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April 13, 2020

RE: North Texas Giving Tuesday NOW! We need your help more than ever! Tuesday, May 5, 2020, 6 a.m. to Midnight. Early giving begins April 14th.

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Ferguson Road Initiative (FRI):

Since we last communicated with you so much has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope you and your family are safe and healthy in these unprecedented times. Please heed the advice from the CDC and our own county and city leaders to help stem the spread of this virus. It is because of this crisis that I am appealing to you today.

It is hard to predict what the final outcome of this crisis will be. But for now, the Ferguson Road Initiative needs your help more than ever. All charitable organizations, including FRI, are reeling from the devastating impact of this global health emergency. Organizations like FRI, that depend on the local support of their communities, are especially vulnerable with mass closures and indefinite shutdowns. The needs are diverse and many and FRI needs your support now.

Let me share with you why FRI's work is so important at this time. Right now, FRI is needed to help marshal information and resources to our largest and most vulnerable populations, our Latino and African American families and our senior citizens 55 years of age and older. FRI demographics indicate we have a 70% minority population and that FRI's two City Council Districts, Districts 7 and 9, house the largest senior citizen population in Dallas. FRI's boundaries include substantial portions of both Districts 7 and 9.

An analysis of federal health and demographic data by the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, in collaboration with the Dallas Morning News and KZAS-TV, has determined (3) three geographic pockets of need in our Far East Dallas neighborhoods where residents who contract COVID-19 will be more likely to end up in the hospital, and possibly in intensive care requiring a ventilator: Ferguson/I-30, Ferguson/I-635, and Buckner/I-30. According to the CDC, these populations also have the highest risk of diabetes, heart disease and other chronic health problems associated with severe cases of COVID-19.

These high-risk areas identified in the above research all represent families living in affordable housing apartment communities. That's why the FRI network has reached out to our multi-family communities to ensure they are equipped with the resource information they need to help those in our community who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. More importantly, we have provided them with information that will connect them to the emergency services and food pantry providers who directly serve Far East Dallas.

In addition to communicating with our apartment communities, FRI is also reaching out to our neighborhoods and asking them for their help. FRI is sharing with the community ways they can help our area service providers by donating food, mobilizing volunteers, and offering cash contributions so their operations go uninterrupted and they can continue to provide emergency services that will keep families fed and from being evicted and forced into homelessness.

*The mission of FRI is to engage and empower a community of advocates to advance a safe, beautiful, prosperous and proud community in far East Dallas.
Our vision is Far East Dallas is a strong and vital community.*

Dallas COVID-19 recovery will require an all-hands-on-deck approach as we try to move mountains that are not mole hills for thousands of at-risk families across Dallas and as it relates to the Ferguson Road Initiative, across Far East Dallas. The Ferguson Road Initiative is uniquely positioned to pick-up this challenge. We are a “backbone” organization made up of 37 diverse neighborhoods, 60 apartment complexes, 2,000 businesses, dozens of nonprofits, and more than 30 faith communities. Through our multiple partnerships and extensive network of service providers, we are the go-to agency that works to assure families are not left behind. We link our Far East Community to the services and resources that will assist them in regaining financial stability.

The COVID-19 virus has caused swift changes in the way we operate, how we serve, and in our ability to continue our community-building projects that impact the quality of life of our friends and neighbors. FRI is still committed to the large-scale community infrastructure projects that are finally being realized after decades of work: the completion of the new White Rock Hills Park, the start construction of the Trinity Forest Spine and Ash Creek Trails, the start reconstruction of Highland Road from Ferguson Road to the Primrose Apartments, and the two intersection improvements at Lakeland Drive/Ferguson Road and Highland Road/ Ferguson Road. We will continue to advocate for our community in the next Municipal Bond Program for funding that will start construction of the White Rock Hills Community Recreation CENTER. However, for now, it is imperative we connect our most vulnerable neighbors with the resources and agencies that can provide food, shelter, and clothing during this time of the COVID-19 crisis. *To put it simply, WE NEED YOU.*


How you can help: GIVE! On May 5th, visit www.northtexasgivingday.org and make a gift to the Ferguson Road Initiative. You can make an early gift beginning as soon as Tuesday, April 14th through May 4th.

This emergency fundraising campaign is vital to the life of our organization. We hope we can count on you to join our community of supporters as we forge ahead to do the work our community needs.

Sincerely,



Dan Ortman, FRI President



Vikki J. Martin, Executive Director