

Happy Hanukkah,

As we enter the holiday season, it is timely to reflect on 2020. What a year! For Caron, it was a year that began with incredible promise as the Florida Medical Center surpassed its fundraising goal of \$17.5M so that construction on the new 98,000 sq. ft. Keele Center could begin.

The new strategic plan, which provided much more access to Caron with specialized insurance contracts with Independence Blue Cross, Highmark, the National Blues, and Aetna was extremely successful. And, plans were underway to continue to grow Caron's Signature Programs with the expansion of the Grandview Program in Pennsylvania. Then, came COVID-19, which had a dramatic negative impact on census, the cancellation of The Keele Center groundbreaking in April, and the postponement of all of Caron's spring events. The new focus was now on securing PPE and COVID-19 testing kits, developing protocols to keep staff and patients safe, and dealing with the wide-ranging financial challenges that resulted from this world-wide pandemic.

The response by Caron's Trustees, Advisory Boards, Leadership Team, staff, alumni and donors with philanthropic support has made it possible to keep Caron's staff and patients safe, so Caron would not have to compromise the world-class care it provides on a daily basis, would not have to compromise its strategic initiatives, and it would not compromise its financial strength. The response was so impressive that by the end of August, I felt comfortable moving forward with my plans to step down as President and CEO of Caron in July of 2021, after 26 years of service. Now I am looking forward to the Board's announcement of my successor in the near future.

So how impressive was the collective response at Caron? This fall, Caron's four virtual fundraising galas provided over \$3.5M in philanthropy to the Scholarship Fund; the Carol E. Ware Center for Executive Women, another Caron Signature Program opened in a new facility in September. The John R. Post Executive Center was completed in November, and after many COVID-19 related delays, The Keele Center construction began in November with \$25M having now been raised on the way to the eventual goal of \$30M. All of Caron's programs are returning to capacity census – a real blessing, as we know the need for Substance Use Treatment Disorder services during this pandemic has been at an all-time high.

As we enter the second half of our fiscal year and the final months of my Presidency at Caron, I can't help but reflect on what makes Caron so unique from other non-profits and other treatment centers. Recently a trustee at an awards ceremony shared a touching part of her story and for me, it captured so perfectly the magic that we find on Magic Mountain. That magic is in the people. The people who everyday find teachable moments to help our patients and families understand this journey called recovery.

(video clip of Carol Ware)

What a powerful example of the impact one person's act of kindness and compassion can have on an individual's recovery. So as we close out 2020, I challenge you to remember a moment this past year that gave you hope and made you smile. I look forward to the coming months to share with you exciting news about research, the announcement of Caron's next President, and to – in person – be able to say thank you for being a part of the Caron mission of "Recovery for Life". Until then, be safe, know you are appreciated, and be kind to yourself. Happy Holidays from Magic Mountain!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug", written over a horizontal line.

Doug