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PRESS RELEASE

**KEARNEY CENTER ANNOUNCES AUGMENTED EFFORTS FOR TALLAHASSEE'S
MORE VULNERABLE CITIZENS**

The Kearney Center, which provides emergency shelter to the homeless, today announces new initiatives to continue their efforts to provide for the safety and welfare of Tallahassee residents experiencing homelessness and those on the verge of homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis.

Beginning today, The Kearney Center will no longer accept new clients directly, but will partner with 2-1-1 Big Bend to provide expert case management for individuals and families with housing issues. Additionally, in order to better meet CDC recommended guidelines to have those in shelters spaced at least 6-feet apart, The Kearney Center will be moving over 100 clients to individual apartments and hotel rooms.

The Kearney Center continues to use precautions including requiring clients to use antiseptic cleansers and on-going screenings for COVID-19 symptoms.

Rick Kearney, founder of the Center shared, "Our clients are part of our family. Many of our clients are elderly, many have health issues, and all of them deserve the best this community can offer. We especially thank Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, Second Harvest of the Big Bend, Elder Care Services and ALSCO Inc. for helping us to plan continuation of health, food and linens as we provide our services at varied locations."

Regarding the partnership to provide ongoing emotional and emergency support, Randy Nicklaus, long-time director of 2-1-1 Big Bend shared, "At 2-1-1 we deal daily with personal life crises. Our hotline is open 24/7 to provide information, referrals and counseling."

In order to provide expanded emergency services, The Kearney Center, also announces **The Kearney Center COVID-19 Fund**. Kearney Center board member, Glenda Thornton, will serve as chair of this effort and underscored, "We need the community support now more than ever. Please give so that we can continue to keep everyone in a safe place. We estimate unanticipated costs of over \$100,000 monthly."

Pastor Nicholas Quinto shared, "I urge everyone to look for ways to love their neighbor right now and the people at The Kearney Center are some of our most vulnerable community members."

Gifts may be made online at www.kearneycenter.org/donate or by calling Holly Bernardo at 615-525-1903.

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The Kearney Center is a 24-hour inclusive emergency service center that provides first response to immediate needs of individuals and families until suitable permanent housing can be arranged. The Kearney Center is one entity under the nonprofit Connecting Everyone with Second Chances (CESC, Inc.), which serves clients who come from eight counties across the Big Bend. The center provides overnight shelter administering the most basic needs, such as warm showers, hot meals and clean clothes. They also provide daytime services connecting clients with case management, housing programs and a variety of social service agencies. For more information please visit kearneycenter.org.