

13 July 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I enthusiastically write this letter of support for Rhonda Roland Shearer's Community Warehouses. For more than 30 years, I have witnessed Rhonda's commitment to developing innovative solutions that support under-resourced communities.

Housing Works was organized in 1990, to provide supportive housing for homeless persons living with HIV/AIDS who were also experiencing substance use disorder and actively using drugs. We were the first supportive housing provider in the United States to house people without regard for their drug use, pioneering what is now known as the Housing first model.

Rhonda was an integral part of the creation of Housing Works. Not only was Rhonda the seed funder for Housing Works, but she allowed our organization to start-up our operations in her own art studio. The first major innovation she brought to us was the idea of upscale thrift shops that target high income New Yorkers. That idea proved to be very lucrative and set us on a path of financial success that continues today

Housing Works would not be what it is today, were it not for Rhonda's ingenuity, creativity, compassion, generosity, and support. Moreover, Rhonda's vision, thoughtful approach to solutions and commitment to offer benefits to those who most often are underserved and under-represented in our communities is unparalleled. She continually leverages her own resources and expertise in the pursuit of equity and justice, and she sees the humanity in people whom society has forgotten or written off.

Importantly, Housing Works partnered with Rhonda to create the CutRedTape4Hereos.org project after she successfully supplied our Covid 19 operations in March 2020. At that time, even hospitals had trouble securing PPE. Our shelter for homeless people with COVID, on the other hand, had a full supply, thanks to Rhonda's connections and tenacity. By 2023, CutRedTape4Hereos.org had distributed 25 million items of PPE and cleaning projects to those in need. This included keeping homeless shelters open by ensuring access to PPE supplies for shelters throughout the five boroughs.

My life's work has been dedicated to the fulfillment of our mission at Housing Works, to end the dual crises of homelessness and AIDS through relentless advocacy, the provision of lifesaving services, and entrepreneurial businesses that sustain our efforts. Through Housing Works, I have witnessed firsthand the need for resources in underserved communities in New York City and the pandemic most certainly spotlighted the triple burdens of poverty, racial and healthcare inequities that plague our world and are manifested daily too often in the lives of countless New Yorkers. We live in a society that has only begun to chip away at these inequities after decades of disinvestment.

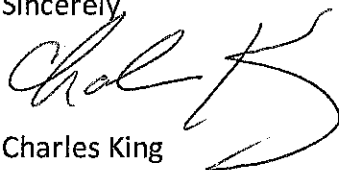
The First Responder Community Warehouses (“The FRC Warehouses”) solution that Rhonda has created would summarily infuse a much-needed quantity of resources directly into the hands of folks who are working tirelessly to serve people in need as well as directly to those who are fighting daily to survive.

The FRC Warehouses is an amazingly innovative solution that will be a connector in our communities. It serves as a platform that links valuable household and safety products, NYC Firefighters and First Responders directly to individuals in our neighborhoods, without the interference of bureaucratic interventions that far too often interrupt progress. It is for these reasons that I am writing this letter of support for The Community Warehouses.

Moreover, my long-standing relationship with Rhonda is one that I treasure and has allowed me to ideate and partner with her based on mutual trust, a sincere passion for putting words into action and delivering tangible results. She has the background, experience and skills required to deliver on her vision to be of service to community organizations. With her Warehouse initiative, I am confident that people in New York City will have access to an accessible, free stockpile of emergency healthful supplies 365 days a year, not just when an emergency occurs.

My support is 100% with Rhonda in pursuing the commitment she has made to source and supply people in need. The Housing Works family stands in solidarity with her in making The First Responder Community Warehouses a full manifestation of the power of individuals who dare to make a difference in the lives of those who strive for equal treatment and fair access.

Sincerely,



Charles King

Chief Executive Officer