

July 2, 2012

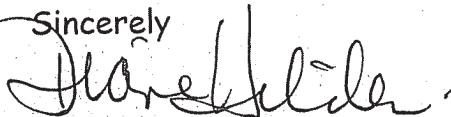
Honorable Mayor Coleman and City of St Paul Council Members

I encourage you to welcome the Volunteers of America's Residential Re-Entry Center to St. Paul. As an individual who has worked for many years in community corrections at Reentry Services (now part of R.S.I.Eden) and currently as a Crime Prevention Coordinator for a District Council in St. Paul I am aware of community concerns regarding ex-offenders. I am also aware of the benefits to the community when programs such as the Volunteers of America work toward integrating ex-offenders back into the community with strict supervision offering them a variety of practical services to change their lives.

I live in Roseville, am the founder and long-time board member of the Lake McCarrons Neighborhood Association, The current Volunteers of American Residential Re-Entry facility is in my neighborhood and in our Association's geographical service area. I have followed and observed VOA's program in action first hand as a neighbor and member of the VOA's community relations board for many years. I continue to be impressed with VOA's vision to uplift the lives of re-entry center residents and positively integrate them into the community. It has been evident to my neighborhood that VOA staff routinely collaborates with a variety of agencies and individuals within the greater Roseville/St Paul communities. These VOA outreach practices are both for the purpose of educating others about the VOA re-entry program and to develop community opportunities for program participants.

In my estimation, having a VOA Re-Entry facility in St. Paul is an opportunity for the City bringing not only an infusion of jobs and but a renovation to the Proposed Jackson Street site. I am aware of the possible doubt of neighbors having a residential re-entry facility move into their neighborhood. The experience of the Lake McCarrons community over many years has been nothing but positive. I believe that the proposed VOA Re-Entry facility on Jackson site will continue to be a good neighbor run by caring and skillful staff for the benefit of highly motivated ex-offenders.

Sincerely



Diane M. Hilden

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Resident & Board Member, Lake McCarron's Neighborhood Association