



Winter 2023

Dear Friends:

As the lead story in our winter newsletter highlights, Americans 55 or older represent a rising segment of today's homeless population. The combination of wages not keeping up with inflation, age discrimination in the workforce, soaring housing costs, growing healthcare and disability issues along with poor savings rates leave many spending their "golden" years not on the golf course but in a homeless shelter.

HUD statistics back this up. From 2009 to 2017, the number of people aged 62 or older becoming homeless nearly doubled. To make matters worse, forecasters predict a dramatic increase in the number of older individuals unable to secure housing during the coming decade.

At St. Elizabeth, we see this every day. When we opened Santa Fe Suites in December 2020, we projected that it would take an entire year for full occupancy of the 122 apartments. Lo and behold, it was 100 percent rented within the first six months. Besides the recently homeless, many of whom had their rent partially or fully subsidized through a grant from the City of Santa Fe's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, a throng of people emerged from sleeping in their cars, couch surfing with friends or other temporary arrangements to lease a unit. These "silent" homeless had jobs or income sufficient to afford the complex's \$850 monthly rent but not enough to put down the first month/last month/utility deposits, along with high monthly rents, at most Santa Fe apartments.

Besides "affordable" rents in costly Santa Fe, the Suites offers a full range of supportive services and staff designed to help the residents maintain their housing and not become homeless again. Case managers, a supportive housing navigator, a clinical social worker and a therapist all work closely together with the residents to address and ameliorate any of the issues that most of them present.

Obviously managing a complex this large with a population that challenged is a costly endeavor. Add that to our four other residential programs – two emergency shelters and two other supportive housing units for families and adults with disabilities – along with our many outreach services for those still living on the streets and St. Elizabeth now has a \$3-million annual operating budget with nearly 60 percent having to come from charitable contributions.

As might be expected, the holiday season is when we raise a substantial portion of our donations. So once again I'm asking for your support so we can continue our work supporting the less fortunate and more at-risk members of our community.

Thank you and my best wishes for the holidays and new year.

Sincerely,

Edward Archuleta
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