

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and honoring Barbara Salapek on her retirement after 25 years as a full-time volunteer at the St. Francis Inn, a soup kitchen and shelter located in the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Barbara Salapek was born in 1950 in the town of Warren, PA. After high school and college, Barbara joined the Blair Company, a women's mail order clothing company where she worked as a customer service representative for almost 20 years, making her home in Jamestown, NY; and

WHEREAS, While working at Blair, Barbara became interested in Franciscan spirituality. In 1991, feeling called to re-orient her life, Barbara pursued a suggestion to come to Philadelphia to join the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry, a lay volunteer program, as a full-time volunteer at St. Francis Inn; and

WHEREAS, Working with the most needy and marginalized of Philadelphia was compelling to Barbara and in 1993 she joined the team of Franciscan friars, Franciscan sisters and lay people who run St. Francis Inn. Barbara has been a team member ever since and Philadelphia has become her new home; and

WHEREAS, St. Francis Inn, located at 2441 Kensington Avenue, has served the population of Kensington and its surrounding neighborhoods seven days a week since December 1979. The Inn provides 10 meals a week to 300-450 people a meal and regularly distributes diapers, toiletries and other necessities during the meals; and

WHEREAS, The Franciscans also run a thrift store on Girard Avenue and women's day center on Kensington Avenue near Somerset Street, as well as offering various social services. The Inn provides a mail address service to well over 300 people so that they can receive needed benefits. In winter, the Franciscans distribute blankets, hats, gloves and other necessities as well. St. Francis Inn operates entirely on private donations; and

WHEREAS, Barbara has been an integral part of the St. Francis Inn for the past 25 years. A tireless worker in every one of the many roles that the staff has taken on, she has taken special interest in creating and maintaining a beautiful garden on the grounds of the Inn, which provides a restful haven for the guests during meals. The garden is a place for patrons to socialize and forget the challenges of their lives for a few moments; and

WHEREAS, Barbara has also forged long-term bonds with numerous guests, families in need and generations of volunteers from the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry, who see her blend of energy, compassion and wisdom as a source of hope and help; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after his election, Pope Francis said, "He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. *Mt* 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!" For 25 years, Barbara Salapek has lived this message. We should all strive to serve our brothers and sisters as she has; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby recognize and honor Barbara Salapek on her retirement after 25 years as a full-time volunteer at the St. Francis Inn.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Barbara Salapek as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.