

Dear Siffrin Family,

It is with deep gratitude and excited anticipation that we announce the coming transition taking place at Siffrin, Inc.

First, the gratitude. As you may know, our longtime CEO, Brad Vincent, will be retiring at the end of September. Brad's thirty years of dedicated service leaves a legacy of caring, growth and a sincere commitment to preserving the dignity of people with disabilities. Under Brad's leadership, we've seen Siffrin grow from three to seven counties—now serving more than 900 people throughout Northeast Ohio. In addition, Siffrin has expanded its service matrix beyond residential in order to help people achieve more vocationally, financially and personally with the additions of Employment, Financial Management, Day Services and Transportation services. Brad has also collaborated with Kent State University to provide Siffrin Academy, an integrated, on campus, service in both Stark and Trumbull Counties. He helped acquire a new central office at its current location on Dressler Road NW and new facilities at Siffrin's Austintown branch.

Brad simply says, "I am humbled and truly thankful to have grown with a system that has evolved from institutional/custodial care to community-based services. Persons with disabilities now have a choice and are playing an active role in their own lives."

We, as a Board, are eternally grateful to Brad on behalf of the families and individuals who have benefited from this wonderful organization. When Brad first informed us of his plans, we began what became a three-year process. After an extensive search, we are delighted to announce that we believe we've found the right person to accept the reigns and direct us to the next level of success.

Now for the excited anticipation. We are thrilled to announce that Kristine Willhite has accepted the position of CEO. Kristine, a Stark County resident, brings two decades of management experience to the position. Most recently Kris worked as a Regional Coordinator for the Early Childhood Resource Center (A ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System) overseeing initiatives and grants. She is no stranger to overseeing operations in multiple counties. In her previous position, Kristine led a six-county region as the Step Up to Quality Coordinator. She has overseen multiple grant projects, successfully securing funding in the area of workforce development. Kristine earned a master's degree in Public Administration from Louisiana State University. Her bachelor's degree is from Kent State University. She is also a graduate of the Leadership Stark County Signature Program and has served on a number of advisory committees and community boards—including our own.

Clearly, Kristine possesses the "head" to accept the challenges of her new role. But more importantly, she also possesses the "heart."

She has devoted her life to the well-being of children, serving as a foster and adoptive parent for more than 20 years. Most of the children blessed by her care have been those with an intellectual or developmental disability. In 1998, Kristine was contacted by Pathway Caring for Children to provide specialized therapeutic care for Brandon, a young child with severe autism. This she did for two years—before adopting him as her son and providing Brandon with a warm, loving, forever-home. Brandon lives with Kristine to this day, as he has for the past 23 years. We are grateful to Kris for bringing her personal and professional expertise to Siffrin through her volunteer service on our Board of Directors, and now as CEO. We are confident that she has been prepared to carry on the rich legacy of our past with clear vision for the future.

Kris says, "I am excited to begin working alongside such dedicated staff to continue the impactful work Siffrin is known for, and to explore expanded opportunities of service to our current and future clients."

Founding Board member, Al Buck, is a treasure trove of Siffrin history. He recalls the joy of finding support and startup money to open our very first home on the corner of Whipple and Fulton, housing just five men. He remembers, "Challenges were many—money, getting people and neighborhoods to accept our homes, and townships that were so unfriendly."

As we take time now to celebrate Brad's dedication and leadership in building upon the foundation laid in those early years to the multifaceted service organization that Siffrin is today, Al echoes our thoughts.

"Brad has done a wonderful job and is truly devoted to Siffrin," he says, "I wish him beautiful days ahead with so much to enjoy." He continues, "I feel we have made a wonderful choice in Kristine. Her experience and community involvement should open new avenues for Siffrin. Kristine understands the Siffrin Family Environment, and we welcome her to the Siffrin Family.

We trust that you share our confidence and excitement. In the not-too-distant future, we anticipate opportunities for you to meet and welcome Kristine into the Siffrin family.

And as a Board, we wish Brad all the very best in this next chapter of his life.

In Your Continued Service,
Siffrin Board of Directors,
Kurt Goodenberger, Chair