Legislation Text

File #: 171023, **Version:** 0

Recognizing and honoring The Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center for 15 years of service to members of the Philadelphia Community.

WHEREAS, On June 10, 2002, the Sisters of Saint Joseph became the proud owners of 724-728 East Allegheny Avenue in the Kensington Area of Philadelphia. What was a former funeral home and doctor's office would be transformed into the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center. After months of demolishing the old building and creating a welcoming space, a group of incredible volunteers and friends from Albania, Guatemala, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic worked tirelessly to clean and refurbish the buildings; and

WHEREAS, In March of 2003 the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center officially opened its doors under the leadership of Sister Eileen Marnien SSJ, the Director at the time, and Sisters Marian Behrle SSJ, Marie Lewis SSJ, Pat Madden SSJ and Peg Fleming SSJ who all joined together to offer classes and services for the people who needed assistance. The primary focus of the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center was to focus on the needs of newcomers to our country, community and neighborhood. The Welcome Center provides educational, immigration and outreach services; and

WHEREAS, For the past 15 years, the Sisters have been offering outstanding services for immigrants in our community. The Welcome Center offers ESL classes, citizenship preparation classes as well as classes to improve computer skills. Social services are offered as well, for those who need help in navigating the City's health and education systems. The Sisters also accompany their "new friends" to clinics, banks, and stores to help them to get acclimated to their new surroundings. They strive to do whatever they can do to meet the needs of immigrants as they begin their new lives in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The present staff of the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center include Sister Kathy McShane SSJ (Director), Sister Marian Behrle SSJ, Nancy Bordewick, Maureen Burke, Sister Pat Madden SSJ, Tasha Mercer, Lizam Morales, Rosa Murcia Garcia, Miguel Ramos, and Sister Connie Trainor SSJ. As of April 2016, with exceptional efforts from the Sisters and all of those involved, over 250 students have become naturalized American Citizens with the assistance of the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes, congratulates, honors and celebrates the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center for their commitment to helping those in need in our community for the last 15 years. We extend the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body and thank you for your Organization's mission to better the lives of our immigrant communities throughout the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Sisters of Saint Joseph Welcome Center as evidence of the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.