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Dear DC 37 Member:

Homelessness exists in every community. It can happen to anyone: to our mother or father, our brother or sister, our children, our aunt or uncle, and our co-workers – even to the hardest working New Yorkers. The inability to afford a home of one's own is a tragedy that we as New Yorkers can work together to address in order to help our family members and friends, including our co-workers, get back on their feet. Through the City's Pathway Home program, all New Yorkers who want to do more now have the opportunity to directly offer a helping hand to families and friends experiencing homelessness.

Pathway Home is a program that offers all of us an opportunity to help those who are closest to us. The program can help you as well as a homeless family. If you have family members or friends who have been in the shelter system for 90 days or are in shelter and have a CITYFEPS referral letter and they move out of shelter and into your home, you can receive monthly payments from the City for up to 12 months. Monthly payments to host families generally range from \$1,200 to \$1,800, depending on the household size of the family you are hosting. Families who move from shelter into your home can retain their eligibility for rental assistance to eventually rent their own apartment and also receive additional help from the City.

This citywide challenge did not occur overnight: homelessness in New York City increased 115% from 1994 to 2014, from about 24,000 to 51,000 – including by 38% from 2011 to 2014 alone, when the shelter census increased by about 14,000 people after the State and City eliminated the Advantage rental assistance program. Rent hikes and wages that have not kept pace are the economic drivers of this increased homelessness. And today 70% of the shelter population consists of families, the majority of whom are families with children – 34% of which have an adult who is working, underscoring the economic realities of homelessness.

New initiatives are beginning to show results and there have been a number of changes, but there is more that we all can do in partnership to address homelessness – and Pathway Home is a program that will help us go further by helping families and friends who may be going through hard times. Please take the time to review the attached materials about eligibility requirements for the program. With the start of the school year, this is a particularly important

time to offer a helping hand to family members and friends who are in shelter but could have greater stability and be closer to their children's schools if you can host them in your home.

If you are interested in participating in *Pathway Home* as a host family, we encourage you to discuss this opportunity with your family or friends who are experiencing homelessness and contact Doreen Howe, the Department of Homeless Services' Associate Commissioner of Transitional Family Services, at 212 361-6816.

Working together, we can make a difference for our family members and friends who have fallen on hard times and are in the shelter system. Thank you for considering helping family members and friends in this way.

Sincerely,



Steven Banks
Commissioner
Department of Social Services



Henry Garrido
Executive Director
District Council 37