

Dear DHS Employees,

I will be stepping down from the position of Executive Director, Department of Human Services on July 1. It has been a wonderful opportunity to serve the people of Utah in this position during the past five years, where I learned much about the depth and breadth of humanitarianism in our State. I was privileged to work with the best employees in State government, most of who could be working elsewhere for more money, but choose to serve those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged instead. I am extremely proud of the work being done in Utah's Department of Human Services.

The job of Executive Director has a natural arc to it. It is important to respect that arc and the political nature of it. At present, the Department is functioning at a very high level of excellence. We have accomplished efficiencies that give taxpayers a solid value for their money. With both the top notch DHS management team and the support of the Governor and the Legislature, we have achieved many important goals such as exiting the David C. child protection lawsuit, attacking the meth epidemic with greater public awareness and treatment resources, restoring mental health treatment resources, planning for the aging population boom, improving services to adolescent females, and making progress on the disabilities waiting list with creative interventions.

There is always more work to be done and more challenges remain. I have the utmost confidence that the DHS team is up to the challenge. By its nature, this Department engenders controversy by balancing the interests of families, children, neighborhoods, and those in need. We help people in the most sad and dire of circumstances. It is the very difficulty of the work that makes it intriguing. The Executive Director position is designed to be time limited to insure that leadership is always fresh and can endure the criticism and burden of seeing so many fellow Utahns who are suffering. I am grateful to leave when there is such a strong foundation under the Department and so many who assist with valuable partnerships. I am especially appreciative of Utah's community organizations and volunteers. We have some of the strongest relationships ever with tribal and ethnic leaders.

I am fully supportive of Palmer DePaulis as he becomes Executive Director of DHS. He brings a wonderful community sensibility to the position and plenty of management fundamentals. Palmer is an example of the best leadership in State government.

I leave as I began, with great faith in the people who do the work of Human Services. Their commitment transcends any particular Executive Director, and it is what enables me to leave what is surely the most compelling and rewarding position in the Governor's Cabinet.

Sincerely, Lisa-Michele Church