

# 2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 631

*Commending Lisa Whetzel.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, May 13, 2024

WHEREAS, in 2024, Lisa Whetzel retires as the executive director of Britepaths, Inc., an award-winning nonprofit organization that provides safety net services and other programs to help Northern Virginia residents in need achieve financial stability and self-sufficiency, after nearly two decades of exceptional service; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of James Madison University, Lisa Whetzel joined the staff of Britepaths in 2005 when it was still known as Our Daily Bread; in her original role, she developed, planned, and launched the Financial Mentoring Program and framework for current Financial Empowerment services; and

WHEREAS, Lisa Whetzel was named as the executive director of Our Daily Bread in 2007 and quickly expanded program offerings to address Fairfax communities' most pressing needs; she also increased collaborative efforts with community partners to better support clients; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of Our Daily Bread's growing mission, Lisa Whetzel oversaw the adoption of the name Britepaths in 2016, which increased staff morale and helped bring a new focus and stability to the organization; she initiated new marketing strategies to include a uniform brand on the website, social media, and marketing collateral with assistance from professional volunteers; and

WHEREAS, Lisa Whetzel expanded Britepaths from Fairfax County to all of Northern Virginia and secured grant funding to launch and operate the Financial Empowerment Center at South County, guiding 2,000 clients toward financial stability; she guided staff to maintain the organization's culture and integrity at the off-site location to exceed grant outcomes; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Lisa Whetzel maintained an 80 percent staff retention rate while increasing program capacity to ensure that clients continued to receive support in their time of greatest need; she also tripled the organization's operating budget to an all-time high of \$7 million during that time, maintaining only a modest overhead rate to ensure maximum investment in services; and

WHEREAS, during her 17-year tenure as executive director, Lisa Whetzel secured funding for and implemented several pilot programs, with most becoming sustainable and impactful programs that surpassed outcomes; she assured the financial integrity of the organization through compliance with regulatory entities and provided transparency for constituents; and

WHEREAS, Lisa Whetzel also served as the face of the organization and as spokesperson for its programs, representing Britepaths in broad-reaching community advocacy efforts; in addition, she provided her leadership and expertise to other local commissions, committees, and task forces that have enhanced the quality of life in the region; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades, Lisa Whetzel has received the Spirited Service Award from *Smart CEO* magazine and has accepted the Human Rights Award from the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission and the Non-profit of the Year recognition from the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce on behalf of Our Daily Bread and Britepaths; and

WHEREAS, throughout her career, Lisa Whetzel has enjoyed the love and support of her husband, Jay, and her children, Ben, Sam, and Anna; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Lisa Whetzel hereby be commended on the occasion of her retirement as executive director of Britepaths, Inc.; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Lisa Whetzel as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her accomplishments as a champion for vulnerable members of the Northern Virginia community.

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