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Dear Advocate,

Empowerment Resource Center is proud to announce our inaugural *"ERC Stride"* 5K event, on October 11, 2025, at the stunning Westside Park. This event isn't just a race—it's a movement. Coinciding with World Mental Health Awareness Day, we are rallying our community to shine a light on the mental health challenges faced by individuals and families across Atlanta. Together, we will raise awareness, break down barriers, and provide critical support to those in need.

Georgia ranks among the lowest in the nation for mental health care access, a statistic that demands immediate action. Forbes reports that 34.4% of adults with mental illness in our state cite cost as the primary barrier to care—the highest rate in the country. Additionally, 66.6% of Georgia's youth with depression do not receive the mental health services they desperately need, ranking us seventh highest nationally. Alarming, 17.4% of adults with mental illness in Georgia are uninsured, further limiting their access to vital resources. The high costs of therapy, medication, and treatment only deepen these disparities.

But together, we can change this narrative, negative perceptions and stigma surrounding mental health continue to discourage individuals from seeking help. The *ERC Stride* 5K aims to unite communities and businesses to dismantle these structural and cultural barriers. Our mission is clear: to provide accessible, affordable mental health services to those in need.

Our fundraising goal for this transformative event is *\$100,000*. Every dollar raised will directly fund individualized therapy sessions for low-income and underinsured individuals diagnosed with mental health disorders. By supporting this cause, you are not just donating—you are making a tangible, life-changing impact.

We invite you to stand with us. Your sponsorship will not only propel our mission forward but will also position your organization as a champion of mental health in our community. We've crafted a sponsorship package for your review, offering various levels of engagement and recognition. Of course, contributions of any amount are deeply appreciated.

This year's theme, *"Clear Thoughts, Clear Mind, Clear Path: Clarity in Every Stride,"* embodies the journey we hope to inspire in every participant. Our supporters include a diverse audience of residents, business leaders, benefactors, and community advocates—all coming together to champion mental health awareness.

As a valued sponsor, your contribution will be formally recognized on event day, and we encourage you to join us in the race or cheer on participants from the sidelines. Your presence will amplify the spirit of unity and support that this event represents.

United, we can create a path to clarity and healing for countless individuals.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and support.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jacqueline Brown".

Jacqueline Brown, Chief Executive Officer
Empowerment Resource Center