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2014-2015**

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Dear Friends of the YWCA,

The YWCA-Clinton Board of Directors has announced we will be closing our Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs effective June 2015. In addition, we will be expanding our Rapid Rehousing and scattered-site Transitional Housing programs.

Our board and staff have been strategically planning over the past year for a sustainable future for our Crisis Services program. The State of Iowa Attorney General's decision to regionalize victim services has left our shelter-based services in a very vulnerable position. We have worked diligently to raise funds in response to the state's decision, but have had to face the hard facts, that we cannot replace a \$250,000 cut in funding with local giving, each and every year going forward.

As you may recall, in 2012, the State of Iowa's Attorney General's Office determined to regionalize services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Since that decision was made, Iowa was divided into six regions with funding available for only 1-2 domestic violence programs, 1-2 sexual assault programs, and 1-2 shelter programs in each of the regions. Due to our small size and non-centralized geographic location within this region, the YWCA Board made the very difficult decision not to apply to be a regional provider. We simply could not compete with cities like Davenport and Iowa City in terms of geographic location and available resources.

We went out on a grassroots fundraising drive, and have been operating our Emergency Shelter with local donations since July 2014. We are so thankful to our wonderful donors who have made it possible for us to continue serving our community in the face of a \$250,000 cut in state funding. We have, however, determined that this level of local giving is not sustainable in the long term. Based on our findings, the YWCA Board of Directors made the difficult decision to close the local Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs effective June 15, 2015.

On a more positive note, because of new government funding options, the YWCA will be expanding our Rapid Rehousing and scattered-site Transitional Housing programs to be able to serve more people in need. These two housing programs serve men, women and children in our community who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and homelessness. In addition, we will now be able to expand our services to include entire families who are experiencing homelessness.

Current research shows that services that help to move participants into their own homes tend to be more effective over the long term than shelter-based services, and current funding trends reflect that. So while we are deeply saddened to have to close our Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs, we are optimistic about the opportunity we have to expand our other two housing programs to help more people.

Community support for our local YWCA is still very much needed and appreciated. We will continue to need donations of food, toiletries, gift cards, gas cards, and with our expanding housing programs, we will rely on local donations to support the case management services we provide, to pay for child care as our clients seek employment or further their education, and to cover the myriad costs and needs involved in starting over in a new home.

We will stop accepting new participants into our shelter-based Transitional Housing Program in December 2014, and shift into serving those participants through our Rapid Rehousing program. Current shelter residents will continue to be served through the closure date of June 2015. New clients will not be accepted into the YWCA Emergency Shelter after June 15, 2015.

The decision to close our Emergency Shelter and shelter-based Transitional Housing programs was made with the knowledge that SafePath Survivor Resources is established in the community. In addition, the YWCA has resources available to assist current participants with their relocation needs. We remain committed to the wellbeing and safety of survivors and will continue to advocate for the rights of victims, as we have for the past several decades.

SafePath Survivor Resources was selected by the state as this area's provider of shelter-based domestic violence/sexual assault services. SafePath Survivor Resources is a division of Family Resources and provides comprehensive domestic violence, sexual assault, sheltering and housing services to our multi-county region and may be reached at 866-921-3354.

For those that would like to learn more about change in services, an informational video is available on our website, which further explains the history of our program and the upcoming changes in services. To view the video, please visit the "Crisis Center" page of our website at www.ywcaclinton.org.

If you should have any additional questions or concerns, we encourage you to please contact us. YWCA Crisis Services Director Ronelle Clark can be reached at crisisdirector@ywcaclinton.org or 563-242-2110 ext.400. Additionally, I can be reached at ed@ywcaclinton.org or 563-242-2110 ext. 101.

We truly appreciate and are humbled by the heartfelt support our community has shown us over the years. Over our past 99 years, we have adapted to our community's needs. We are very proud of the work we do at the YWCA, and will continue to provide help and hope to our community for the next 100 years to come. Thank you for your continued support of the YWCA.

Sincerely,

Shannon Sander-Welzien

YWCA Executive Director