



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

BOARD MEETING –APRIL 7, 2025

Board & Governance

- Bob Hennekes stepped away from Board membership in late January for personal reasons.

Staffing Changes

- Holly James resigned as Executive Director in mid-March.
- Marci Peebles appointed interim Executive Director.
- Margarita Whitson (Haircuts) resigned. Position posted on Indeed within days.
- Madison Yee hired as Program Assistant – support for general admin, development, Tau, and Garden.

Strategy & Planning

- Phase 1 of Strategic Plan with Ryan Mulligan/Sidekick Services partially complete. Phase I services focused on assessment with information to be gathered through meetings with staff, a board retreat, and other data-gathering exercises. Further update in regular Board meeting discussion.

Development

- Fundraising activities this past quarter include the following:
 - 2025 General giving: \$ 25,964.34
 - \$85k Gift to Tamar's Center from estate of Paul Wenzel – check presented at March Retreat
 - Grant submissions:
 1. Church of the Incarnation – grant for \$5,000 submitted for the Haircuts from the Heart student voucher program. Additional in person presentation made by Marci Peebles to the Social Action Committee. We have received funding from this source in the past for vouchers.
 2. Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl (local funds) – grant for \$3,000 submitted for Community Garden water costs. We have received funding from this source in the past for vouchers.
 - Emails and social media posts for the “Piggest Raffle,” part of the Flying Pig events in May, have gone out. We have gained several new donors from previous events.

General Update on ED / Interim Transition

- Asked to fill the Interim role just prior to the March 15 retreat; one-week overlap with Holly.
- In three the weeks since, attending meetings and reading documents to “catch up” on ED items.
 - one-on-ones with Sr Marilyn (weekly), Michael Barnett, Ryan Mulligan (strategic plan), Debra Savage (consultant Holly was working with).

- Strategic Planning Retreat, Executive Committee meeting, Tamar's Committee meeting.
 - program / catch-up meetings with Tamar's staff.
- Conducted in-person interviews and hired for Program Assistant position.
- Reached out to OneSource Center for Nonprofit Excellence EXCEL Program
 - I attended this series in 2024 in hopes of being better able to assist in whatever needs arose at FM between EDs, but had to miss a few sessions due to family health issues.
 - I have been given permission from OneSource to make-up the sessions in the coming weeks.
- Currently screening cosmetologists for newly open position with Haircuts mobile.
- Maintaining Tau House, Community Garden, and Haircuts needs while transitioning.
- Prepping technology for Program Assistant for their arrival.
 - I will be onboarding her on all things FM and specifically on Tau / Garden starting next week.
- Scheduling time for Holly to return to train both PA and I on Donor Perfect this month.
- FM Audit completed this past week.

PROGRAM REPORT

BOARD MEETING – APRIL 7, 2025

General

We are looking forward to the start of our Program Assistant this week. Madison is very enthusiastic and brings many varied skills to our organization. She will be able to support the Garden and Tau House with day-to-day needs as well as provide coverage of many administrative aspects of our programs. Additionally, she has research, grant-writing, and communications / marketing skills which may prove very beneficial to FM.

The Community Garden

The Garden season has begun, and all plots are in-process or claimed for at this time. We continue to have a sizeable waitlist. To date, weather has prohibited any official gatherings, but a Work Day is scheduled for April 12. Efforts to address necessary repairs on the fence surrounding the Garden continue, and we have funds set aside for this. There are a very limited number of companies which work with the deer fencing we use, resulting in numerous delays and negotiations to ensure we get what we need within our price range. Conversations are occurring with Heartfelt Tidbits to continue to improve the overall function and experience of the Community Garden.

Haircuts from the Heart

Although the mobile haircutting program was running smoothly, the resignation of our licensed cosmetologist in mid-March has meant a suspension of the program until this position can be filled. Ideally this role will be filled as soon as possible so that there is no need to return any portion of mobile fees for the year. Position is posted and resumes are being reviewed. Operations at the shower house (Mary Magdalen House-MMH) continue. The partnership with MMH remains strong, and the staff is very supportive of our efforts and generous with their space. The voucher program continues to grow, and we are pursuing additional funding to meet increasing demand.

Tau House

We are in an in-between time – especially with a late Easter resulting in an empty March. However, there are two spring trips coming this month. The 2025 schedule is fully booked for summer groups (May 25-July 25), and volunteer sites and programming are being confirmed. Below is a summary of bookings to date:

- Winter/Spring: 3 retreat groups - 51 ppl total and 3 mini-trips 38 ppl total
- Summer - 8 trips - 173 ppl total
- Fall: Groups typically book during late summer
- Winter: Groups typically book in the fall

Tamar's Place

In mid-2024, the realities of the population in Lower Price Hill and the lack of response to the extensive and varied efforts put out by the staff to engage with the neighborhood led to the need to find a new way to serve women in need out of the LPH location. At that time, the staff heavily researched and discarded multiple options before obtaining Board permission (in late October) to pilot a program for women based on culinary art therapy.

This framework is a very intentional way to create an atmosphere where it was possible to speak to the deeper needs of women. Additionally it dovetails with what Sr Wilma had shared in the spring that she was happy to not only see women receive help themselves but also to pass these learnings on to other women. Success should not only be measured by what happens AT Tamar's but also by what happens in women's lives when they leave Tamar's. Finally, it was a practical fit for the resources of the house and staff.

To date, staff have hosted 7 pilot gatherings with women from various demographics and backgrounds, with 25-30 people attending in total. Each session included a planned cooking or baking activity, such as bread making, and a simple meal for the group. However, the real work and intention and benefit of the gathering lies in the conversations and connections surfaced by those in attendance and facilitated by staff.

Through the sessions, staff have discovered that women crave connection with other women. They are lonely, lack self-esteem, feel lost, suffer stress and anxiety daily, and have experienced varying degrees of trauma. Both emotional and financial poverty run high among the women participants. Cincinnati is a deeply philanthropic community and offers many resources for financial assistance. However, through these sessions, women have stated that there are few opportunities to come together in a therapeutic, safe environment for fellowship and emotional connection.

Pilot results to date show women participants are eager to attend more sessions and want to bring their friends, daughters, and mothers. Women in the groups also share their culinary knowledge with other women and form their own mini-groups, fostering healthy relationships and emotional support. Finally, participants indicated they were willing to donate to Tamar's in return for the culinary sessions, adding a revenue generation possibility to support Tamar's work. This option could serve a wide range of women from all backgrounds, provide collaborative opportunities with other FM programs (such as the Community Garden or Tau) as well as outside partners, and function as a revenue-generating opportunity.

The Board granted permission to continue to run with and grow the program at the March retreat.