

Sisters Place to Close after 32 Years of Service to Homeless Families

Embodied with the spirit of the 14 Communities of Catholic Sisters who founded the ministry in 1993, Sisters Place embraced a mission to serve families experiencing homelessness by providing safe and secure housing and offering programs and services to help residents heal and thrive for more than 30 years. However, as with many religious congregations in the United States, Sisters Place's founding communities, who are the Members of the corporation, had to reevaluate their level of involvement in various ministries due to aging and declining membership.

In 2021, Sisters Place moved from Clairton, PA to Mt. Oliver in Pittsburgh, which offered residents better access to resources but increased the organization's costs. During this time, Sisters Place expanded its mission to the Hilltop community providing outreach and programs to non-residents while nurturing relationships with neighbors, business owners, and community leaders.

Throughout 2023-24, the Sisters Place Members and Board of Directors made a thorough review of finances and the current needs of the families and communities served. They concluded that Sisters Place would not be able to sustain services at the level of quality desired beyond 2025. The Sisters Place Board, with the agreement of the Members, has made the difficult decision to close operations after months of exploring all options, including seeking a partnership with Auberle, which was ultimately not realized.

"The Sisters Place Board and founding communities offer our heartfelt gratitude to all the families, staff, neighbors, and friends who supported our efforts to care for persons experiencing homelessness in Western Pennsylvania for longer than our founding members ever imagined back in 1993," said Sister Janet Gardner, President of the Board. "Making this choice to end our mission now gives us the blessing of time. Time to transition families into alternative housing organizations and programs, and time for staff to prepare for the conclusion of our mission and seek new employment."

"I have had the tremendous honor to have worked at Sisters Place for the past 8 ½ years," states Lynette Vybiral, Interim Executive Director and Senior Development Officer. "As we all face the difficult decision to close, I will carry the memories of the wonderful people I have met who have carried Sisters Place in their hearts and through their actions these many decades, and of the thousands of lives we have touched through our mission. We can sunset this program knowing that another dedicated social service organization will be able to take up the reins and continue to provide housing and support for those struggling with homelessness."

The conclusion of operations is expected to take several months. During this time, the Sisters Place staff and Board are working with Allegheny County's Department of Human Services to transfer families to another organization.

