

July 22, 2020

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We hope this note finds you and your family safe and well during this unprecedented time. Catholic Charities has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by instituting significant changes in the way it serves those in need in many of our programs – pop up food pantries, immigration services, helplines, among others.

Unfortunately, not all of our programs lend themselves to realistic changes in a time of social distancing and necessary infection control measures. Among those programs are the high-quality services we provide to the blind and visually impaired through Catholic Guild for the Blind.

As with other human services providers, COVID-19 has had a drastic impact on our ability to continue to operate and deliver services to the visually impaired. We have been forced to fully suspend certain programs and services for an undetermined period. This impact has been especially hard on the small Catholic Guild for the Blind program. In addition to the drastic negative impact on the program's financial position, it also jeopardizes our ability to provide ongoing quality services.

As a result, I share with you, that during the next several months, CGB's Program Director Judith Katzen, will work closely with existing clients and with the Commission for the Blind, to develop a seamless plan to ensure existing clients are transferred to alternate service providers. Fortunately, there are larger providers who possess the right blend of expertise and operational capacity to continue to serve the best interest of our clients, especially as the environment we live and work in continues to evolve.

Catholic Guild for the Blind has been a small high-quality provider of services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired in New York City and in the Hudson Valley since 1954. So, this is a sad decision, but we make it with the confidence that our clients will be seamlessly transitioned and will continue to receive the services they need. We expect to make this transition by the end of August, at which point CGB will no longer be providing services. We are deeply concerned for our dedicated staff, and will be working with them on job opportunities within Catholic Charities and with other providers.

I want to personally thank the staff who have dedicated themselves to this program- your commitment to CCCS' mission in serving those in need has been an inspiration and you will leave an indelible legacy on the agency.

Sincerely,



Beatriz Diaz Taveras
Executive Director