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Solid Ground Executive Director Trisha Kauffman Announces Retirement

White Bear Lake, Minn., August 25, 2023 – Solid Ground, an award-winning non-profit organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness for families, announced the retirement of Trisha Kauffman, Executive Director. Trisha has led the organization for 26 years, helping thousands of families break the cycle of homelessness and poverty for the next generation.

“Working for Solid Ground has been such an important part of my life for the past 26 years,” says Trisha. “It’s given me the opportunity to pursue my passion for ensuring that children and families have a safe place to call home. I certainly never thought that I would be at Solid Ground for such a long time, but when you ‘re fortunate enough to ‘find your people,’ you stay.”

Solid Ground (formerly East Metro Women’s Council) was founded in 1987 by a dedicated group of women living in Ramsey and Washington Counties who wanted to help low-income mothers in their community. In 1993 East Metro Place opened its doors close to Century College, providing affordable housing and supportive programs for 20 families. Two years later we started offering scattered site housing and services, and in 1997 Trisha Kauffman joined Solid Ground as its Executive Director. Over the years, Solid Ground continued to grow to meet the housing and service needs of the community, and in 2001, Trisha accepted a Live Your Best Life Award on behalf of the organization from Oprah Winfrey’s Angel Network.

In 2002, the HomeAgain program launched in Washington County, and in 2005 the East Metro Place campus expanded to include 14 new units of permanent supportive housing. Solid Ground was the first family supportive housing program in the Twin Cities to offer Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills training in 2008, and in 2011, Solid Ground was awarded the statewide Nonprofit Award of Excellence in a Small Organization by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits.

Solid Ground’s scattered site housing expanded again in 2013 through the HomeSafe program, and in 2016 Solid Ground’s HomeFront program opened to house long-term homeless military veterans and their families. Solid Ground now also offers housing throughout Ramsey and Washington Counties through Homework Starts with Home, a partnership serving K-12 students

and their families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Today Solid Ground provides four different kinds of housing assistance: Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing, serving over 200 families annually. Services are developed for each family depending on their self-determined needs and goals.

“Through Trisha’s commitment, determination and relationship building she has been able to lead Solid Ground into the award-winning organization it is today while holding true to our mission,” says Lynnette, Becker, Chair of the Solid Ground Board of Directors. “Her work has such a positive impact on the community and will leave a lasting legacy supporting families through housing and supportive services.”

“Deciding to retire from Solid Ground has been an emotional journey for me,” says Trisha, “there is so much going on right now! The organization is in the middle of a capital campaign to renovate the East Metro Place building to add a new front entry and improved program and office spaces. We are expanding our prevention assistance program to help more families avoid eviction. We’re also launching a new permanent supportive housing program, Welcome Home Washington, that will provide permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless families. In a few more years, we’ll open Gladstone Crossing, a new supportive housing development in partnership with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative. That program will provide housing for young parents aged 18-24 and their children, giving us a better chance to break the cycle of homelessness for two generations. As difficult as it is to move on at such an exciting time, I feel so good about the team in place and know that they will continue to do amazing work.”

In partnership with WJ Flynn & Associates, Solid Ground’s Board of Directors has launched a search for their next Executive Director. W. J. Flynn and Associates is an Eagan, Minnesota based search firm that specializes in executive recruitment in the human services, mental health, and physical health provider sectors.

Walt Flynn, the lead consultant for the search, had the following comment: “We are excited to work with the Board on this important search. Ms. Cummins Kaufman’s leadership has positioned Solid Ground well for the ongoing and future success of Solid Ground. In our assessment, the opportunity to follow in her footsteps will make this a very attractive position for potential candidates.”

Trisha will continue her role leading Solid Ground until her successor is named and remains committed to supporting our staff and families through this transition. We look forward to celebrating Trisha’s outstanding legacy next year and will provide more details as that date approaches. Solid Ground’s website will be updated in the coming weeks with additional information (www.solidgroundmn.org) as we move through the process.

In this strategic time of transition, Solid Ground remains committed to our mission continuing our work to prevent and end homelessness for families through housing and supportive services.

ABOUT SOLID GROUND: We are committed to strategically investing in our families, staff, and communities – working to prevent and end homelessness through early intervention by providing a holistic approach to housing and supportive services in Ramsey and Washington Counties. Our vision is that every family has a safe and affordable place to call home, where parents and children thrive in school, at work, and in their community, and can achieve their goals and dreams. In 2022 we served 661 individuals; 398 (60%) of those we serve are children.