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Community Life Collaborative
16349 Chillicothe Road
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RE: Empowering Transformation: A Year of Collaborative Environmental Stewardship with Community Life Collaborative

Dear Community Life Collaborative,

As the echoes of the past industrious era still linger in Summit County's post-industrial city of Akron, a remarkable journey towards environmental and social justice has been ignited, and at the heart of this transformation stands the Community Life Collaborative (CLC). Our partnership with CLC through the Living Water Association (LWA) has been nothing short of inspiring, propelling us toward meaningful conversations, profound actions, and a shared commitment to stewardship.

CLC's mission to amplify voices and foster transformational action aligns seamlessly with Living Water Association's dedication to congregational ministry and community engagement. This synergy was profoundly manifested through our collaborative initiatives, breathing life into the Summit County landscape and our local communities.

The Our Nature Series, a remarkable program stemming from our CLC/LWA partnership, brought together indigenous wisdom and modern environmental concerns. The Waterwalk led by indigenous activist Sharon Day along the Little Cuyahoga River was a poignant reminder of the deep connection between people and the land. Similarly, the Low Power, Happy Hour conversation about Akron and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, in partnership with the Conservancy for CVNP, was a celebration of the city's green spaces and their potential for positive change.

The pinnacle of our collaboration was seen in the partnership with the Summit of Sustainability Alliance (SoSA). CLC's dedicated efforts, in tandem with SoSA, materialized in a substantial \$150K investment toward planting native plants in our community. This significant contribution will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the environmental health and beauty of Summit County. The fact that these native plants also found their home in our beloved Elizabeth Park, nestled within the Cascade Valley Neighborhood, magnifies the meaningfulness of this gesture.

Moreover, the synergy extended beyond just the physical environment. The partnership between CLC, Heartland Conference UCC, and Living Water Association culminated in

hosting the Sacred Quilt Ally Project traveling exhibit. This thought-provoking initiative, with its powerful display of George Floyd's last words through meticulously crafted quilts, boldly underscored the need for racial justice. By challenging perceptions and sparking conversations, this exhibit embodied the essence of CLC's mission and our shared commitment to social equity.

In conclusion, our collaboration with Community Life Collaborative has been an enriching and transformative journey. Their unwavering dedication to igniting change through meaningful dialogues and impactful actions has elevated our community's awareness and involvement in environmental and social justice causes. As we reflect on the strides we've made together this year, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to CLC for being a beacon of hope, inspiration, and catalyst for the betterment of all of Northeast Ohio—especially Summit County, Akron, and my own Cascade Valley Neighborhood. Here's to a future of continued partnership and positive change.

With deepest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Michael Anthony Howard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rev." being more prominent.

Rev. Michael Anthony Howard
Minister of Faith in Action
Living Water Association
Heartland Conference
United Church of Christ