



**Interfaith
Alliance on
Poverty**

MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER

“On A Mission to Alleviate Poverty in the Portland Region

“We have a calling to empower every brother and sister in our community facing hardship and hopelessness. We walk together as an alliance of interfaith communities because we believe doing things together is better than doing them alone. We lead with our hearts and open our minds to understand the causes of poverty and the challenges of escaping it. We work hand-in-hand with families living in poverty by encouraging and supporting them as they move to stability. We boldly advocate for systemic change to help eliminate the root causes of poverty. We know the road is long but we believe as Martin Luther King, Jr. did when he said, “faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.” **Tom Hering**

Website: allianceonpoverty.org

Interfaith Alliance on Poverty Member Congregations & Partners

include: Westminster Presbyterian, Fremont United Methodist, Congregation Beth Israel, Madeleine Catholic Parish, First Unitarian, Wy’East First Unitarian, St. Andrews Catholic Parish, Rose City Park Presbyterian, Augustana Lutheran, Genesis Community Fellowship, Ainsworth United Church of Christ, Grace Memorial Episcopal, and Central Lutheran working with St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish and Community Partners, including Ecumenical Ministries Of Oregon, League of Women Voters of Portland, Living Cully, Multnomah County Library, Northeast Coalition of Neighbors, Oak Leaf Mobile Home Park, Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices, Oregon Housing Alliance, Portland Central Nazarene Church/Agape Village, St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, Home for Everyone, Transition Projects, and the Muslim Education Trust.

Interfaith Alliance on Poverty

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Interfaith Alliance Co-Chairs: Carol Turner, carol@carolturner.com; David Groff, dgroff45@yahoo.com

Advocacy Action Team: Tom Hering, tehering@gmail.com; Sarah Carolus, scarolus3@gmail.com

Transition to Stability Action Team: Dave Albertine davea51@gmail.com.; Rae Richen, rrichen@hevanet.com

Poverty Awareness/Communication Action Team: Holly Schmidt, schmidt.holly@gmail.com; Claudia Roberts, clarobb@juno.com

Newsletter: Bonnie Gregg, Bonniejgregg@msn.com - Comments are appreciated. Newsletter articles regarding issues of poverty (preferably 400 words or less) are welcomed for consideration. Deadline for submission is the 20th of the month.

Website: Tom Hering, tehering@gmail.com

“What You Need to Know About Oregon’s Tax and Budget System”

Tax information will be explained by Juan Carlos Ordóñez, Communication Director with the Oregon Coalition of Public Policy, at the 1st Thursday March 7th meeting held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 NE Hancock, from 12:00-2:00 PM.



The session will include an overview of where the money comes from and where it goes, especially in terms of the General Fund dollars as related to human services and affordable housing.

Juan Carlos manages the Oregon Coalition Center’s communication strategies and media relations, collaborates with coalition partners, and is a key member of the Center’s policy team. He’s a graduate of Harvard Law School, a former litigator, and former freelance writer. An immigrant from Guatemala, he’s a father of two kids attending Portland Public Schools.

CENTRAL CITY CONCERN REPORTS ON PORTLAND POVERTY



Rabbi Joseph welcomed the 1st Thursday meeting of the Northeast Interfaith Alliance on Poverty to Congregation Beth Israel, on February 7, 2019 meeting -- *with song and an invitation to welcome God into the "sacred space within us" -- so that our gathering may become a "Living Sanctuary" in which to share and work together.*



Dr. Eowyn Rieke, Gary Cobb, Mercedes Elizalde

Sally Rosenfeld introduced Central City Concern guest speakers: **Dr. Eowyn Rieke, MD, MPH**, Associate Medical Director of Primary Care, Blackburn Center; **Gary Cobb**, Community

Outreach Coordinator; and **Mercedes Elizalde**, Public Policy Director.

Gary Cobb, Central City Concern Community Outreach Coordinator advised that following a career in the Coast Guard, he had spent almost 20 years "on the streets, homeless, addicted, unemployable, without support systems, and finding it difficult to navigate."

When he found his way to Central City Concern in November 2001, he found "sanctuary" within the community. They helped him to access the Oregon Health Plan, detox, and experience the "real magic" of conversion into a healthy, capable, employable individual. He has been "clean and sober" for 17 years. He was also able to "clean up the wreckage" of his family relationships. He is now a home owner and has been employed by Central City Concern for 17 years. Gary.cobb@ccconcern.org

Dr Rieke stated "The problem is worse than most people realize." The 2017 Point in Time Reports indicated that 4,177 Portlanders are experiencing homelessness, including 1,668 unsheltered, and that the 2018 ECO Northwest Report reveals that "tens of thousands" of people are 1 crisis or major life event away from homelessness.

Both Individual and Structural Factors play a role affecting poverty: Between 1970-2000, 3 million low income housing units have been lost, and 2 million "Single Room Occupancy" (SRO) units are no longer available. (Portland has experienced a 70% loss in SRO's.) At the same time, mental health institutions were closed, pushing people out into the streets, without resources, and there were significant cuts to mental health funding, which has been reduced from \$261,000 million to \$31,000 million.

Dr. Rieke concluded, “To truly impact homelessness, **we need federal programs**, but local programs can also help by providing comprehensive solutions that include health services, employment support, and housing.”
Eowyn.Rieke@ccconcern.org.

Mercedes Elizalde, Public Policy Director, reported on Central Concern’s policies regarding affordable housing, immigration, and health delivery systems.

She indicated there is a particular need for shelters to support the mentally ill. In addition, federal funds are needed to increase the availability of housing vouchers. Right now the priority is for families, which does not reflect the actual need. Although 500 families are in need, 7,000 individuals lack housing.
Mercedes.Elizalde@ccconcern.org.



Housing Is Health

In the fall of 2016, six health organizations from the Portland area announced the “Health is Housing” initiative, which provides major funding to Central City Concern (CCC) for a new clinic and 379 units of urgently needed new housing. Housing is Health partners include Adventist Hospital, Portland; CareOregon; Kaiser Permanente Northwest; Legacy Health;

Oregon Health Sciences University; and Providence Health & Services – Oregon.

These projects are a reflection of Central City Concern’s evidence-based approach to ending homelessness; housing and health care go hand-in-hand. You can’t get well if you’re not housed and you can’t stay housed if you’re not well.

www.centralcityconcern.org/housingishealth



Blackburn Center

To answer increasing needs in the Eastside community, the Blackburn Center is being constructed at 25 NE 122nd Ave. It is a six-story structure that combines a health care clinic with housing.

The facility will extend Central City Concern’s current services to give more people access to primary care, recovery and mental health services, housing, and employment assistance. The building is set to open in summer 2019.

<https://www.centralcityconcern.org/housingishealth/blackburn>

OAK LEAF MOBILE HOME RENOVATIONS MOVING FORWARD



Photos by Claudia Roberts

Dave Albertine, Co-Chair of the Transition to Stability Action Team, reports that while improvements were made to the Oak Leaf Park Mobile Home Park, residents have been living in temporary accommodations. Most renovations are now completed, but because there are 7 septic tanks in need of repair, residents will not be allowed to return until that work has been accomplished.

Interfaith Alliance members assisted residents in moving to their temporary accommodations and have stayed in contact with them while they wait for the renovations to be completed. They will also be on hand to help them move back and welcome them home. If you would like to assist in these efforts, contact Dave Albertine, davea51@gmail.com

HELP NEEDED FOR WALNUT PARK NE PORTLAND WARMING SHELTER



(Multnomah County)

The Walnut Park Shelter, at 5329 NE Martin Luther King Blvd., was opened in November 2018. It provides nighttime accommodations for up to 80 people, with special priority for veterans, people 55 and older, those with disabilities, and people already experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the neighborhood. The shelter is open daily at 5 p.m. and closes at 7:30 a.m. It will close in April.

In addition to a place to sleep, guests are provided with a hot cup of soup. **To supplement the soup, volunteers are invited to prepare and bring meals to the shelter. Training in procedures required is offered by Transition Projects.** To volunteer, either as an individual or with a group, please contact Emily Coleman, Volunteer Coordinator with Transition Projects, emily.coleman@tprojects.org or 503.488.7745.

The Interfaith Alliance has sponsored two training sessions. If you would like more information on how to volunteer within the Interfaith Alliance, contact Leslye Johnson, lesgeooj@comcast.net

PORTLAND RENTS ON THE RISE

by Bonnie Gregg

As of January 2019, average rent for an apartment in Portland, OR is **\$1,635** which is a 3.55% increase from last year when the average rent was \$1,577.

One bedroom apartments in Portland rent for **\$1,511** a month on average (a 2.32% increase from last year) and **two bedroom** apartments rent on average **\$1,866** (a 4.34% increase from last year).

Oregon minimum wage workers earn \$10.75 /hour which translates into \$430 a week, for 40 hours work, or **\$1,863 a month.**

<https://www.minimum-wage.org/oregon>

In other words, unless you make at least **\$21.25 per hour and work 40 hours per week**, you cannot afford a 1-bedroom apartment in Portland.

So,what are low-incomed workers to do?

HOME FORWARD may be the answer – They tell us, “As the largest provider of affordable housing in Oregon, Home Forward offers a variety of housing options to low-income individuals and families: more than **6,000 apartments to rent, including approximately 1,980 units of public housing, and approximately 9,390 Section 8 rent assistance vouchers.** Our housing is available to individuals, families, people with disabilities or special needs and seniors who meet each program's income guidelines. Home Forward is a public corporation serving all of Multnomah County, including the cities of Gresham, Fairview, Portland, and Troutdale, and other East County communities.

“Home Forward partners with more than 100 community agencies in the public, nonprofit and private sectors. The services provided by our community partners include financial services, education, substance abuse and youth programs, job training and life skills.

“**Apartment Communities** - Home Forward maintains a diverse portfolio of apartment communities located throughout Multnomah County that are dedicated to low-income residents. These homes range in size from single rooms to five-bedroom townhouses, and have rent amounts that are well below market rates. Most of these properties are individually operated by independent management companies that are overseen by Home Forward.

“Some of our apartments are public housing, which is directly subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and managed by Home Forward. Rent amounts in public housing are set between 28.5% and 31% percent of the household's monthly income. To find out more about our housing options, [click here](#).

“**Rent Assistance** - Home Forward's Section 8 rent assistance program enables low-income residents to rent from any qualified private landlord who accepts rent assistance vouchers. Participants negotiate their own lease, and Home Forward pays a portion of their monthly rent, based on their income and the size of the household. For more information on Section 8 vouchers, [click here](#).

“Home Forward also coordinates other types of rent assistance in collaboration with our partner agencies, including [short-term rent assistance](#), help for [renters with disabilities](#), and help for [military veterans](#).

“Services -- Home Forward offers more than just shelter. We know that difficulties resulting from low income, disability or special needs are not limited to securing affordable housing. “Some residents are eager to move toward economic independence from public assistance; others are interested in training for and obtaining employment; still others need help with day-to-day activities. Our residents seek education, independence and support in order to function as productive members of society. Home Forward's services are designed to help residents meet their goals. For information contact: <http://www.homeforward.org/home-forward/overview-of-programs>”

BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING 02/07/19 – NOTES By Sarah Carolus

The Committee was welcomed and the roll was called. Jo Ann Hardesty will be appointing the new committee member to replace Jes Larson, who is now working on the Metro Bond Measure.

Housing Bond Project Updates

1. The Ellington Application letters notifying residents of availability of 52 project-based vouchers were sent in January. 90 applications were received, although some may not qualify. The applicants were placed on a waiting list by lottery, with a preference for households at 0-30% AMI. The eligibility process will be performed by HUD. Home Forward has hired a Resident Service Coordinator and will be contracting for a Youth Program Coordinator to offer activities to the approximately 260 children living at the property. Statistics: 251 family-sized units, 1 unit being converted to a community space, 80 0-30% AMI units, 20 supportive housing units and 52 project-based vouchers.

2. 30th and Powell Holst Architecture is currently conducting a feasibility analysis. Home Forward is preparing an RFP. Statistics Projection: 180 total units, 75 family-sized units, 72 0-30% AMI units, 30 supportive housing units and 50 project-base vouchers.

3. 105 East Burnside 100% occupied in January. Statistics: 51 total units, 24 family-sized units, 16 0-30% AMI units, 9 supportive housing units and 16 project-based vouchers.

4. Westwind Apartments Health and safety related maintenance work continues. A relocation consultant, OPC, was hired the end of January. 23 of the 50 tenants have been interviewed so far to determine housing needs and relocation benefit eligibility. All relocations of current tenants will be permanent. When the building is reopened, new tenants will occupy it. Statistics: 70 total units, 70 0-30% AMI units, supportive housing and project-based voucher units still to be determined.

5. NE Prescott Statistics: 50 total units, 50 family-sized units. Development will be part of the new solicitation process.

Reports, Audit

1. The Bond Oversight Committee Annual Report is currently being drafted and 3/27 is a proposed date to present the report to City Council.

2. The General Annual Report which will be published for the public will be aligned with the BOC Annual Report.

3. The City Auditor’s office is currently preparing a draft report for the performance audit.

4. The financial audit was awarded to Harvey M. Rose Associates in January. The scope of the

work is being amended due to the City Auditor's performance audit.

Bond Solicitation Process as a result of Constitutional Amendment passing

1. The Framework still needs to be used as guidance for the new strategies. Goals to avoid displacement, reduce homelessness and advance racial equity are priority. The communities and locations prioritized in the Framework need to be emphasized and equity in contracting and workforce needs to be upheld.

2. The structure of ownership has shifted from 100% publicly owned land and buildings to funds leveraged by City owned property being leased to privately funded sources or private land being used for City projects. This widens the location areas available and maximizes funds. Urban Renewal funds are tied to geography, and the City needs to focus on SW, North and East Portland as priority neighborhoods to be developed.

3. New strategies need to be developed to achieve the Bond goals. The goal of creating 600 family-sized units won't be met until another 375 units are completed. The 0-30% AMI goal still needs

504 units; 96 family units have been created so far. The supportive housing units needed are 240 units for chronically homeless and 31 units for families. Because the chronically homeless need 24 hour management and the most services nearby, the Housing Bureau envisions 3 buildings totaling 240 units, one of which will be the Westwind. Families will be scattered within multiple other projects. The Housing Bureau sees an additional 6-10 other projects to fulfill the other goals (375 family-sized units, 264 0-30% AMI units, and 31 supportive housing units for families).

Solicitation Planning for 2019

1. February and March will involve outreach work to the contractor and subcontractor community, low income developers, JOHS, community engagement organizations such as MACG and OPAL, and supportive housing service providers. The solicitation process will begin in April with a June deadline. In August, projects will be awarded and financing started. A second solicitation will occur in 2020.

2. The NOFA is very detailed and has specific requirements, so only those experienced will apply.

3. The range of funds to be offered will be \$50 to \$75 million with a range of 300-500 units to be created. Projects that offer either new construction or acquisition/rehabilitation will be considered.

4. This year's goal is to continue development of the Westwind and find another similar project to create another 70 units of housing for the chronically homeless who will fill the 0-30% AMI requirement and will need supportive housing. Also another 3 to 5 projects will be needed with 80 - 180 family-sized units to be developed and 48-108 units developed for the 0-30% AMI.

Strategy Questions to Consider

1. Should there be a subsidy cap per unit?

2. How do the project-based vouchers get deployed – by project and/or population?

3. What is the location strategy for the supportive housing project and how do services get aligned?

There was no public testimony. The next meeting will be on Thursday, March 7th from 9 – 11 AM

Below are two poems written by Marilyn Robb, The Madeleine Parish, in which she asks and answers the question:

WHAT GOOD HAVE THEY EVER DONE ME ?

What good have they ever done me? These worthless
beings clustered in their dirty tents,
These failures and losers,
They are a festering blemish on the streets of my city,
reeking of alcohol and urine.... wrapped in their wool
cocoon, asleep along the walks and walls.
Let them rot in their filth. Let them die of starvation. Make
them disappear from my sight.
What good have they ever done for me?

THE RESPONSE

What good have they ever done for me?
These worthless beings clustered
in their dirty tents,
These failures and losers,
These who are "the least among us..."
What good have they ever done for me?
They have restored my sight
and opened my eyes.
They have showed me my wealth and taught me to
share.
They have disturbed my thoughts
and helped me to understand.
They have changed my life
and taught me compassion. They have opened my
heart and allowed me to love.
What good have they ever done for me?
They have done for me, more than I can ever do for
them.

"THE BASIC NECESSITIES"

by Bonnie Gregg

For most of us, a place to call home requires a few basic necessities. First, we want walls and a roof to protect us from the cold/rain, and a door we can close to keep us safe. We want a fireplace or stove to keep us warm and cook, chairs to sit, a bed to rest; light to see; water to drink and to wash; and an area equipped to meet our bodily needs. We like to have a window too, to keep tabs on what's going on in our neighborhood.

We also need space to keep our stuff - food, pots/pans, clothes, blankets, towels, books, gadgets, tv, cell phones, etc. Ideally, we have a place to wash our clothes and put our garbage, because like all human beings, every day we manage to produce a mess that needs to be cleaned or cleared away.

These may be our basic necessities – However, on a cold winter night, we will settle for a car with a heater or a sleeping pad on the floor of a warming shelter.

Although not the majority, there are those among us who do not seek a dwelling with our "basic necessities". Free spirits, they prefer life in the outdoors. No door, but a doorway on a city street is fine. They don't need a lot of stuff – too much to carry. **They are experts as urban dwellers.** They know where the soup kitchens are and what time to get in line; when the shelters open up, and where you can get free clothes, medical help, etc. Some spend much of their day in libraries where they can read books, use computers, see films, hear music, and use pristine bathrooms. They generally prefer being alone, although there are always companions about, if they want, folks like them who walk their own path, understand their journey. They know the street gossip and their street neighbors, who to avoid, who to trust. They like being their own boss – nobody telling them what to do.

Sandi Coila sent this eulogy from Sue Grafton's book, "W is for Wasted" – which is shared in part below...

"We are here this afternoon to mourn the passing of two friends, Terrence Dace and Felix Beider. They were homeless. Their ways were not those we most desire for ourselves, but that didn't make them wrong. **We seem determined to save the homeless, to fix them, to change them into something other than what they are. We want them to be like us, but they are not.** "The homeless do not want our pity, nor do they deserve our scorn. Our judgements about them, for good or for ill, negate their right to live as they please, **Both the urge to rescue and the need to condemn fail to take into account the concept of their personal liberty**, which they may exercise as they see fit as long as their actions fall within the law.... *"Their graves will be unmarked but that does not mean they are forgotten. The Earth remembers them, even as it gathers them tenderly into its embrace. The sky claims them and we who honor them will hold them dear from this day forward."*

UPCOMING EVENTS:



MARCH 4 – INTERFAITH ADVOCACY DAY – SALEM CAPITOL @9:00 AM-4:00 PM -- (Registration required (2/20))

Sarah Carolus, Co-Chair of the Interfaith Advocacy Action team encourages everyone to attend this special event to discuss "compassionate legislation, climate, criminal justice, health care, housing, hunger, and immigration" followed by a community

march. If transportation is needed, please contact Sarah at scarolus3@gmail.com



MARCH 6 – HILL BLOCK COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE – 4:30-5:30 PM, New Song Community Church, 2511 NE MLK Blvd

MARCH 13 – TRAUMA INFORMED LEADERSHIP TRAINING, 5:30-7:30 PM - - VIBRANT TABLE, 2010 SE 8TH AV, PORTLAND, OR [map --](#) Learn resources and skills for interactions with vulnerable people. Gain important history on homelessness in Oregon and new perspectives for your real life volunteer events. Following speakers, there will be a thirty minute guided conversation, with snacks provided.

Keynote Speakers:

Mandy Davis, LCSW, PhD. Associate Professor of Practice Director, Trauma Informed Oregon PSU, School of Social Work is an Associate Professor of Practice at Portland State University's School of Social Work and a licensed clinical social worker. She is Director of Trauma Informed Oregon. Dr. Davis teaches and lectures on implementing trauma informed care and trauma specific services. **Israel Bayer** is a housing advocate and former executive director of Street Roots, an award-winning street newspaper in Portland, Oregon.

