



“A Season of Gratitude and Giving The RHA’s Commitment to Caring and Accountability” Laura Snyder, CEO

As the autumn leaves painted our town in vibrant hues of red, orange, and gold, I found myself walking through the grounds of the Rockford Housing Authority taking in the beauty of the season. The air was crisp, and a sense of gratitude filled my heart. Thanksgiving was just around the corner, and I couldn’t help but reflect on its significance, not only as a time for personal gratitude but also as a cornerstone of the RHA’s mission and values. Thanksgiving, to me, represents a powerful reminder of the importance of thankfulness, gratitude, and service to others, values that are deeply embedded in the core of the RHA’s mission. It is a time when we come together as a community, not just as staff and residents, but as an extended family, to celebrate abundance, share warmth, and express our appreciation for one another. The core values of the RHA, which include caring and accountability, are not mere words on paper; they are the very essence of our organization. These values extend to our staff, our residents, and our broader community.

This Thanksgiving season, I want to take a moment to reflect on what these values mean to me, our team, and the RHA family we have created.

Caring

To me, caring is more than just a word or an action; it’s a mindset that should guide everything we do. Within RHA, caring means seeing the humanity in every person we encounter. It means understanding that our residents are not just beneficiaries of our services; they are individuals with dreams, hopes, and stories. Caring is about listening to their needs, empathizing with their

struggles, and working together to create a supportive and nurturing environment. When we care, we are not only doing our jobs, but we are actively working to improve the lives of those we serve.

Accountability

As a CEO, I've always believed that accountability starts at the top. It means taking responsibility for our actions and decisions, both individually and collectively. We are entrusted with a vital mission, and we must be accountable to the community that relies on us. When we make a promise to our residents, whether it's about safety, maintenance, or support, we must honor that commitment. It's about keeping our word and delivering on our mission with integrity and transparency. Accountability is the bedrock of trust, and it's something I hold dear in all aspects of my role.

This Thanksgiving, I'm especially grateful for the incredible team that makes up RHA. Our staff members are the heart and soul of our organization. They work to ensure the well-being of our residents, maintaining our properties, offering support, and building a sense of community. Their dedication is inspiring, and it's a reflection of the caring and accountability that underpin our core values. But it's not just our team that I'm thankful for; it's the RHA residents themselves. They are resilient and determined, facing challenges with courage and strength. Many of these folks have overcome adversity that most of us can only imagine. Their stories are a testament to the human spirit, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve them and make their lives a little better these past twenty years at RHA. As the holiday season approaches, I'm reminded of the importance of giving back to our community. Thanksgiving, after all, is not just about a single meal but a spirit of generosity and service.

At RHA, we take this spirit to heart, and it's not confined to a single day. Throughout the year, we engage in various initiatives and programs to give back to our residents and the wider community. The program that embodies our commitment to resident services is our "winter initiatives". As Thanksgiving and the holiday season approach, our team works diligently to ensure that our residents have a safe, warm, and welcoming place to celebrate with their loved ones.

We organize RHA events, decorate our facilities, and provide, through the help of our community partners, meals to those who may not have a place to go. It's a way to show our community residents that they are not alone, that they are part of the RHA family, and that we are here to support them. This year, as we prepare for Thanksgiving and the upcoming holiday season, our Leadership team is planning an array of activities to bring a touch of holiday magic for our RHA staff and residents. We want to create a sense of warmth and togetherness. It's our way of saying, "We care, and we're here for you."

Caring and accountability are not just words; they are principles we embody every day, even outside of our formal roles. Many of our staff members volunteer their time and resources to support local charities, schools, and community organizations. Whether it's coaching a youth sports team, participating in a food drive, or mentoring a young person in need, our staff goes far above and beyond, demonstrating their commitment to making a positive impact. As we gather

around the Thanksgiving table with our own families and loved ones, I'm reminded of the RHA family that we've built over the years.

It's a diverse and vibrant community, filled with unique stories and experiences. Our residents are not just beneficiaries of our services; they are our neighbors, friends, and fellow community members. Their well-being is at the center of what we do, and their voices and perspectives matter. Listening to our residents and involving them in decisions that affect their lives is another aspect of our accountability and caring.

We hold regular community meetings and seek input on matters like property improvements, safety enhancements, and social programs. It's a way to ensure that their needs and concerns are heard and addressed, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their homes. As the holidays approach, we also aim to celebrate the cultural diversity within our RHA family. Our community is a rich tapestry of backgrounds, traditions, and experiences.

We encourage residents to share their cultural heritage with one another, deepening their connections and fostering mutual respect. This cultural exchange not only builds a sense of community but also educates us all about the world's many different traditions and perspectives. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, we believe it's essential to encourage acts of kindness and gratitude among our residents. It's a small gesture that can have a profound impact, as it reminds us all of the positive aspects of our lives and the strength we gain from gratitude. One of the most heartwarming aspects of Thanksgiving for me is seeing the generosity of our wider community and our community partners. Local businesses, organizations, and individuals step up to support our residents during this time. Whether it's through donations of food, clothing, or financial assistance, their kindness makes our resident initiatives even more meaningful. These acts of generosity reinforce the idea that caring, and accountability extend beyond the boundaries of our organization. They remind us that, as members of the community, we have a collective responsibility to uplift those in need. It's a sentiment that aligns perfectly with the values that the RHA holds dear.

As Thanksgiving nears, I'm filled with a sense of pride for RHA, its staff, and its residents. Our commitment to caring and accountability is not just an ideal; it's a way of life. It's the foundation of our mission, the spirit of our community, and the heartbeat of our organization. Thanksgiving is more than a holiday; it's a reflection of the values we hold dear. It's a time to come together, to express our gratitude, and to share with those less fortunate. It's a time to show that we care, not just about our immediate families but about our extended RHA family and our entire community.

I look forward to the days ahead, to the shared meals, the laughter, the acts of kindness, and the deep sense of gratitude that Thanksgiving brings. As we embrace these moments, let us remember the importance of caring and accountability, and let them guide us in all that we do. To our RHA family, our staff, our residents, and our broader community, I extend my warmest wishes for a safe, healthy, and joyful Thanksgiving. May this season be a reminder of the values we hold dear and the difference we can make when we come together with caring hearts and accountable actions. Happy Holidays! Laura Snyder, CEO