Message from the CEO

Dear Friends of VEAP,

In August of 2016, VEAP launched the most robust strategic planning process in its history. The communities of VEAP’s service area – Bloomington, Richfield, Edina and a portion of Minneapolis – are rapidly changing, and so are the needs of community members. Our community is aging and becoming more diverse. There is a growing gap between income and expenses contributing to the 58% increase in suburban poverty since 2008. What hasn’t changed is VEAP’s goal to reduce all barriers and provide access to the most impactful, efficient programs possible for limited income individuals and families whose needs are unmet in our community.

As part of the strategic planning process, client surveys, research, community conversations and interviews with our clients revealed that what the community needs most from VEAP:

Access to Healthy Foods: VEAP clients consistently report that affordability is the biggest barrier to eating healthy and say they are unable to buy nutritious foods when shopping for themselves. Clients noted that access to healthy foods was a factor in their ability to achieve future success—whether their goal was feeding their children healthy foods so they could succeed in school or performing well on the job.

Access to Safe, Affordable, Dignified Housing: Lack of affordable housing is a mounting crisis. The majority of VEAP client households live on $1,600 per month or less. With average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Bloomington at $1,078, that leaves little for food, transportation, clothing, medication and other basic needs. Vacancy rates hover at 2-3% leaving few options for families to move into housing that is affordable to them. Naturally affordable housing options are being rapidly purchased by for profit developers, with lost transportation, clothing, medication and other basic needs.

Social Connections and Support Systems: Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities. Resources that enhance quality of life can have a significant influence on health outcomes. Examples of resources include access to healthy foods, safe and affordable housing, access to education, public safety, social interactions and relationships. Fifty-three percent of VEAP clients reported they rarely, or never, were able to get help from others when they needed it and had no one to go to for help. They expressed a strong desire for connection with others, seeking a mix of emotional support, practical help and opportunities to network for career development. When asked how connected they felt to their community, most rated themselves less than 5 on a scale of 1 to 10.

VEAP Strategic Framework: Moving forward, you will hear many references to the new VEAP Strategic Framework, and how the input from clients and other partners has helped us to focus and strengthen VEAP programs, as well as create new streamlined approaches. VEAP’s reputation for creative and innovative programming will only grow as we take what we’ve learned and continue to build stronger – more hopeful – communities.

VEAP is at an exciting turning point, poised to deepen our commitment to making a profound difference – not only in the lives of those in need – but in the lives of all involved: volunteers, supporters and partners alike. VEAP needs you more than ever.

Will you come along side of us in ways you’ve never imagined before?

Lisa Horn
CEO

Dear Friends of VEAP,

In August of 2016, VEAP launched the most robust strategic planning process in its history. The communities of VEAP’s service area – Bloomington, Richfield, Edina and a portion of Minneapolis – are rapidly changing, and so are the needs of community members. Our community is aging and becoming more diverse. There is a growing gap between income and expenses contributing to the 58% increase in suburban poverty since 2008. What hasn’t changed is VEAP’s goal to reduce all barriers and provide access to the most impactful, efficient programs possible for limited income individuals and families whose needs are unmet in our community.

As part of the strategic planning process, client surveys, research, community conversations and interviews with our clients revealed that what the community needs most from VEAP:

Access to Healthy Foods: VEAP clients consistently report that affordability is the biggest barrier to eating healthy and say they are unable to buy nutritious foods when shopping for themselves. Clients noted that access to healthy foods was a factor in their ability to achieve future success—whether their goal was feeding their children healthy foods so they could succeed in school or performing well on the job.

Access to Safe, Affordable, Dignified Housing: Lack of affordable housing is a mounting crisis. The majority of VEAP client households live on $1,600 per month or less. With average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Bloomington at $1,078, that leaves little for food, transportation, clothing, medication and other basic needs. Vacancy rates hover at 2-3% leaving few options for families to move into housing that is affordable to them. Naturally affordable housing options are being rapidly purchased by for profit developers, with lost transportation, clothing, medication and other basic needs.

Social Connections and Support Systems: Health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities. Resources that enhance quality of life can have a significant influence on health outcomes. Examples of resources include access to healthy foods, safe and affordable housing, access to education, public safety, social interactions and relationships. Fifty-three percent of VEAP clients reported they rarely, or never, were able to get help from others when they needed it and had no one to go to for help. They expressed a strong desire for connection with others, seeking a mix of emotional support, practical help and opportunities to network for career development. When asked how connected they felt to their community, most rated themselves less than 5 on a scale of 1 to 10.

VEAP Strategic Framework: Moving forward, you will hear many references to the new VEAP Strategic Framework, and how the input from clients and other partners has helped us to focus and strengthen VEAP programs, as well as create new streamlined approaches. VEAP’s reputation for creative and innovative programming will only grow as we take what we’ve learned and continue to build stronger – more hopeful – communities.

VEAP is at an exciting turning point, poised to deepen our commitment to making a profound difference – not only in the lives of those in need – but in the lives of all involved: volunteers, supporters and partners alike. VEAP needs you more than ever.

Will you come along side of us in ways you’ve never imagined before?

Lisa Horn
CEO
Our Programs  impactful services promoting health and stability for those in need.

Basic Needs

Access to Healthy Food
VEAP operates one of the largest food pantries in the state of Minnesota with approximately 10,000 individuals having access to healthy foods every month.

3,427,695 MILLION
pounds of healthy food distributed

1.8 MILLION
pounds of fresh produce

110,496 VISITS
to VEAP’s Food Pantry

Social Services

We provide resources, case management, financial assistance and housing services. Our person centered approach and individualized care helps individuals and families in crisis move toward a stable, healthier future.

$167,000
in financial assistance

520
new client assessments

5,100
referrals

When Jennifer was unable to return to work due to complications during childbirth, her husband Ricky took on an extra job in addition to caring for their two other children and maintaining the household. It was a difficult couple of months for the family as they saw their savings dwindle and eventually they were unable to pay their rent. They came to VEAP and met several times with a social worker for housing assistance and food support. The financial assistance they received from VEAP made it possible for them to stay in their housing. Jennifer is now healthy, back at work and the family is once again stable.

3,100 Volunteers

WHAT WE PROVIDE AND WHO WE SERVE:
Basic needs and social services for low-income residents of Bloomington, Richfield, Edina, and south Minneapolis

8,707
rides provided to seniors

4,116
rides home from VEAP’s food pantry

89% of households that received housing assistance were stable in their housing and up to date on their rent three months following assistance.

Volunteer Program

A caring and connected community enriching lives through volunteering.

In 2016, individual and group volunteers donated over 77,000 hours for a value of $1,814,473 to our community.

In 2016, VEAP saw a 50% increase in the number of Donate & Do groups from local businesses and other organizations. In total, 80 Donate & Do groups contributed 4,700 hours volunteering in the VEAP warehouse preparing fresh fruits and vegetables for the food pantry.