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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 20, 2020

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## NON-PROFIT LEADER CALLS FOR FOCUS ON HUMAN SERVICES NON-PROFITS IN WAKE OF 2019-NCOV, OR NOVEL CORONAVIRUS 2019

### Economic Downturn Promises Devastating Impacts on Seton Youth Shelters' Life Saving Services

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**Virginia Beach, VA** — The economic impact of 2019-nCoV, or novel coronavirus 2019, could plunge Seton Youth Shelters into an unprecedented financial crisis threatening its ability to continue operations. Seton Youth Shelters has been an indispensable resource for the Virginia community—without pause—since 1985. “Seton made a promise in 1985 to provide shelter, counseling and support to our region and nation’s most vulnerable runaway, homeless, and more recently and frequently, trafficked youth. That promise includes a commitment to never charge a youth or their family for the lifesaving and critical shelter, outreach and mentoring services which we provide 24 hours a day, 365 days a year,” Seton Youth Shelters’ Executive Director, Jennifer Sieracki, explains. “I’m not hearing human services non-profits like ours in the local or national conversation about the looming crisis resulting from the coronavirus. There are thousands of non-profits across the country, which provide emergency and life-changing services for children and adults, and this crisis may well spell disaster for their ability to continue operating. We need to get this subject on the table. Small business loans are not the solution for lost donations. Financial assistance through grants must be an option.”

Seton Youth Shelters raises nearly \$1.3 million from the community each year through grants, donations and special events. This year, Seton’s largest event, which coincides with the live running of the Kentucky Derby on May 2, 2020, will be postponed until September—the next fiscal year—due to 2019-nCoV, creating an operating revenue deficit in the tens of thousands of dollars over the next two months. A major retail donor must drastically limit operations, and Seton will not receive monthly donations in the five figures. This threatens

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Seton Youth Shelters' ability to provide the most vulnerable in Hampton Roads with a safety net. Sieracki continues, "The need for our services will only increase over the next few months, as we are a microcosm of our community, in both achievements and in adversity. Right now, our community is in a state of crisis. 2019-nCoV is creating stress and hardships on youth and their families, and this stress and hardship continue to bring those youth onto the streets and into our shelters and related programs. Without us, these children will have nowhere to turn—nowhere to go—but onto the streets and into the hands of predators. For their safety, our doors must remain open." Sieracki and Seton's Board of Directors have contacted local and regional lawmakers, and Virginia Governor Northam, to ask for inclusion of human services non-profits in their emergency assistance planning.

Seton Youth Shelters is the region's only organization devoted exclusively to providing shelter, street outreach and mentoring services to youth 9 up to 18. Each year hundreds of boys and girls, ages 9 up to 18, arrive at our two Virginia Beach residential shelters—often in the middle of the night, sometimes with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Our professional staff welcomes them with food, shelter, clothing, school supplies and the counseling and support necessary for them to either return to their families or continues on to another safe, home environment. Seton's Outreach Program, visits area schools, events, and neighborhoods, reaching out to thousands of youth, offering crisis intervention, counseling, and shelter options—a lifeline for this vulnerable population. Our Mentoring Children of Prisoners program gives children of incarcerated parents the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to reach their full potential.

To learn more about what Seton is doing during this time of crisis, visit [setonyouthshelters.org/covid19](https://setonyouthshelters.org/covid19) or our Facebook page at [facebook.com/setonyouthshelters](https://facebook.com/setonyouthshelters). For information about how to help, contact Jennifer Sieracki at 757.963.5795 x 105 or email [jsieracki@setonyouthshelters.org](mailto:jsieracki@setonyouthshelters.org).

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