



Creating opportunities for the homeless to have hope

NEWSLETTER

August, 2021



WHEN HOPE ALMOST DIED FOR ROGUE RETREAT



Chad McComas, Rogue Retreat Executive Director

There is an old proverb that says: “Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick, but a sudden good break can turn life around.” Proverbs 13:12 (The Message)

This was so true in 2009 for Rogue Retreat. We were at the edge of complete failure. The end was near unless something dramatic took place. But let me backtrack to truly set the scene.

Rogue Retreat was founded in 1998 by a group of concerned community people wanting to make a difference for those who fell between the cracks of society and needed a hand up. That group had no resources, no experience, just the determination to make something happen. Fast

forward 11 years with multiple disappointments and bad decisions which make us truly heartsick as the proverb states.

neck as we got close and closer to the balloon payment in 2010. The investor wasn't interested in any excuses. He wanted his money



Drawing of our first men's recovery house. We started with 5 men in this house in 1999

From 1999—2004 Rogue Retreat endeavored to operate safe houses for those struggling to take a recovery road out of addiction. With a run-in with code enforcement rules and officers the board of Rogue Retreat had abandoned their houses on Oakdale and purchased an 11 unit apartment on Riverside which needed much care and maintenance oversight. The purchase was a no-down, interest-only contract with a private investor at 10%. It has a balloon payment in six years. It seemed like a good decision but ended up being a chain around our

and if he didn't get it he'd foreclose on the property and take the board chairman down financially as well. Unfortunately, I was the board chairman who had signed a guarantee on the loan. (this is common practice in the non-profit world, but most solid non-profits have director's insurance which we didn't have because we couldn't afford it. Truly a bad decision!) To make matters worse, the property wasn't worth the contract price and efforts to get refinanced were truly impossible!

Now back to 2009. We were

scrambling to find answers. We had no paid employees. Rogue Retreat was an all-volunteer operation. We were operating the 11 unit apartment complex on Riverside as homeless housing by then. We were learning how to provide supportive services to those in the apartment which eventually became our “secret sauce.” But, it was truly a month-to-month operation just finding ways to stay solvent and provide the services.

This is when I met Thomas Fischer. (See the sidebar for his story) He was a commercial real estate broker and I was hoping perhaps he had some ideas on what we could do. I will forever remember standing with him in the gravel parking lot of the apartment complex explaining the situation we were in and asking him what we could do. He had no answers and it was clear he knew we were in trouble. But to my surprise, he volunteered to join our board when I asked. That decision helped forever change Rogue Retreat and Thomas.

But we still had the problem: Time running out on the balloon payment due; no resources; no assets; no answers. But we still had our faith in what we were doing and a trust something good had

GROUNDBREAKING GATEWAY TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



Groundbreaking at the Gateway Project in Talent.
Photo by Charley Cross

The Board of Directors of the Urban Renewal Agency of the City of Talent is excited to share the recent groundbreaking of the Gateway transitional to permanent housing project in downtown Talent. This trail-blazing project, led by the Agency's Board of Directors, is the first locally-driven initiative that provides affordable housing to survivors of the devastating Almeda Fire. This community-led project will install long-term infrastructure while also providing urgent housing to those displaced due to the Almeda Fire. This urgent, transitional housing project will be vital in the rebuilding of the Talent Community and bringing Almeda Fire survivors back to their local community. This first of its kind, the locally-driven project will make it possible for survivors who are

not FEMA eligible to relocate back to the Talent Community. The Gateway Project was designed to embody the phrase "Stronger Together", giving students and families within the Phoenix-Talent School District the first priority to relocate onto the Site. According to School District estimates, over 690 families were displaced by the fire, with many still lacking permanent, safe housing. The Agency has an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Phoenix-Talent School District to give students and families displaced by the Fire priority on the Site. The transitional site will install permanent infrastructure while providing housing to these families, giving students the opportunity to stay within the School District and their schools.

The infrastructure that will be installed during the transitional project will also carry forward the community's vision for the Gateway while providing the necessary housing to those with urgent needs within the Talent Community. The goal of the Gateway transitional to permanent housing project is to address the immediate need for housing while developing the long-term vision for the Gateway Site within the City of Talent. The project has received significant financial contributions from local and state partners, including the People's Bank of Commerce Foundation and Oregon Housing and Community Services which made this

project possible. As part of the project, the Urban Renewal Agency's Board of Directors also collaborated with the Talent Public Arts Committee, resulting in the launch of the Gateway Mural Art Program. This program gave students a unique opportunity within the School District and Talent Community to submit artwork that will be displayed on the exterior of the Gateway Site. Programs similar to these are instrumental in the community's healing process from the fire and inspire a sense of unity in the community.

The Agency continues to work with its large group of strategic partners on the project, including Rogue Retreat, to finalize the relocation guidelines for future residents on the Site. Once finalized, the Agency will work with local media outlets to share information about the Site and resident selection criteria. You can also stay in touch with Agency activities online at <https://www.talenturbanrenewal.com/>.

Talent's leadership remains committed to developing stronger policies that bolster housing within the community. Meanwhile, other cities and regions are increasingly looking at Talent's recovery model, as the forward-thinking leadership of the City Council and the Board of Directors have paved the way to the realization of a trail-blazing project within not only the State of Oregon—but also within the nation.

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Rogue Retreat's Riverside apartments During remodel (Top) and after our remodel (Bottom)

CONTINUE FROM PAGE 1

to come.

“Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick, but a sudden good break can turn life around.”

One of our volunteers, Betty Wolff, heard about a State grant called “Housing Plus.” It was a new grant (ended up being a one-time grant which was never redone by the State of Oregon).

The grant was to help create permanent supportive housing (pay for the purchase and/or renovation of a property) for the homeless (40-year agreement) with rent subsidies and case management funds for two years. It was a pie in the sky type of Hail Mary Pass, but once we determined we had to try for it. We had no experience writing grants, especially grants on a State level.

We met with the local representative from the State and were encouraged to apply. She suggested our project to save our apartment complex on Riverside was just the type of project the State was looking for, so we took the chance of being rejected and wrote a grant proposal. In early 2009 three of our board members traveled to Salem to make our request

in front of the State of Oregon’s Housing and Community Services board. We felt like David standing in front of Goliath. They were polite, but in reality, to trust a fledgling organization like Rogue Retreat with no staff or resources or quality track record was truly a stretch. The grant request was to pay off the \$660,000 loan, remodel the apartment complex and provide operating funds (rental subsidies and case management salaries) for two years. It was a \$1.5 million grant. We’d find out their decision in March (just nine months from the balloon payment and the end of Rogue Retreat!

You can imagine the shock and exhilaration we felt when we received word they approved our grant request in March. We hired our first employee on April 1, 2009, and relocation and remodel started on our Riverside property.

But to make a good miracle even better we received word in June that the State wanted to offer us another apartment complex in Medford with eight units. It had been granted to another non-profit organization, but they decided to turn it down. Now, on June 15, the State needed to find another non-profit to take it over or lose the funding on June 30. They asked if we’d be interested and after a quick yes we now had another \$1.5 million grant.

One catch: we had to raise \$100,000 as part of the grant details. We were able to borrow that from a dedicated volunteer and the deal was final. Now we had 19 apartments we owned!

“Unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick, but a sudden good break can turn life around.”

This was the first major miracle (turn around good break) that has made Rogue Retreat what it is today. We’ve had favor when we needed it most. We’ve had donations and grants provided at just the right time and connections made which were beyond our control.

It reminds me of another old promise: “(I) will make the Valley of Achor (Achor literally means trouble) a door of hope.” Hosea 2:15

When we can take a breath when trouble arises and there seems to be no way out we have learned something good is coming. We hold on. We keep doing the next right thing and sure enough, the door of hope opens just in time. But, whether we like it or not, the door only opens after we are in the valley of trouble. Holding onto hope is the key. This is the reason we named our first tiny house village Hope Village. Hope changes everything.

Chad McComas is the current Executive Director of Rogue Retreat which he helped found in 1998.

Sidenote by Tom Fischer, Rogue Retreat Board Chairman:

Chad describes that possible end of Rogue Retreat very well. Rogue Retreat had gone into the leveraged purchase of the Riverside apartments as many people do when deciding on an investment. We researched the costs, we looked at how we could support the loan, and we decided it would work financially and serve our community. Like many in those days, we didn’t see the coming crash of the real estate market in 2008. The lender had the right to take the Riverside apartments if we could not pay off the loan. He had a history of enforcing that clause. We were scrambling to find a solution. As Chad described, it was Divine Intervention that solved the problem. We will not enter into a loan like that again, but we will continue to look at ways we can give the homeless a hand up. Daily, our staff work into the night to provide the services we know will lead the homeless to their next step forward. Often on the weekends, our leadership will be searching out a State program that may help get more people off the Green Way. Rogue Retreat is getting smarter and more experienced, enough so to recognize we are not often in control like we think we are. Thankfully, and with much gratitude, we know that Divine Intervention also guides us.

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT:

JAQUELINE'S STORY



daughter made the decision to take her aging father home to Texas. Jaqueline only had a few days to leave. With nowhere to go, she ended up on the street. That was three years ago. Unfortunately, with the lack of affordable housing, we are seeing this startling trend

Her throat thickens when she talks about her dreams, “The first thing I’ll do when I get a real place is go to the dog shelter and tell them to give me the dog that’s been there the longest and is the most unwanted. I’ll give him the best home possible because that’s what’s happened for me.”

As people move through our programs, they become more hope-filled. Jaqueline is one of our senior citizens currently living in a Pallet shelter at the Urban Campground in Medford. She says she loves it and feels at peace. Also, she can’t say enough about how grateful she is to have staff who are so understanding and not judgmental about the resident’s addictions and mental illnesses. “They never make anyone feel ashamed.”

When asked how she came to be homeless, Jaqueline was open about her circumstances. She’d been working as a live-in caretaker for an elderly man for a few years until the man’s

increase for our seniors.

Since that time, Jaqueline has stayed in shelters when she can but mostly on the greenway. She’s had some ups but mostly downs. This Spring, she was sleeping between two pieces of cardboard in the Winco parking lot. It was cold and raining.

“I felt I was at the end of my rope. Every day was harder than the last.”

Some other homeless folks invited her back to their tent. They were good to her, but it wasn’t a very good place to be. “Through all of it, I kept going to church and didn’t lose my faith even when things were so bad. I just prayed, ‘Please God, there’s got to be something more for me.’”

One of Medford’s compassionate Livability officers showed up at their tent and said, “You don’t belong here.”

She says she gives him a hug every time she sees him. “He’s an amazing fella. He saved my life.”

At one point, she was badly hurt on the street and was put in the hospital for eight days. “It leaves psychological damage and made me wary and not too trusting. I don’t want to connect too much. But I’m seeing a counselor to help with that.” Now she has a safe place at the campground with people who don’t steal. “This is the best place for me. Some ladies pick me up on Sunday and take me to church. It helps me feel better.”

One way Jaqueline gives back is to provide a lending library from her Pallet shelter. She has a few books and lends them out to the other residents. Since she’s read them all, she can recommend the right book to the right person. “It means a lot to me to make others feel happy, like when people come over and exchange a book and talk about how they liked it.”

Agencies that partner with Rogue Retreat are working to get Jaqueline out of the campground and into a more optimal shelter.

FOUNDRYVILLAGE:

HOPE FOR OPENING, INTERVIEW WITH DOUG WALKER

These days, there is always something going on at Foundry Village in Grants Pass. Lead Super- (volunteer)-man, Doug Walker agreed to take a quick break from breathing paint fumes and answer a few questions about what it’s been like to bring this dream about.

Q: What prompted you to help with this huge project?

A: Nothing in particular. One thing just led to another and someone said, hey, let’s do this.

Q: Have you ever done something like this volunteer project before?

A: Not like this, but I was a contractor before I retired and in construction since I was a kid.

Q: What has brought you the most satisfaction?

A: The volunteers is the most fun. And seeing the work get done.

Q: What attitudes do you generally encounter in your volunteers?

A: Amazing generosity of themselves and their hard work. Also in their willingness to help in whatever way they can – bring cookies, or bake for us.

Q: What is your hope for the residents who will move in here?

A: I hope they’ll be able to move in here and get on track with their issues; get to become productive members of society. I figure the better off my neighbors are, the better off we all are.

Q: What is the biggest change you’ve seen

in your own life since you began?

A: I’ve met a lot more people. And I stopped having to have all the answers worked out beforehand. I just start and know the money and volunteers will come in. I just have to have faith.

Q: What recommendations do you have for others who may want to get involved in their cities?

A: Just start asking, talking. Find a way around the first hurdle then the next. Be welcoming and inviting of others want to be part of it. I never know whether I’m leading or following, depending on who’s here.

MEET THE BOARD

STEVE JONES



Steve Jones, Rogue Retreat Board Member

What is the one thing in your life that you are most proud of? (could be an object, achievement, etc.)

My 30-year marriage and having raised four children who are wonderful and successful.

If you could be a superhero, which one would you be and why?

Ironman ... Love the suit!

What is your favorite movie or book? Why?

This is a tough one... Saving Private Ryan, Shawshank Redemption, and Rocky 3 all tie ... Book/Author, IT by Steven King

If you had the choice between achieving world peace or ending poverty worldwide, which choice would you make?

Ending Poverty ... so much violence/war is because of wealth inequality

Are you a cat or dog person?

Definitely dog!

What is the greatest gift you either received or gave?

My children, hands down!

Can you name the State Capitals of Delaware, Missouri,

and Canada without Googling them? (hint, this could be a trick question)

Easy ... Dover, Jefferson City. When did the US acquire Canada?

What is the one thing that you thought you could never do and actually did do?

I've kind of done most everything I've set out to do. There's one thing I haven't done yet ... own a yellow convertible Corvette!

It has been said that giving and receiving are the same thing. Do you think this is true or false? Why?

Interesting question. I like to give, but it has a selfish side to it as well. I receive thanks, and it makes me feel good inside. Like I made a difference.

Favorite sport and team?

I'm going to get boos for this one. Football and Dallas. Go Boys!

Do you believe in love at first sight?

No. So much more goes into love than sight.

What is something people don't know about you?

That I was born here and I'm American. Not totally true ... I'm a citizen and consider myself a red-blooded American ... but I was actually born in England and lived there until I was 10. I have dual citizenship. One of the last people the government allowed.

Why did you want to become a Rogue Retreat Board Member?

Wow... this is a loaded question, and I have so many reasons. Homelessness and substance abuse has personally touched my family. I was looking for a way to give back and help my community when I met Chad. We chatted for a while, did some business, and then I asked him what Rogue Retreat did. He put his arm around me, said: "I'm glad you asked." The rest is history.

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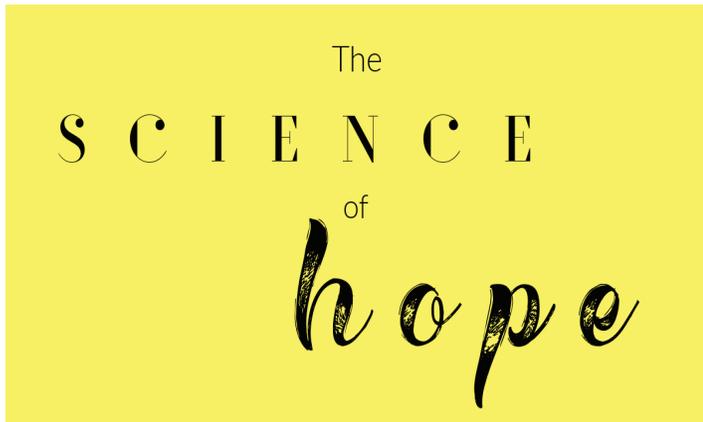
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THE SCIENCE OF HOPE



“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Proverbs 13:12 states, *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick; but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”* (NIV) Another translation, (The Message) says it this way, *“unrelenting disappointment leaves you heartsick.”* Heartsick certainly describes the plight of the homeless. Yet, there is a

power that hope has even over the unrelenting disappointment.

Arizona State University researchers describe the process of hope. “In psychology, hope is a cognitive practice that involves the intentional act of setting goals and working toward them with purpose. Hopeful people are able to set goals, identify ways to reach their goals, and feel as though they can do the work to achieve those goals,” said Crystal Bryce,

associate director of research in the ASU Hope Center.

John Parsi, executive director of the Hope Center states, “Hope is an active process. Dreams and optimism are just belief structures.” And “Hope requires a person to take responsibility for their wants and desires and take action in working towards them.”

When people have been hit too hard and for too long, sometimes they need to borrow another’s hope. That is what Rogue Retreat strives to instill in our participants and employees. We come alongside in every area possible to give each precious individual the love and support they need to restore their lives.

Psychologist and author of “The Value of You,” Christopher D. Connors, offers this advice. “At its core, hope is an inspirational force – one that furthers our goals and dreams, and improves our everyday affairs.”

There are a number of concepts that are frequently used interchangeably with hope. Terms like optimism, wishing, envisioning are components, but fail to fully capture the power of hope.

In their book, “Hope Rising: How the Science of Hope Can Change Your Life,” Casey Gwinn, J.D., and Chan Hellman, Ph.D. use nearly 2000 published studies to offer this call to hope. “Science tells us that it is the most predictive indicator of well-being in a person’s life. Hope is measurable. It is malleable. And it changes lives.”

We believe this because we’ve seen it. Hope raises people. That is why we’ve named our fundraising campaign, Raising Hope. We trust you will join this campaign in whatever way you are able. We welcome your donations at www.RogueRetreat.org/RaisingHope

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TRUTH BE TOLD

THE VERY REAL CONNECTION BETWEEN TRAUMA AND HOMELESSNESS



Myth: Homeless people are just lazy addicts who don't want to be helped.

Truth: There is a common evil behind homelessness.

Recently near our Rogue Retreat office, a homeless woman threatened to strip and jump from a ledge. This kind of situation begs the question, what happened in her life to lead to this extreme behavior?

A number of researchers have come to the same conclusion:

“Trauma drives homelessness and homelessness can increase traumatic exposure. Trauma drives social difficulties and mental health problems which can cause homelessness.” FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless)

The article quotes studies that show 85% of this trauma was experienced as children.

This kind of trauma is of an overwhelming nature. It is “shocking, terrifying and devastating to the trauma survivor...” It can be Type 1, a single traumatic experience such as the sudden loss of a parent or a one-time sexual assault; or Type 2 trauma, repetitive and prolonged harm where the child had no place to escape.

Homelessness can bring a third type of trauma. When a homeless person becomes a victim of sexual or physical assault, or even witnesses these violent actions, they can become re-traumatized.

“We have seen that trauma has a significant impact on mental health. There is a clear link between traumatic experience and maladaptive behaviors such as: problematic drug and alcohol use, personality disorders, taking sexual risks, high levels of actual and attempted suicide, etc.”

In his PSYCOM PRO article, “Perspective: Touching the Trauma of Homelessness,” Michael D. McGee, MD states: “Trauma is almost universal among homeless people – not only does trauma increase the risk of homelessness but homelessness increases the risk of trauma. In one study of homeless individuals, 100% of the women and over 90% of the men reported experiencing at least one traumatic event.” “More than 50% had witnessed someone being badly injured or killed; 50% of the women and 10% of the men had been raped.”

Many homeless individuals suffer from a physical health issue, a mental health issue, and a substance abuse issue. It is not surprising that their life expectancy falls dramatically

from the norm of 78 to 50 years of age. At Rogue Retreat, we are committed to a better outcome for our residents.

Why does the Rogue Retreat model work?

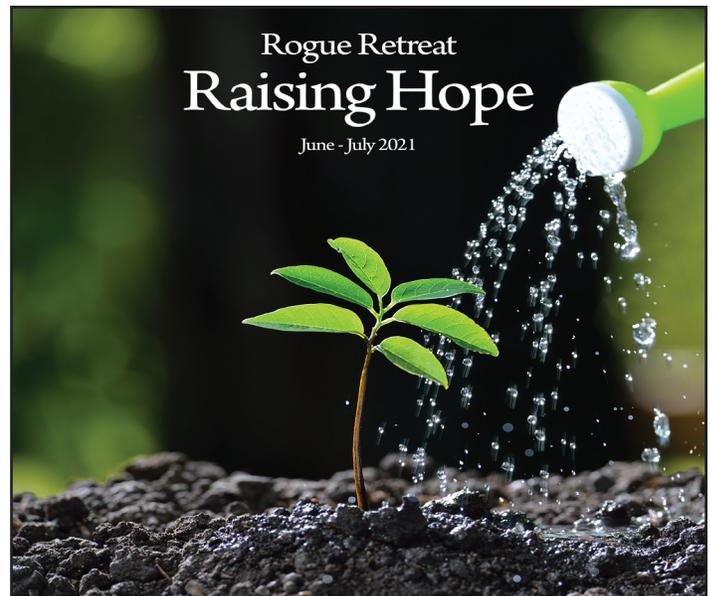
Dr. McGee believes that “Supportive housing can work to treat psychiatric disorders in homeless individuals when that housing is paired with social and clinical services. When you give people safe housing and caring support, they will sometimes accept help for their mental health, too – including for addiction and substance use disorders.

The FEANTSA report concludes: “We can see that trauma and homelessness are so deeply interlinked that we can assume that any strategy addressing homelessness can only be effective if trauma

considerations are integrated within it. It is important to acknowledge these intersections and to make service adaptations to better address the needs of trauma survivors.”

“Relationships are key to recovery and to healing trauma. Staff is encouraged to focus on using their relationships with clients to support and encourage self-development and recovery, and to enable clients to feel able to lead their own journey out of homelessness.”

Our website states, “Rogue Retreat envisions a community where all homeless have a place to call home and are empowered to strengthen the quality of their lives.” It is a huge undertaking. It is also a profound message of hope. And you make it happen. Thank you.



It has been said that nobody remembers the ones who gave up.

We don't agree... We CARE for them and we believe you do too.

Please join Rogue Retreat for our first-ever community-wide fundraising campaign
Your generous donations not only provide shelter, but ensure you have a real impact on the clients we serve by providing meals, clothing, healthcare services, mental health counseling services, financial counseling and legal services, and many more programs that help our participants achieve self-sufficiency.

We need you more than ever and welcome your donations online at www.RogueRetreat.org/RaisingHope



**By Matthew Vorderstrasse,
Development Director**

HISTORY OF ROGUE RETREAT

ROGUE RETREAT BY THE NUMBERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The mission of Rogue Retreat is to create opportunities for the homeless to have hope. Rogue Retreat is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that envisions a community where people who have been homeless have a place to call home and are empowered to strengthen the quality of their lives. Rogue Retreat gives hope to the homeless through life coaching, affordable housing and accountability accomplished through case management, housing inspections, life-skills training classes and a safe and stable living environment.

Rogue Retreat was founded in 1998 and began operating a Recovery House for those suffering from addiction soon after its inception. In 2006 Rogue Retreat revised its mission to

primarily address the growing homeless epidemic in Southern Oregon through providing housing and relationship based case management that helps participants overcome the barriers that keep them from obtaining housing and becoming self-sufficient. The State of Oregon granted Rogue Retreat two large grants in 2009 that provided 19 apartments and case management funding thus making Rogue Retreat a Permanent Supportive Housing Program for the homeless. In 2010 the State of Oregon partnered Rogue Retreat with the Housing Authority of Jackson County to purchase and operate 23 more apartments under Rogue Retreat's program.

Since then Rogue Retreat has expanded to overseeing 44 apartments, women's and men's recovery homes, medically assisted treatment housing for women, recuperative housing for the medically vulnerable homeless (in partnership with AllCare and Providence), Summit House

(partnership with the Medford Livability Team, On Track and Providence), a thrift shop, a 64 bed year round low barrier shelter (The Kelly Shelter), a 34 bed tiny house village known as Hope Village (the first tiny house village in Southern Oregon), and our Clean Sweep job readiness program that is operated in partnership with the City of Medford and local businesses. Our case management services have also grown to include wrap-around supportive services to help participants transition into permanent housing and self-sufficiency. This includes our contractual partnership with Consumer Credit Counseling to provide hands-on financial literacy education to those we serve. Rogue Retreat believes in giving homeless people a hand up on their journey from homelessness to stability. As of today over 300 people each night are housed and sheltered under Rogue Retreat's roofs.

We also broke ground to help build Foundry Village which will

be the first tiny house village in Grants Pass, Oregon. Foundry Village should be operational by the Fall of 2021. Rogue Retreat also received a Project Turnkey grant that purchased the Redwood Inn Motel. The 47 units are currently being renovated into apartments. These units will initially be used for the Fire Survivors from the Alameda Fire and will be transitioned into units for the chronically homeless and the fire survivors transition into permanent housing. The Medford Urban Campgrounds is also slated to double in size and grow to 150 sites this year. In total Rogue Retreat will add somewhere between 100 to 200 new beds this year.

These new beds will help us nearly double the amount of people we can serve. Our Annual Campaign- Raising Hope is set to support this growth. We encourage each of you to take part in this campaign and help us continue building community and creating opportunities for the homeless to have hope.

FROM HOMELESSNESS TO HOME OWNERSHIP

We are delighted to share this real-life success from Shannon Holland, our kitchen manager at the Kelly Shelter. It's an amazing story.

"How I became without a home has several different parts because I was homeless multiple times. I was deemed 'chronically homeless' because I would be living a successful life and then something would change, and I would just throw it all away. I never knew how to deal with stress in a healthy way. It was always easier to get high or drunk and not deal with what was going on.

I found Rogue Retreat when I was trying to stay clean to get my daughter back in my custody. I was in family court through OnTrac and going to intensive outpatient 5 days a week. I had just gotten kicked out of another program and was staying at the woman's mission. I saw an ad somewhere, I think the

paper, talking about Rogue Retreat, and so I went and signed up.

I have been in the Rogue Retreat program twice. The last time was the most important because even though I did not stay in their program, I left with a program of AA and a sponsor and a new sense of direction. I left with a purpose and a goal of where I want to be, and I worked hard at it and never gave up.

The whole story behind us buying our home was a 'God' shot for sure. We had been trying to find a place to rent with no luck. We have two little dogs that are not 'apartment living' dogs. They are very loud, opinionated dogs, and I felt like they would probably cause us issues in an apartment. I saw a house on Zillow, and I loved it. It's a little house with a big backyard, perfect for us. So, I decided why not see if I could qualify for a home loan, and I was pre-approved. That is how we came to

own our own home.

Through Rogue Retreat, I gained the confidence to reach for the stars and beyond. God knew my dream was to own a home, so it was extremely difficult to rent one but really easy to buy. Everything we were asked to do for this home came so easy. I knew this was the path I was supposed to be traveling.

I tell others to just keep doing the next right thing and put one foot in front of the other. Never give up on your dreams and do all you can to achieve those dreams. I love to 'challenge' myself to see what I can accomplish, to learn as much as I can, and to make the most out of this second chance at life.

I used to want to do something amazing in my life. Thanks to God and my Rogue Retreat family, I get to do amazing things every day. I get the chance to give back what was given to me, a choice to live again, happy and healthy."

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

DONNIE HARPER



Donnie Harper, Rogue Retreat Employee

So, my journey began on June 11th of 2019, when I surrendered and chose a new way of life. I went to residential treatment through the ARC and spent 87 days there. Then, I learned of Rogue Retreat through a man named Thorston, who helped men find housing upon graduating from the program. I contacted Rogue Retreat and was offered a room at Harold's Haven. This was the first opportunity I had to be independent again.

I found a sense of belonging and acceptance in the home, living with fellow addicts in recovery. Eventually, through Rogue Retreat I found a family. It was a different feeling than I was accustomed to, unfamiliar but good. I was able to become open and honest with people and slowly became a better person. It felt great.

About 5 months after I moved in, I heard that Rogue Retreat was looking to hire people to work with the homeless, and something inside me told me that is what I needed to do.

You see, I was homeless before I went to treatment and knew and understood the struggles that these people face on a daily basis - no shelter, food, a lack of self-esteem, loneliness, a feeling of desperation, fear, and so much more.

Because of Rogue Retreat, I was able to slowly build a foundation and felt I had a purpose. So, I applied and was chosen for the position. Today I've

been with Rogue Retreat for almost 19 months and I love the job. There is no better feeling than seeing someone come in lost, scared, broken, and defeated and then finding themselves gaining employment, getting clean and sober, transforming into someone that they never knew they could be.

Being a recovering addict allows me to share my story and show them that there is a better way to live. I spent the better part of 25 years in and out of jails, prisons, and hospitals, near-death more times than I can count. Over the course of the last 2 years, I have been able to let go of that ball and chain that kept me stuck in my old way of life.

I just celebrated 2 years clean on June 11 of 2021. This is the longest time I've been clean in 25 years. I would not have been able to do it alone. I've had so much help from so many - my case manager Harold, my sponsor, my bosses Shannon, Justin, and Liz, who have always had their doors open when I am going through it. Also, family friends and Narcotics Anonymous, and so many more have helped me get here. There is no way I could have done it alone.

Like I said before, I found a family in Rogue Retreat, and I am blessed to be part of such an amazing organization. I hope to continue down this road and eventually progress in the organization, move forward, and continue to help save lives. Because at the end of the day, that is the most rewarding part - seeing people get better, learn to love themselves again, become active members in society who no longer need to hang their heads in shame but hold them high because they also now have a purpose and are making a difference.

You see, every person who comes through Rogue Retreat and moves forward is a success story. If you think about it, word of mouth travels fast. People hearing that Rogue Retreat helped so many brings us more people who we can help, and that's what our goal is - save as many lives as we can. I love my job. I love Rogue Retreat, and I am blessed that they helped save my life.

"My recovery must come first so that everything I love in life doesn't have to come last."

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ROGUE RETREAT THRIFT SHOP:

MORE THAN YOUR AVERAGE STORE



The Thrift Shop is an amazing place to work and volunteer. Each day we meet people from all walks of life. They visit for different reasons. Some are treasure hunting and looking for something special. Others depend on the low prices to furnish their homes and clothe their families. We also meet

those in need every day. People that just need someone to talk to without judging them. Someone to say hello and lend an ear. Some people come to the shop with no shoes on and are desperate for footwear. Others come during the winter and are freezing on the street at night. We do all we can to help them. If someone needs a jacket, we make sure they leave with a jacket. If they are shoeless, we make sure they leave with a pair of shoes. Shop staff and volunteers also hand out brochures for Rogue Retreat and other resources. We direct them to Set Free for food, clothing, and showers.

At the Thrift Shop, we are able to experience joy with our

UPCOMING SALES:
 Aug 2-7. Back to school sale, children's clothing and shoes 1/2 off
 Aug 8-14 Designer jeans sale. All jeans 25% off
 Aug 17th- National Thrift Shop Day entire shop 1/2 off! and give away prizes.

customers. The young lady trying on a wedding dress and realizing it's a perfect fit! The brand new grandmother buying clothing and toys for her new grandchild. The newlyweds looking for home décor and kitchenware. The list goes on! Our customers become our friends. We see them often,

hear about their lives and happy moments. We are grateful to make those connections.

Our volunteers show the spirit of giving every day. The majority of our volunteers help more than once a week. Many volunteers help 3+ times a week. They love being a part of an organization that freely gives hope to others. We see this when the volunteers assist someone who needs basic clothing and shoes. The volunteers love to help people find a warm blanket or a good pair of shoes. The kindness they show is inspiring. Getting to share kindness and joy with our community is amazing. We are thankful to be a part of Rogue Retreat.

CITIES AND INNOVATION TEAM UP TO BRING RELIEF

Rogue Retreat values the connections we've made with groups who are as committed to fighting homelessness as we are. We invited our good friends at Sprung Structures to tell us how their products are being used in cities across the country to provide a sturdy solution. Read what David Renard, President, and Richard Renard, CEO have to say.

If your heart breaks for those without overnight shelter, you may have noticed in the news, large, tent like structures that are housing folks who need a helping hand. A case in point is the Harbor of Hope Navigation Center next to the Broadway Bridge up in Portland. This is a Sprung Structure, the basis for a navigation center that's made up of dormitories that can house families, single women and single men. In addition, full social and behavioral services are offered, a greeting area, reception, intake, counseling, training, medical, dental, a day room/cafeteria, kitchen, administration, bathrooms, showers, laundry and



storage. Many navigation centers now accept guests with pets, to help the healing process.

Sprung Structures lend their "atmosphere" to those without housing, be it a simple shelter, through the navigation process, or to transitional housing, leading to a permanent solution most of us currently experience. What makes these large facilities so successful is the "outdoor" scope of coming inside to a welcoming bed. It's like bringing this outside atmosphere of hope inside.

Sprung's pre-engineered shape creates a positive side effect for these facilities that traditional models of modular trailers and small alternative housing units do not provide, for instance the high ceiling and bright light that brings this beacon of hope.

"When you walk into a Sprung, a medium-sized unit for example, it's 25 feet tall! And so, it's like sleeping inside and thinking that you're outside looking at the stars. It really brings a calmness to the needs that they have." Richard Renard, CEO, RPM TEAM™, Salinas, CA Hybrid Navigation Center.

It's heartwarming to interview residents before, during, and after their stay at a Sprung shelter.

"This is where I find hope." Hope in the form of a Sprung Structure.

"I feel good about moving from (the center) to a bigger place and taking more progressive steps to getting out of here to my own place." Christopher Weaver, Veteran, Salinas, CA.

"I can't believe how great this

place is...I've only been here two months and I'm now getting the key to my own apartment next week!" Graduate of the M Street Navigation Center, Bakersfield, CA.

Changing the atmosphere is the paradigm shift of the status quo that is at the forefront of a dignified, caring solution to housing issues our guests face. A special benefit is that Sprung Structures can be erected in 30% less time and for 50% less cost than traditional construction, benefiting those who immediately need overnight housing.

Some of the recently completed campuses encompass a 900-bed shelter for the City of Reno, a 195-bed navigation center for Huntington Beach, a 50 bed hybrid navigation shelter for Salinas, a 200-bed navigation center in Bakersfield, and additional facilities for Yakima Nation, Sacramento, Fresno and San Francisco. Soon, construction will commence in Vallejo, Stockton and Olympia, followed by new opportunities in Tracy, Phoenix, and Anchorage.

“THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS” REVIEW



by Cheryl Colwell

When I first watched this movie, it was the perseverance of Will Smith’s character, Chris Gardner, that grabbed my attention. I marveled at his tenacity and the precious gift of believing in himself. Now that I’ve been working with Rogue Retreat, I’ve seen how circumstances can beat that out of a person.

Tonight, I replayed the movie and noticed the huge part that deals with homelessness. In an opening scene, working people are oblivious as they step around an unconscious homeless man on the sidewalk, much the way I overlooked the homeless theme in the movie. Is this because it is so far from our own reality?

The movie is poignant in that it takes one of us, a working person with a family and stable home life, and follows his life

down the rabbit hole as his reality deteriorates bit by bit. As financial pressures build, Gardner and his wife work extra jobs to survive. His son works around odd schedules, short tempers, and missed meals. Resilient by nature, the son adjusts, acts brave, tries to support – very adult traits that ask a lot of a child in real life.

About the time Gardner was doing all he could think to do, his wife plunged in another dagger, as often happens under stress. She curls her lip and tells him, you haven’t done enough. “You can’t make this right.” Beat down beyond her ability to cope, she abandons her son, not knowing what will become of him - a crushing moment that haunts every parent who’s made the same decision.

The mounting pressure leads Gardner to bad decisions. Desperation leads to trusting the wrong people and at times theft, trouble with landlords, the police, and the IRS. Even Gardner’s natural talent and tenacity are no match when life conspires to pull him into a downward spiral. Most heartbreaking is watching his child’s fear at his unstable condition.

Yet, all along, Gardner is planting good seeds. He’s helpful, generous beyond his means,

put his son first, and uses every creative cell to push through this gauntlet.

Thankfully, a church had a shelter, but it could only house so many for the night. I was just taking a breath of relief when Gardner and his son didn’t make the nightly cut.

“All the rooms are full. Go away.”

Gardner, his son, and dozens of people must find somewhere in the city to sleep. He chooses to ride around on the subway for hours. He reflects on his thoughts as a kid when he got an A on a test. “I would get a good feeling about myself and all the things I could be, but never became any of them.” He’s hit the loss of possibility, of vision - a new low.

The tone begins to turn when Gardner attends the shelter’s church service. The music and words bring comfort for the moment and faith for the long run. And still, the challenges come. He sells blood, bullies a friend to repay him, and must answer his child’s universal, heart-breaking question, is it my fault? “Did mom leave because of me?”

Then he gets a break. When he sells his last medical machine, he mutters, “This buys us four more weeks of oxygen.” A portion of

time to keep his nose above water. At the end of this true story, his diligence and talent pay off, and he is hired as a stockbroker. He goes on to become a multi-millionaire. It’s awesome. We cheer for him. But it’s a one in a million story.

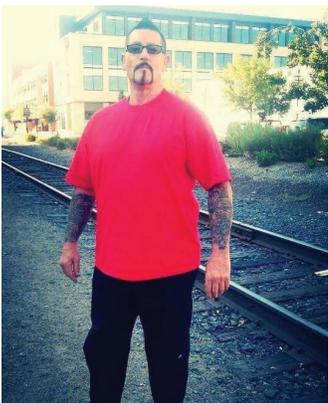
At the beginning of the film is a note. “The homeless people who worked as extras received a full day’s wages at minimum wage of \$8.60 per hour, plus free catered meals. For some, it was the first money they’d made in a while.”

Long after the movie, after Gardner was able to pull himself back up, thousands of men and women and their children are still out there on the street. But that’s not the end of their story either. Groups like Rogue Retreat are mounting a campaign to reduce this kind of suffering. To raise hope. To offer stability long enough for people to take a breath, get a few months of oxygen, and focus on pulling themselves out of the rabbit hole of despair.

I’m so glad I watched this movie a second time, especially now that I see so much being done for our neighbors who have fallen so far below our consciousness. It gives me hope for them as I see the army of workers and donors pulling for them every day, for the long haul, restoring one life at a time.

ROBERT HANSEN LEAVES HOPE VILLAGE:

SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPANT TRANSITIONS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY



Robert Hansen, Former Rogue Retreat Participant

Robert is one of the many success stories we are privileged to witness. He successfully utilized the services available, has two steady jobs, and has been saving money for when an opening becomes available in a local apartment complex. His enthusiasm was apparent when he told his story.

“I’ve struggled with addiction for years but didn’t want help. I wanted to do it on my own, but I was wrong. I had an accident in December and Rogue Retreat came alongside me. I stayed at the

Kelly Shelter for three days then transitioned into a tiny home in Hope Village and got my life back together. Now, I hit 3 meetings a week.

By the time my five-month limit was up, I was clean and sober, had my jobs, and had saved enough money to get into an apartment when one comes up. For now, I’m living with family, saving money, and waiting for a place. My life is better now. I respect Rogue Retreat. Calling them was the best thing I ever did. I got under their system and here I am. I walk into

the shelter, and I always feel open arms.”

When asked what was the first thing he wanted to move into his apartment, Robert replied, “A nice couch. I just want to sit on it and relax, read a book. And I’d like a coffee table and just enjoy my life again - having my own space and being comfortable.”

As far as Robert’s future dreams, he replied, “Staying together. Stay focused on remaining clean and sober. I did my wreckage in the past, but my life has moved on. I’m still learning but life’s good.”



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