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Dear Friend,

Now more than ever, Iowans of all ages and abilities who need direct care/support need paid direct caregivers; paid direct caregivers need Iowa CareGivers; and we need you. The training, leadership, and empowerment programs that we provide have proven to attract people to careers in direct care and keep them in a field that an alarming number of people leave every year. A lack of opportunities to grow professionally, low wages, and lack of respect associated with work that is grossly undervalued by society, make it difficult to attract and keep workers in the field.

These daunting issues have reached a crisis as the demand for care and services by Iowans is on the rise and now exceeds the number of available paid direct caregivers. Most care is provided by family caregivers, neighbors, and friends and the next in line to provide services are the paid caregivers, such as home care aides, certified nursing assistants, and direct support professionals. Together they are the bedrocks of a caring society.

"For 12 years, I worked a second job to make ends meet. It wasn't my passion, but a job that brought in revenue to pay bills, so I could do, full-time, the job I really loved ... direct care." -Fran Mancl, Certified Nursing Assistant

"My mother had 50 different home care aides in a year's time before she died making it very difficult to ensure she received good consistent care." Michael Wolnerman, Family Caregiver, Pharmacist, and Community Activist.

"When a home care aide doesn't show up...I don't get out of bed," Michelle Meadors Omaha, Iowan who relies on paid caregivers after being left quadriplegic following a car accident.

"We have told our clients and their family caregivers that they better have a Plan B because we may or may not be able to send someone to assist them", A Former Home Care Provider.

"When employees have to leave their jobs or take time off to care for a loved one because workers aren't there to assist...that has a significant impact on the business community and the economy in general", Mary Bontrager, EVP, Talent Development for the Greater Des Moines Partnership.

These personal stories and many more like them...some good and some not so good...are what renew our passion. We hope these stories also ignite your passion and that you will find our work worthy of a financial contribution. Your support is vital to our being able to continue to do all we can to ensure that every Iowan receives the best care and support possible when and where they need it. They need us.

Maribel

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