Dear Director Thompson,

For us at the Eden Village, an organization dedicated to tackling homelessness, we simply wouldn’t be able to do what we do without FHLB Des Moines’ help.

Our community of Springfield, Missouri, had long lacked the infrastructure needed to properly serve its homeless population. So, in 2010 our founders, a group led by Linda, my wife, and me, decided to tackle it head on.

Knowing that it’d be impossible to fix Springfield’s homeless issues all by ourselves, we decided to focus on individuals who’ve been diagnosed with mental and physical disabilities and had been on the street for at least a year. That’s why we first formed The Gathering Tree, a drop-in center designed to assist homeless individuals as best we could.

But five years in, Linda reached the conclusion that we weren’t doing enough to solve the problem. The people we were helping would just go back into the woods or onto the streets at night to sleep.

That’s when the idea for Eden Village was born – an idea that wouldn’t have gotten off the ground without an AHP grant from FHLB Des Moines in partnership with The Central Trust Bank.

Eden Village, a tiny home community that opened in Springfield in 2018, provides dignified housing and loving supportive communities of hospitality to our community’s chronically disabled homeless population. It’s a community supported by on-site support services including a psychiatrist, a psychiatric nurse, case managers, mental health providers and a community center where the residents can both work and interact with other residents, guests and volunteers.

But building and maintaining such a facility wasn’t cheap. Luckily for our team and Springfield at large, FHLB Des Moines was there to help.

As a retired physician in the community, we had enough connections in the community to attract early donors who helped get the project off the ground. But that wasn’t going to be enough – and we were hoping that an AHP grant from FHLB Des Moines would close the gap.

But we had never applied for a grant before.

AHP has many rules, and FHLB Des Moines provided a lot of advance help through their technical assistance process. I appreciate the rigorous process needed to ensure we are meeting the requirements. We were grateful for the assistance from the dedicated and caring FHLB Des Moines’ community investment team and utilized it to make sure our submission had the best chance of being accepted.

FHLB Des Moines “bent over backwards” to make sure we completed our application correctly, and sure enough we received $750,000 to build our first Eden Village.

In less than five years, our little idea has gone viral. Eleven cities across the country now have licensed Eden Villages of their own as they have followed our lead to attempt to transform their chronically disabled homeless individuals into a thriving community.

And none of that would’ve been possible without FHLB Des Moines.

Sincerely,

David Brown

The Gathering Tree dba Eden Village