



Covenant House
New Jersey

Dear [First name],

I first want to wish you and your family a blessed Christmas. I pray that the pandemic has not caused you heartache and sadness this past year, and you find the joy the Christmas message promises us all. Let us all pray that we are moving past this difficult time.

It has been a challenging year for us here at Covenant House NJ. COVID has hit us hard. 40 kids have tested positive, and we have had to rearrange offices and space to provide safe quarantine space. 38 staff members have tested positive, putting a real strain on giving adequate coverage. Sadly, two of our young alumni died of COVID.

Making the right decisions has been difficult. I wish I were more like one of the Wise Men in the Christmas story, but I think I humbly have to say I am more like the shepherd or the Innkeeper. The Shepherd, in trying to stay faithful and keep watch over the flock and keep them safe. I have at times been fearful of being able to continue to provide care for our young people. Do I need to suspend intake so we can manage the sick kids we have with less staff? That sounds more like the Innkeeper.

But we know the Christmas message is a message of Faith and a promise. "Fear not!" said the Angel. And I see that promise every day. The staff has always shown up for work, always. So many of our young people are achieving incredible milestones. Clay got a job at Amazon. Joey saved enough money to buy a car. Karli has agreed to go to deal with her addiction finally. And Margarete will be going to college in January.

I tell my staff that we know fear because we see it each day in the eyes of the young people who come to our doors. We know what it is not to know what the future will bring and, "Will I make it?" We know the fear of the unknown. We know first hand, that in time, in God's time, our kids leave the shadows of fear and stand in the knowledge of their goodness... and we know in the marrow of our being that love wins and we have the extraordinary privilege of bringing that peace, hope, and love to our young people. **Lucky us and JOY TO THE WORLD!**

The Christmas story demands something of us all. To fear not and believe that there is great joy as we show kindness, compassion, and belief in a loving God and benevolent universe. That's what I tell my staff. Hopefully, I can rest this Christmas knowing I have a little of the Wise Men too.

Thank you for your gift to our kids. I pray you and those you love enjoy a blessed holiday season.

Peace,



Jim White
Executive Director
Covenant House New Jersey

P.S.: Pray for those who have left our care, that they may live in hope and love they found at Covenant House. Would you please say a special prayer for kids on the streets who have yet to find us? Keep them safe until they make their way to our home. ***Your gift to them ensures that our lights stay on and our doors remain open, so we will be here when they come.***

Merry Christmas

