



August, 2023

Dear Friends of Hope,

As we begin our new leadership roles of Co-Executive Directors this month, we wanted to take this opportunity to connect with you and share our perspective on the work ahead.

Many of you know us already, but for those who may not: Chaka has dedicated the last 19 years to Hope as an organizer, artist, and community builder, with a proven track record in nurturing the organization's community organizing and engagement work. He will continue to oversee and guide the Community Engagement team. With 15 years of experience at Hope, Will has been instrumental in driving housing initiatives and fundraising efforts; he will continue to focus on these areas. Our shared commitment to the organization's mission and values motivates us to lead as we are called and contribute to the success of Hope.

We see our role as sustaining and building upon the strong foundation set by Shannon and her predecessors. We are so grateful to Shannon Smith Jones for her leadership over the last six years, through some incredibly tumultuous times. Shannon led collaboratively, with passion, humor, and grace, and she leaves us having fortified the organization and set us on an exciting course for the future. As our founder and beloved cheerleader Char Madigan quipped about the transition at Shannon's farewell lunch – it is not lost on us that it takes two men to fill the shoes of one woman!

In our years here at Hope, we have become steeped in the organization's history and recognize that what we do now is only possible because we are standing on the shoulders of so many incredible people who have come before us – and also because we have a community of powerful people contributing to Hope today.

Collaborative leadership will remain a priority as we work closely with the other members of the Director Team – Betsy Sohn, our Director of Grant Development and Organizational Learning (who herself has over 20 years at Hope) and Rachel Martinez, our Director of Human Resources and Organizational Culture – to ensure a smooth transition and continuation of Hope's impactful work. But more than that, Hope's culture is one of nurturing and developing leadership at all levels. Our capable, creative, and committed staff provide us with confidence as

we face this period of change. We are eager to see the entire organization's talents shine, making us more resilient and adaptable.

In the coming months, we will work through setting our goals and budget for 2024. Through this process, we will be having conversations and visioning that will inform and guide our search process for the next phase of leadership at Hope. We are committed to maintaining transparency and involving the staff in this important phase. While our timeline is not set in stone, we are estimating that this work will unfold over the next 6-9 months as we move with intention and care to determine what comes next. As we navigate this transition, we will provide updates on the future leadership structure of Hope.

We appreciate your dedication and support. Hope could not exist without the strong commitment of our community. We look forward to what the future will bring for all of us. Together, we will continue to build on the legacy of Hope and build a more powerful, connected community.

In Partnership,

Chaka Mkali and Will Delaney  
Co-Executive Directors (Interim)

