



Dear Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

It is my pleasure to provide this letter of support as Volunteers of America seeks to re-locate its program to the Jackson Street location. VOA's program to help those nearing the end of their federal sentences speaks to the power of redemption in all of our lives. This program seeks to provide those willing to change with the tools and ability needed to change and become self-sufficient benefits our entire community.

VOA's program works seamlessly within the community and the work of VOA's community relations board ensures community voices are heard and respected. It is also understood that often providing the physical space required for programs such as these are difficult choices, however, city staff has clearly indicated the Jackson Street location is an appropriate use with applicable conditions.

In my 20+ years of work at the Union Gospel Mission, I see firsthand the necessity of providing a well-rounded program for individuals which includes housing for more than just 30 days. Especially in these tough economic times, we need to welcome such programs into communities with open arms and ask how can we help rather than hinder the good work being done. Strong partners make strong people which makes for better communities.

I encourage you to welcome VOA to this location. They already do great work within St. Paul and I am confident they will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Roe-Smith, WorkNet Director
Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities