



Creating opportunities for the homeless to have hope

NEWSLETTER

January, 2021



WE REACHED OUR GOAL PALLET SHELTER MATCHING GRANT



a total of \$75,000.00.

WE EXCEEDED OUR MATCHING GRANT GOAL

On New Year's Eve, we had a series of donations come in, not only did we meet our goal of \$41,000, but we exceeded it! Raising \$51,000 to release the matching funds. That made the fundraising total reach \$84,000! We are not only able to order the 10 Pallet shelters that we planned on but with the generosity and support of over 50 community members who donated to this cause, we are able to order 11 Pallet shelters! That means 11 more of our elderly and medically fragile residents that are able to be off the streets, out of tents, and in a dry Pallet shelter. In total, we will have 25 Pallet shelters at the Temporary Urban Campground and 60 total sites. Each shelter is equipped with a power panel that controls a small heater, electrical outlets, and lighting. Each unit also has a smoke alarm, fire extinguisher, and an emergency exit. These are by no means permanent solutions to homelessness, but they sure do make sense to help provide pressure relief on our communities.

We can't thank the community and anonymous donors enough for their support. Not only does this help get more people off the streets, but it gives our residents hope and lets them know that people in the community care about them and believe that they can make a change in their lives. Your support makes a difference and changes lives, for that we are so grateful.

By Matt Vorderstrasse
Development Director

In October of 2020, Rogue Retreat was introduced to a company called Pallet out of Seattle, Washington. Our introduction to Pallet was remarkable. The company donated 10 of their 65 sq. ft shelters to the Urban Campground to be utilized for seniors and the medically fragile.

Pallet is a Seattle-based social purpose company building personal, rapid, and durable shelter for people experiencing homelessness. The company's shelters are a stepping stone out of personal crisis and into a life of stability. The pallet is second-chance friendly, and the majority of employees who build its shelters are formerly homeless, addicted, or

incarcerated. For more information on Pallet, visit www.palletshelter.com.

"Pallet provides safe and secure shelter that moves people off of the streets and into stability immediately —and then on to permanent housing," says Amy King, Pallet Founder, and CEO. "Whereas permanent housing and mass shelters can take years to construct, we can shelter a person experiencing homelessness the same day we arrive on site."

"We are truly grateful for this amazing donation. Our community is working to recover from a devastating loss and these shelters will save lives" says Chad McComas, Executive Director at Rogue Retreat. "Our medically fragile and seniors that are at risk will be placed in these desperately

needed shelter units and given wrap-around services to help them move forward into more permanent forms of housing and shelter. We are honored to get to partner with Pallet, The Livability Team, the City of Medford, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, St. Vincent De Paul, Medford Gospel Mission, and many more to help make shelter available to our communities most vulnerable."

This Holiday Season, Rogue Retreat was given the opportunity to raise 41,000 (\$34,000 + shipping and on-site shelter set up) to purchase 5 Pallet Shelters (\$6,800 each) which will then be partnered with a \$34,000.00 Matching Grant from an anonymous family to help purchase **10 total Pallet Shelters for**

ACTION IS ABOUT TO BEGIN IN GRANTS PASS



By Valerie Lovelace

As a city councilor in Grants Pass, I am very happy to report that action is about to begin on our long-awaited Foundry Village.

During this past year of code challenges involved in setting up the parameters for transitional housing in our town, and working through the various pre-application, and design phases, I have become educated as to the time, money, and

patience involved in putting forth a project of this sort.

Hats off and a sincere thank you to Rogue Retreat for the successful model they have provided to Josephine County, through their operation of Hope Village. It is the success of their operations that pushed us over the finish line with our city council and community in support of Foundry Village.

The Grants Pass Planning Department has completed their part, engineering is in the final stages, and I have been assured a development permit will be available soon.

In talking with Doug Walker, one of the leads of Foundry Village here in Grants Pass, his team is chomping at the bit to get started. I have been lucky enough to join the Grants Pass Gateway Rotary, of which Doug is a member, and seen the passion and commitment this Rotary group has generated in this community in support of this project. They have been out salvaging windows and flooring from a church recently demolished in town.

A Lawn Art Sculpture

Fundraising Event was held in October, raised \$18,000. And who else but Doug Walker furnished many of the homemade whimsical lawn art features that were put up for sale. All three of the local Grants Pass Rotaries, collaborated to raise funds, that was matched by the District Rotary Foundation to pay for the kitchen facility at Foundry Village.

As ground moving, and excavating on the property begins, Rotary volunteers in the near future will be donating their time building the cabinets for the kitchen in the common building. I believe that as work at Foundry Village becomes visible, the community will rally around the efforts of those leaders in our community who are helping the homeless in Josephine County. There is a continuum of homeless interventions needed to provide a variety of solutions to the homeless issue.

As a city councilor, I recognize the need to develop partnerships with successful non-profits in our

region to manage solutions. The government has a role in helping solve the problem, but it takes the community to come behind a non-profit to manage, support, and fund operations for the homeless.

Watching Rogue Retreat set a successful model in Jackson County, by stepping out ahead of us to find safe workable solutions, by working with government bodies and the community to get behind and support those in need by providing opportunities and hope has been a blessing.

I thank you for paving a path for success. I also look forward to working with you in the future, as we continue to find regional solutions and support in confronting local issues.

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WHAT IS COMING IN 2021?



By Chad McComas

More HOPE is coming in 2021.

Rogue Retreat's mission is to "Create opportunities for the homeless to have hope."

The bad news = the homeless crisis in Medford, Oregon and at least the West Coast is growing, in some cases exponentially like Jackson County with over 2,000 homes lost in the recent fires.

The good news = due to the pandemic, fires, the economy, and the understanding of how homelessness can happen to almost anyone we are seeing a shift in the public's desire to find ways to house the homeless. Cities and Counties are looking for answers and options. Individual groups are forming to raise funding and find housing solutions. There is a growing community will to make something happen.

Since Rogue Retreat was founded in 1998 our goal has been to help those who can't help themselves. We have targeted the homeless and our vision is: "a community where all homeless have a place to call home and are empowered to strengthen the quality of their lives."

At this writing, Rogue Retreat has 300 people under some type of roof each night, but we hunger for more and through the favor and support of so many, more is coming to Southern Oregon.

JOSEPHINE COUNTRY

Rogue Retreat is excited as the year begins to enter into Josephine County. **Foundry Village** has been the dream of some amazing community leaders for some time and their work is about to come to reality. By the publication of this article, Foundry Village should have necessary building

permits and work has begun. A target is to have the village open for participants in early summer 2021 which creates a program for participants in 17 tiny houses. It can serve up to 34 people.

Since our work in 2020 with UCAN in the Warming Center (an emergency shelter for up to 40 people) we have known in our hearts we wanted to help create an ongoing shelter in Grants Pass like The Kelly Shelter in Medford. We have been working with Grants Pass City leaders to get the necessary "green light" to move forward on what we call **GPS (Grants Pass Shelter)**. This month (January) we go before the Grants Pass City Council for permission to operate a temporary shelter (up to 90 days) for 50 people while ongoing work to find the right location and permission necessary to operate a full-time shelter. There has also been some interest in creating an urban campground like the one we currently have in Medford.

JACKSON COUNTY

Rogue Retreat is partnering with The Addiction Recovery Center to create **Heart Village** of 12 tiny houses specifically created to serve the needs of homeless individuals struggling with addiction who want to find freedom and regain their lives. The Medford City Council will be reviewing this request and if granted construction can begin very soon with a late spring or summer opening date.

The **Temporary Urban Campground** approved in July 2020 by Medford City Council has been so successful (housing up to 60 people currently) that City and County Officials are working to find a location and funding to allow the campground to continue and eventually grow. Rogue Retreat has long believed having a low barrier campground with proper oversight is a good idea for any community with a homeless challenge. It allows us to work with many other service providers in the area to get to know and address the needs of the campers. The campground has served over 250 different individuals and has moved forward nearly 50 of them into more permanent housing options. It is clearly working so well other communities are taking a closer look to see how they can copy what we are doing. Ashland is working on creating funding and a location to partner with Rogue Retreat to have a campground in their vicinity. Our Hope University Course on creating a campground is being taken by leaders from cities all around Oregon.

Pallet Structures found at the Temporary Urban Campground have gained real popularity since the first 10 were donated to us in October. Since then local generous donors have added 14 more and we are seeing the potential of another level of housing for the homeless who are older and more medically fragile. These 8x8 units have a locking door, windows, and an electric package that can provide heat and lights. All we need to

do is find a location which has the electricity to begin a new type of village.

A **Transition Suites** dream is in the works. The City of Medford, local agency leaders, and Rogue Retreat joined services to apply to the State of Oregon for a Turnkey Grant to purchase a motel to create transition suites (studio and 1 Bedroom units). These can be used to help ease the bottleneck of people who are successfully fulfilling their time in other transition programs like Hope Village but can't move forward due to the lack of affordable housing. These people will have a stable income, but need a place to transition as they wait on more permanent affordable housing to open up.

Space doesn't allow us to talk about other projects like Hope Village 2 or an RV park for those displaced by the recent fires.

BEYOND

Rogue Retreat expects to have more interest directed from other Cities, Counties, and States. We invite these inquiries hoping to stir up more opportunities to create hope for the homeless across the country. We are in current discussions with leaders from Douglas, Linn, Curry, and Deschutes Counties in Oregon.

BOTTOM LINE

We love partnering with so many committed, generous donors. We feel honored to have some many people give on a regular basis to enable us to serve the homeless and we look forward in 2021 to adding more. We plan to grow our "planned giving" program to help people make long-term giving decisions from their estates. When we can purchase a new Pallet Structure for \$7,000, a tiny house for \$10,000, or a bed for the shelter to take more homeless people off the streets, and when we can do that we all win!

Your Cans and Bottles Can Help!

Clean Sweep would love to come by your place of business and pickup your cans and bottles to help support our job training program.

For more information call (541) 449-0880



Trader Joe's donated 17 bags of cans and bottles!

CRISIS CAN LEAD TO BLESSINGS- COVID-19 IMPACT



By Matt Vorderstrasse

COVID-19 has had some major impacts worldwide. On top of the loss of life and stress on our medical systems, our economy has taken a major hit. Collectively, we have seen our agency expenses increase by \$50,000.00 per month. We faced a significant loss of income and had to move quickly to stem the bleeding while being stretched operationally.

We were still operating at full capacity with sheltering and housing over 200 individuals a night

in Jackson County and also being presented with the opportunity of operating the 40 bed Grants Pass Warming Center each night in Josephine County in partnership with UCAN after the COVID-19 shutdown (closed in May).

The community came together and our staff continued to show up and provide essential services to the unsheltered in our community. 4 Tiny Houses at Hope Village were sponsored. These contributions came from the Medford Rogue Rotary who raised \$20,000.00 internally to pay for 2 tiny houses, from Rogue Retreat Board Member and his lovely wife, Kelly and Liz Andersen, and the Raymond Family Foundation. As we entered the Summer's Wildfire Season, Rogue Retreat was blessed with another opportunity to help expand our homeless services by operating Southern Oregon's first Urban Campground in partnership with the Medford Livability Team (over 60 sites). We added 10 more permanent beds to The Kelly Shelter and as of today we now house and

shelter over 300 people each night.

Operationally, we were supported by ACCESS, UNCAN, Oregon Community Foundation, Care Oregon, Jackson Care Connect, AllCare CCO, Slave 2 Nothing Foundation, United Way, and many other generous donors. While the economy fell out from under the Country, the community came forward to save Rogue Retreat and help ensure that these services are still being provided to our community's most vulnerable. This year we have received over \$2.4 million to help support and expand our services. It has been breathtaking and humbling to see this support come forward.

Speaking from the personal

experience of having served on the Board of Directors before becoming the Development Director. I remember when grants and donations were nearly non-existent and Rogue Retreat was a small agency that struggled to finish the year in the black. To now be an agency that can shelter and house over 300 individuals across 2 counties' with an operating budget of \$3,000,000.00; well I still have to pinch myself sometimes when I think about it.

I cannot thank everyone enough for this support. It is humbling to be able to be part of this organization and to see this support from our community grow. We would not be able to do this work without you.

WINTERIZING THE URBAN CAMPGROUND

By Chris Keller

Winter comes with all sorts of twists and turns in it and this is no different for those that are unhoused. The only difference is the cold is more bitter when you are unsheltered and homeless. The Urban Campground is more exposed than most programs and as a result, we have had to do some additional work to winterize this program and better serve our communities' most vulnerable.

The Urban Campground has over 50 sites (14 Pallet Shelters and over 40 tent sites). Each tent site is covered by a carport canopy and we have placed all the tents on pallets reinstalled bark to keep the mud to a minimum. We used heaters to create a warming tent and we supply extra sleeping bags as needed. Some of the water issues are still being worked on in partnership with the City of Medford however everything continues to keep



improving. We keep case a hand warmers and we supply them as needed to our campers.

During this Winter Season the Urban Campground is in desperate need of:

- Propane for Heat
- Campground Meals www.mealtrain.com/trains/8gqz94
- Water
- Hand Warmers
- Tents
- Pallet Shelters for seniors and medically fragile (\$6,800 each)
- Sleeping Bags



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GRANTS PASS SHELTER (GPS) PRESENTED TO GRANTS PASS CITY COUNCIL



By Heather Hassett

Rogue Retreat has applied with the City of Grants Pass for a temporary use permit to use the former UCAN building at 125 Northeast Manzanita Ave as a seasonal winter shelter. This request went before the Grants Pass City Council on Wednesday, January 6th at 6 pm. Since this is a land-use issue the Council voted to begin the 7 days public comment period and then the council will reconvene to vote on the Conditional Use Permit and hopefully bring GPS into existence.

The temporary use permit would allow Rogue Retreat to operate a 90-day shelter while the city creates a process to apply for a permanent Conditional Use Permit for the location, due to the current zoning that does not allow social services in the General Commercial zone.

Plans for GPS (Grants Pass Shelter) include providing 50

separate rooms varying in size for individuals, couples, small families, and large families. This particular layout is ideal to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses. The shelter would have 24/7 onsite staffing, with case management during the day to help shelter guests address the barriers that have contributed to their homeless circumstances.

GPS would be operated based on the model of Rogue Retreat's "Kelly Shelter" located in downtown Medford. Those who are experiencing homelessness are invited to fill out an application for services and are then placed on a waiting list. Shelter guests are notified of openings and are selected from the waiting list and are enrolled in the shelter for the full 90-day season. If they find other housing options or are otherwise removed from the shelter, the next person from the list is selected. This prevents the chaos of "queuing up" outside the shelter waiting for a bed. Since the facility would be a 24-hour shelter there would also be no group of homeless individuals "hanging out" during the day waiting to be let back in at night.

There have been some local businesses who have expressed concern over the proposed location for the shelter. Their fears are common to all new Rogue Retreat projects. To help address the fears



with facts we held a very positive GPS Neighborhood Meeting via Zoom on January 4th at 6 pm. Local neighboring businesses received a flyer with an invitation to the meeting. Feedback from this meeting is already prompting us to change some of the operational plans, which includes finding a separate office (away from the shelter site) in Grants Pass to process applications and do program intakes.

On December 18th Mayor-Elect Sara Bristol and Counselors-elect Briand DeLaGrange and Vanessa Ogier toured three of Rogue Retreat's Medford programs, the Temporary Urban Campground, Kelly Shelter, and Hope Village. DeLaGrange said he had a preconceived notion of what a homeless shelter looks like, and it wasn't necessarily positive. After seeing all three facilities, he said it's the staff that makes operations like these run smoothly. He admitted that he was expecting to see more people around, more noise, more things going on, and he just didn't

see any of that. Executive Director Chad McComas led the tour and estimated that around 60% of people who enter Rogue Retreat's programs move on to more positive housing. Ogier said that the trip was meant to gather the facts about Rogue Retreat and the work that is done, especially at the Kelly Shelter. "My takeaway today is the work Rogue Retreat is doing in Medford is phenomenal. A 60% success rate is really something to be proud of". Bristol said some of the Grants Pass community concerns she hears about is safety, but those concerns were not manifested in Medford.



THE 180° CLUB IS HELPING PEOPLE MAKE A 180 IN THEIR LIFE



By Chris Janisch

The 180° Club is a group of our supporters who are helping

people make a 180 in their life. The supporters give \$25 per month to help make that difference. We know the average person can't write the \$100, \$500, or \$10,000 checks that we sometimes get here at Rogue Retreat, but what they can do is commit to giving \$25 a month.

A lot of people say they want to do a 360 in life, but the truth is that you don't want to do a 360 because that means you turned around and went back in the same direction. You want to do a 180, which means that you were heading in one direction, then you turned your life around

and went a different direction. Here at Rogue Retreat, we give homeless people a chance to do a 180 in life. They might have gone in the wrong direction and be stuck going that way, but we can help them stop, turn their life around, and move forward in a better direction making better life choices.

When you give to Rogue Retreat you enable us to do what we love, and we couldn't do it without you. Our goal is to have 180 people giving 25 dollars a month. Over the last couple of years, we have built the 180° Club to about 135 people

who give every month.

Think about it, can you give us \$25 a month and join the 180 Club to make a difference in someone's life?



HEART VILLAGE UPDATE

By Heather Hasset

The planning committee of Heart Village will be presenting their proposal to City Council at a zoom study session on January 28th to create a new homeless recovery model for treatment housing options. The next available date for a City Council official vote is February 18th to approve the request for the ARC property to be designated as an urban campground, which allows the tiny houses to be used for shelter.

Heart Village is an active collaborative partnership between Rogue Retreat and Addiction Recovery Center. It is based on the tried-and-true model of Rogue Retreat's Hope Village and augmented by ARC's assessment, treatment, and recovery support services for people needing substance use or co-occurring mental health disorder treatment. This initiative will establish a fenced and gated transitional tiny-



house community with common community facilities that are attractive, relaxing, peaceful, and green, on ARC's West Main campus.

The proposed project will include 12 tiny houses, constructed from shipping containers. The tiny houses will not include electricity

or plumbing. Those services will be provided by shared community facilities. The Community Center will be the hub of the village and will also serve as the front gate for the gated community and the case management office. The Facilities Trailer will include showers, bathrooms, and laundry. There will be a kitchen trailer for participants to prepare their own food and a food pantry building where each participant can store their food in locked cabinets and refrigerators.

"Mike and Vickie Graves are making a significant lead donation to help build Heart Village in the memory of their son Matthew Graves who struggled with mental illness later in life and was always sympathetic towards the homeless."

If you would like to become a sponsor, you may:

- Sponsor a Tiny House for \$10,000.00
- Help sponsor the Facility Trailer (bathroom, showers,

laundry \$50,000.00 total cost)

- Help Sponsor the Community Center
- Help Sponsor the Kitchen Trailer (\$10,000.00 total cost)
- Heart Village General Startup
- Sponsor Benefits
- Plaque placed on the sponsored building
- Testimonial videos of participants served
- Quarterly updates
- Invitation to exclusive events
- VIP status
- Other ways to help and get involved (including In-Kind Donations and Service Projects):
- Flower Pots
- In-Kind Donations
- Landscaping
- Sponsor the Dog Run
- Wheelchair Site Accessibility
- And, More!

THE GROWTH OF ROGUE RETREAT: PROOF IS IN THE DATA



by George Jarvis

The word going around is that Rogue Retreat has been growing recently, but is that really true?

According to the data from reports ran from Service Point, which is the HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) which is the database used for tracking those experiencing homelessness, the answer is a most definite YES!!!

The numbers of those served are as follows:

01/01/2018 to 12/31/2018 – 480 different people were served.

01/01/2019 to 12/31/2019 – 501 different people were served.

01/2020 to 12/29/2020 – 834 different people were served.

These numbers do not include any that were served more than once in a project, or in more than one project that Rogue Retreat oversees.

Why the big increase in the numbers from 2019 to 2020? The main reasons are:

The addition of the Temporary Urban Campground (TUC) project is designed to give folks an alternative to living on the Greenway and people have to have a referral from the Medford Police Department Livability Team to get into the campground. There are 51 campsites that mostly house single individuals, but can house couples if needed. Since the opening date of 07/27/2020 through 12/29/2020, 215 different people have been served.

The emergency shelter that Rogue Retreat runs, the Kelly Shelter became a year-round shelter, opening 11/21/2019. For the physical year 2019 since it was only a seasonal shelter, that closed 186 total people were served, but in the physical year 2020, 446 people have been served. Also, on 09/14/2020 the number of beds available increased from 54 to 64. The total served in

While serving a lesser number the Summit House which is a recovery house for men, opened in March of 2020. There are 5 beds and have served a total of 9 people since its opening.

As you can see, there has most definitely been an increase in the number of people Rogue Retreat serves. Going forward, there are several other projects that have been proposed, which if approved by the appropriate City Council, will push the growth even higher in 2021 and longer. These projects are:

Grants Pass Shelter – The proposed shelter will have 40 separate rooms, with beds for

singles, couples, and even families. This means that anywhere from 40 to 100 people could be sheltered at any one time.

Foundry Village – This is the Grants Pass tiny house village based on the Hope Village project and will have 17 initial tiny houses.

Heart Village – This is another project based on the Hope Village project, as it will have 12 initial tiny houses, and will be used for people in the Addictions Recovery Center program that need a place to stay while working their program.

The bottom line is that the Data shows that Rogue Retreat is definitely growing, and will continue to grow. Not only is the number of people served increasing, but this also makes it critical that the number of employees increases to be able to give the participants the best services possible. Rogue Retreat has gone from 40 employees in 12 months to just over 70 currently and will be hiring more as the other projects open.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT:

GINA MAE



By Gina Mae

“I would like to share that I am a proud graduate of Hope Village and alumni of Rogue Retreat. I graduated just over fourteen months ago. I took a week to really think about what volunteering has done for me and my success. In doing so I found out that it has been essential to my recovery and to fitting in, in the world today.

Let’s face it -I was one of the worst

when I got here. I could not focus. I had no patience and I

could not sit still or be still no matter how hard I tried. I would describe myself as a Tasmanian devil out of control.

Over time I felt like the staff at Rogue Retreat respected me. I felt loved and safe. My radical behaviors diminished and were almost all gone. Being and staying

a part of Rogue Retreat is the key for me. I guess it would have been easier to just take and not give back or participate, but then I would have missed the mark for me.

Today I am accepted and appreciated in my efforts. I Have made new friends and am getting

great work ethics under my belt. Sounds like a winning hand to me. So for the new year, I recommend that others try something different. Get out there and volunteer with Rogue Retreat and I guarantee you will have different results!

LIGHT ONE CANDLE



By Krystal Perkins

When one of our employees heard about the Medford Mail Tribune’s “light one candle event,” she knew just the person to nominate! Marci McComas has been working with Rogue Retreat for a year now and has worked with many of our participants and been touched by many of their stories. But when she heard that the Mail Tribune was asking us to nominate a person or family in need, Marci was determined for a new one participant in particular. The lady in our program (who we will not name) has lived a story that most can’t even

fathom. This woman is over 80 years old and after losing her husband her life spiraled out of control. By the time anybody knew enough to intervene she was already living in a cardboard box on the Bear Creek greenway. Medford Police livability team officers found her. This woman came into our program and has already touched the lives of so many. Marci nominated this woman and The mail Tribune published the story so that the community could offer gifts to make her Christmas a little brighter. On the day of the publication, Rogue Retreat’s phones would not stop ringing. There was so much community outpour to help this woman. The staff here at Rogue Retreat were jumping up to answer the door every 5 minutes because so many amazing community members were dropping off gifts for the woman. Thanks to the Medford Mail Tribune, Marci’s determination, and our community, Rogue Retreat was able to gift \$3,000 and a mountain of gifts to give this woman a fresh start in life at 80 years old. These are the beautiful things that Rogue Retreat gets to be a part of and it’s because of the love and amazing people in our valley!

Rogue Retreat Wishlist

These are some of the items we need to help service the homeless in our community.

- 1. Sanitizing Wipes**
- 2. Toilet Paper**
- 3. Binder Clips**
- 4. 13 & 6 Gallon Trash Bags**
- 5. Post-it Notes**
- 6. Disposable Face Masks**
- 7. Pacific Blue Multifold Paper Towels**
- 8. Disposable Vomit Bags**
- 9. Disposable Food Serving Gloves**
- 10. Latex Gloves**
- 11. Hand Sanitizer**
- 12. Triple Antibiotic Ointment**
- 13. Band-aids**
- 14. White Washcloths For Face**
- 15. Laundry Detergent**
- 16. Adult Incontinence Underwear (Mens)**
- 17. Mega Roll Toilet Paper**
- 18. Socks**
- 19. Razors For Men And Women**
- 20. Paper Towels**

If you feel you can help provide any of these items, please call our office at (541) 499-0880

LOWES HOME IMPROVEMENT... MORE THAN JUST A STORE!



By Krystal Perkins

One of the biggest struggles that the Kelly Shelter has faced, has been the need for a bike shelter. Many of our residents' livelihoods are dependent on their bicycles and unfortunately, bicycle theft runs rapidly through our city. It got to a point that our residents' were waking up in the morning to find that their bicycles had been stolen and they weren't able to make it to their doctor's appointments, job interviews, or any other appointments essential to getting them back on their feet.

We as Rogue Retreat felt it was our duty to these individuals to provide some level of protection to our resident's belongings. We began reaching out to organizations, stores, and manufacturers to find a shed or bike rack that would work at the shelter's location. We were on the hunt for about two months with no such luck before we reached out to Lowe's. Lowe's had recently gone above and beyond to help us build the Temporary Urban Campground (virtually from scratch) and so we were reluctant to ask for help again so soon. More and more time passed, more bicycles were stolen and more people who were working so hard to get back on their feet were falling victim to the thefts.

We finally bit the bullet and reached out to Lowe's and just like the last time, they didn't hesitate to help. Rebekah Tarkon (Lowe's store manager) proved eager to participate in this effort and even volunteered a team of her employees to assemble this beautiful shed they donated to us. It's always great to receive

donations that will help meet the needs of our residents but getting to actually meet and spend time with our donors is a whole new kind of experience. We love getting to learn about our donors and getting to educate them about our program as well.

In mid-November, several of Lowe's employees arrived in their work logo T-shirts and came ready to put in the work. They helped build the 12X10ft loft shed from the ground up. Even the rain didn't redirect their determination to help. One of the Lowe's team members even got to take a tour inside of the shelter. After seeing the shelter, he said that he is really happy to be part of a project that is truly making a difference in people's lives. Thanks to Lowe's our residents no longer have to worry when they rest their heads at night, that they may be the victims of theft by morning.



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A MUCH NEEDED EXPANSION TO THE KELLY SHELTER



By Shannon Holland

As the kitchen manager at the Kelly Shelter, I have the opportunity to feed the lost and broken souls of our community. These are folks who have lost their way now have a chance to rebuild their life or learn how to live in a society. In my

opinion, food is the most important part of healing and recovery. If your belly is empty it's hard to concentrate and life becomes more overwhelming. I speak from experience.

The expansion of the Kelly Shelter is very much needed, not only does it provide ten more

people with a safe space to sleep every night, but it will help me with storage and organizing. I will be able to say "yes" to more donations because I will have the room to store non-perishables.

Having more room means, I will have more counter space for serving and to set up some of the crock pots, if needed.

This expansion means having an expanded dining area for our guests and a place for them to watch TV and not disturb others who may be resting. Our guests at this time sit at their bunk to have their meals, keeping the 6ft distance, but it is difficult with limited seating.

We are also excited to be able to have employee lockers and a place for employees to sit and eat their lunch or sit and take a break.

The whole idea behind this expansion is so our employees and our guests can have room to work and live comfortably. Then all can



learn the steps to get the life they desperately want and deserve. I am so fortunate to be where I am today. I'm watching our shelter grow and expand into a very successful place for our homeless brothers and sisters. As a person that has been in the same spot at one time, I am so grateful to be able to be a part of their life journey and with this remodel we can do so much more for our guests.

God bless.

Help Feed the Kelly Shelter and Urban Campground

We know that providing our participants with stability is one of the biggest ways we can help them build a better future.

One of the many ways we do this, is by providing hot meals for them every night. It also helps build an important sense of community within our programs.

We need your help.

Would you consider signing up to bring a hot meal to either program?



Meal Train is a meal service program we use to schedule and manage our meal donors. If you go to the site, it lists what nights are still available and the specific details for dropping off a meal to each of our programs in need.

Sign Up to Help

The Urban Campground meals need to serve 60 people
Sign up: <https://mealtrain.com/8gqz94>

The Kelly Shelter meals need to serve 64 people
Sign up: <https://mealtrain.com/v1r9oyThe Kelly>

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT:

MICHAEL MCKENZIE



Rogue Retreat Participant Michael McKenzie

By Krystal Perkins

In early November I came to know of Michael McKenzie. Michael is the younger brother of my friend Tina. Tina was lost, knowing that her little brother was walking the streets of Medford with nothing but a tent and the clothes on his back. She would cry to me daily about her fears for him. As the winter months

crept upon us she was losing sleep. She couldn't stand knowing that while she cuddled up in the warmth of her home, that Michael might freeze to death before morning.

Tina knew all about Rogue Retreat. She had been my daycare provider for a year and a half and has heard innumerable testimonies of the program from me. In mid-November she asked me,

"Krystal please help my brother." Now, we all know that a person can only be helped if they let somebody help them. They have to want the help and when it came to Michael, she explained that he was headstrong and not one to accept their family's help. I took Tina's plea to heart and told her I would try. She began telling Michael about me and about the Rogue Retreat program. For weeks she continued to put the bug in his ear. I did not reach out to him first. I waited. Then HE CALLED! I answered the phone and we talked briefly. I asked him about his circumstances and he shared. I suggested that he sign up for the Kelly Shelter and our Temporary Urban Campground. He quickly hung up on me. A few minutes later, he texted "no thanks." I knew he wasn't ready and I knew that trying to push change on him would surely scare him away. Instead, I replied "I want you to know that I'm not offended that you hung up on me. I know this can be overwhelming and scary. I want you to know that when you are ready we are here." I finished it off by saying, "In the meantime, if you need food, clothing, or a warm shower then just call me." Then we waited. Over the next couple of weeks, Michael would text me regularly. He expressed his reluctance and shared that every time he puts effort into change, it always fails. I reminded him that it's ALWAYS going to fail.... until the day it doesn't! We began working together through text, complete strangers who had never even met. We began discussing his needs and small to-do-lists that we could accomplish together and so began the road to Michael being ready. Read the following interview to see where Michael is today...

When did you move into the Rogue Retreat program?

At the beginning of December 2020.

What were your circumstances before coming into the Rogue Retreat program?

I was alone, homeless, out in the cold, and living in a tent. I had no electricity, no running water. No job and NO HOPE. Every morning that

I woke up, I was angry that I did. Another day I would have to be alive and living like this.

What brought you to Rogue Retreat?

Hope for a better life.

What have you accomplished since you moved into the program?

I finally "care" again. I've quit using drugs, I haven't been smoking cigarettes. I got established with a doctor and filed for my unemployment. I am ready to get a job and go back to work.

If you could go back in time and say one thing to your younger self, what would you say?

"Don't do it, Don't do it, Don't do it! Do not make poor choices because IT MATTERS!" I never thought way back when that the choices I was making would matter so much today.

What are your short term and long term goals?

To go to the World National Arm Wrestling Championships and represent the U.S.A. I also want to open the "McKenzie Center."

What is the McKenzie center? (interviewer asks)

It will be a place that helps anybody and everybody who needs to turn their life around. I won't tell anybody no -no matter what they're struggling with.

What would you tell somebody who is reluctant to come into our program like you were?

I would tell them don't be scared and to not hesitate. I would tell them that it's safe to give Rogue Retreat all of your trust.

Michael hasn't been in the program for very long but has already taken huge strides. We've watched him push himself far outside of his comfort zone. We've seen him say yes when he wanted to say no in hopes for a better outcome. He thanked me recently for believing in him and reminded me that sometimes, all a person needs is somebody to believe in them.

Rogue Retreat believes in all of our participants and we always will.

Rogue Retreat Tours

Since Hope Village was built in 2017 Rogue Retreat has hosted many tours for various city, county and state leaders. We have had university presidents and business leaders and so many interested citizens along the way. Most all say at the end of tours: "This isn't what I expected."

Hope Village, The Kelly Shelter and now the new Urban Campground are setting examples of what can be done to serve the homeless in other areas. Hope University was created to provide valuable education to help others make a difference.

Please reach out to Rowena to set up a tour at 541-499-0880 or by email at rowena@rogueretreat.com

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN



By Rowena Reeley

This year the holidays have looked very different for a lot of people. For some it's because of the precautions of avoiding the usual family gatherings, for some it's the loss of work and income, for others the loss of a home due to fires and for some, it just feels plain different this year. Some have been fortunate and blessed enough that they have not needed to majorly adjust their plans or expectations for this holiday season.

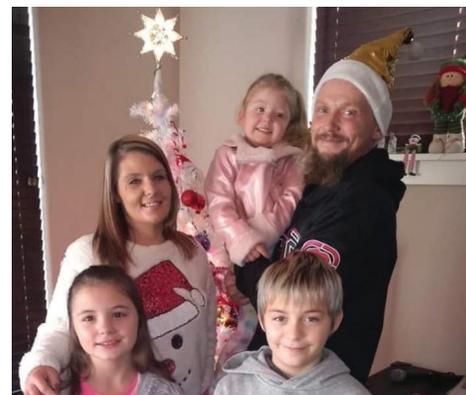
It's one of these blessed families who figured out a way to help other families get a lift in their holiday spirit. Krystal Perkins and her husband, Jason had a plan this year. They bought a "Santa

suit" and were going to set up their indoor security cameras to help their children 'catch Santa' on his yearly visit to their house. While they were planning this adventure for their own family they began talking about how blessed they had been this year despite everything that has happened in 2020. That's when it happened... They decided they wanted to offer others the same kind of experience they had planned for their kids, only why not let the kids of Medford meet Santa in person?

Krystal put out an inquiry on Facebook asking if people would be interested in having Santa personally come to their homes to wish their kids a door-step, "covid-conscious" Merry Christmas and hand-deliver a gift or two. The response was overwhelming! Santa made visits and deliveries to families in Phoenix, Talent, Medford, White City, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Central Point, and Grants Pass! The adventure grew to such a point that it was necessary to expand the operation adding two additional Santa's and supporting elf staff.

This author even got to get in on the fun and what I can tell you is that this was not only a very memorable experience for the families but for the people who made it possible. Bringing such joy and cheer to the community during a holiday season in the midst of a pandemic and

following events such as the fires that recently swept through this area was a special kind of soup for the soul. I could not personally think of a better way to help bring some cheer back into the holiday season.



Krystal says that it is because of her work here with Rogue Retreat that helped to prepare her to take on a project of this scope. There were some learning experiences for sure but overall it was a positive experience all the way around. The hope is to repeat this adventure next year as well, so if you missed out on meeting Santa this year don't worry, there will be another chance to make the list next year!

Thank You RVTD!

We would not be able to survive without our community partners and partner agencies. Over the past several years RVTD has blessed Rogue Retreat by donating retired vehicles that have helped us create a small fleet of vans and buses to help operate our programs and serve the chronically homeless in Southern Oregon.

Please join us in thanking them for their support!



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