



Creating opportunities for the homeless to have hope

NEWSLETTER

May, 2021



HOPE UNIVERSITY HELPING PROVIDE HOPE AND TRAINING FOR OUR NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES



**By Matthew Vorderstrasse,
Development Director, Rogue
Retreat**

A January 2020 survey found 845 people in Douglas county who were identified as homeless, including 183 under the age of 18. At least five homeless individuals in the area died last year, and three more homeless people were found dead in January.

Rogue Retreat's Hope University consulting and training program was blessed to be able to help the Roseburg Homeless Commission conduct a Community Needs Assessment for those that are unsheltered. The process of creating an action plan



Matthew Vorderstrasse working with volunteers in Douglas County during the Community Needs Assessment

for improving homeless safety net services in the Roseburg community began in March of 2021.

The first step in advising this plan was through conducting a needs survey to unsheltered individuals, an online community survey for community members, and zoom and phone interviews with community leaders. In total over 80 members of the Roseburg community took part in helping draft this assessment and action plan for the community to execute. The results were reviewed at a Strategic Visioning meeting that was conducted on April 14th, 2021, and the report and action plan

were presented and reviewed by the Homeless Commission and City Staff on April 26th, 2021.

Some of the needs that stood out with the unsheltered that were surveyed were:

- Access to more Domestic Violence (DV) shelter beds.
- A low barrier shelter/year-round shelters
- Warming Centers and Cooling Centers
- A family shelter
- Youth Shelter

- A space to be (much like an organized Urban Campground)
- ACCESS to bathrooms, trash cans, showers, and laundry
- More medical outreach (mobile medical and dental outreach)
- Pet-friendly shelter spaces

One of the more impactful stories that we heard during this outreach was a woman who had been living in an encampment for three days after fleeing domestic violence. She had nowhere to go, so she packed a tent and put it in a park. This type of homelessness is becoming more and more common as our housing crisis continues to grow.

This information that was gathered helped inform the vision that was created which states:

“Roseburg envisions an inclusive community where all feel safe, supported, and have the opportunity to work towards becoming self-sufficient. This will be accomplished through building a sustainable, coordinated social service-based network to address the needs of the unsheltered.

Lasting success will be founded on the principle of collective engagement with the entire community.”

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GRANTS PASS SHELTER ON PAUSE



by Chad McComas, Executive Director

Rogue Retreat has been looking forward, for months, to creating a winter shelter in Grants Pass. We have been talking about this since we ended the Warming Center at the end of May 2020. Our experience working with the people who used the shelter was powerful and frankly, we were hooked. It was a great time partnering with others in Grants Pass to make it work. We can't thank UCAN and agencies like St. Vincent DePaul enough for their vital assistance in the endeavor. We were able to serve over 250 unique individuals through the Warming Center.

We thought we could take a step up this year by providing a three-month shelter with a full

staff, case management, and 24-hour care and oversight. We went to the City and were warmly welcomed by the new City Council and Mayor. We received permission to move ahead, but there were neighborhood concerns around what we planned to do, so the entire process was delayed.



"It's The Climate" sign in Grants Pass, Oregon

We worked for months with the owners of the building on Manzanita we had chosen to use. They ran into their own problems finding affordable insurance after the fires of last fall. Insurance agencies are hiking up their fees due to the danger of being less than five miles from forest land. The costs kept adding up and eventually, it became too big a lift for us to risk on

a "temporary" shelter with no guarantees of being able to continue after the three months. It was a very difficult decision, but at this time we cannot move forward in a fiscally responsible way with this temporary three-month shelter. We see a great future for our involvement in Grants Pass in serving the homeless, but it will not start at the Manzanita building for now.

We have enjoyed getting to work with the City as they have talked about the potential need for a campground for the homeless. We also love working with the AllCare Foundation on the creation of Foundry Village and the potential of partnering with them on their Turnkey application to purchase a motel that will serve as an emergency shelter for the homeless. We are committed to finding permanent solutions in Grants Pass and will be focusing our efforts and funding on long-term solutions at this time. We thank you for your continued support and encouragement and we look forward to continuing our partnerships with you in Grants Pass in the months and years ahead.

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ROGUE RETREAT THRIFT SHOP COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP



Su Rolle, Lead Volunteer, shown with a scarf worn as a turban

New ACCESS Program Provides Wigs

The Thrift Shop by Rogue Retreat is excited to announce a new partnership with the Over the Top wig program at ACCESS. This new program helps women experiencing hair loss for a medical reason such as chemotherapy to receive a free wig, headscarf, and accessories needed for wig care. Over the Top, which is run entirely by volunteers, offers a large selection of

wigs in many colors and styles which the client may choose. During COVID 19, wig selection is done over the phone or through email, and all products are hand-delivered to the client's home.

In addition to a wig and scarf (which can be transformed into a turban as shown), Over the Top provides each client with a wig stand, wig shampoo and conditioner, a sleeping cap, wig comb, and various brochures to help them navigate through the process of hair loss. All information is kept strictly confidential.

The Thrift Shop by Rogue Retreat is proud to support this amazing program by saving scarves, knit hats, and brand new wigs for Over the Top. We are happy to assist a program that so graciously helps others in our community.

For information about Over the Top, please contact ACCESS staff liaison Jennifer LaRosa at: wigprogram@accesshelps.org

Or call (541) 494-1219.



HELPING PROVIDE HOPE AND TRAINING FOR OUR NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES

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In order to achieve this goal, the homeless commission will begin with creating tactical sub-committees that will focus on accomplishing some short-term goals first which will lead the way for more program creation. The short term goals that were identified were:

- Navigation Center that Roseburg has received funding to create.
- Identify the lead organization or organizations to help stand up and operate the programs. The lead organization or organizations will have the bottom-line responsibility of managing the day-to-day operations of the programs.
- Create a comprehensive property inventory for potential program development.
- Facilitate a forum to develop a

perspective and strategy related to information sharing and referrals.

- Create an outreach and livability sub-committee of the homeless commission to focus just on short term needs of the homeless.
- Investigate potential ordinance updates to help create a pathway for program creation.

Rogue Retreat will work with the Homeless Commission to Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help provide coaching, consulting, and training services. Our goal is not to expand into Douglas County, rather we want to help build up their existing community to carry forward this work.

It is truly an honor to get to help other communities address the needs of their unsheltered.

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Oregon Health

RAISING HOPE



Gena Satori, Development and Community Relations

HOPE: the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best; to believe, desire; to place trust; rely

There's a funny saying around Rogue Retreat that goes like this, "We're HOPE dealers."

Nope, that didn't read like you

think it read - let me write it again, "We're HOPE dealers."

We have learned if someone loses hope, they have lost their ability to believe not much of anything good will happen for them. What's even worse, is when someone feels hopeless to the extent that they've lost trust that *others* can help them facilitate positive change in their lives.

Unsheltered people who have lost hope no longer believe anyone cares about their suffering, or that anyone can help them alleviate their suffering.

Because of you, Rogue Retreat can provide shelter so unsheltered people can start to rebuild their lives one step at a time. We provide meals. We provide showers. We provide safe places where one can rest without worry about the threat of violence. We facilitate services that help our program participants collect the documents needed to put one's life together, such as identification cards, bank cards, social security cards - the documents needed for one to secure employment, access financial resources, or to secure a place to call home.



We are open Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm!
If you need anything, don't hesitate to come in, email, or call. We're always here to help!

4880 Airway Drive, Central Point, OR 97502 — sales@bigsignfx.com — 541-499-0531

We do more than that, however. We help our participants to stabilize and access services that will meet their recovery needs if addiction is an issue. Also through our partners, we provide access to mental health services, legal services, and credit and financial counseling services.

None of this assistance - the ways and means in which we wrap our care around our program participants - can be done without the help of our many community partners and donors.

This year, we are planning on increasing our bed capacity by 200! That means that on any given night in Southern Oregon, we will have the capacity to shelter 500 unsheltered people, thereby providing 182,500 bed-nights over a year's period of time!

We need your help to make this dream a reality.

Please consider donating to

Rogue Retreat this summer. Your donation makes a significant and lasting impact on the lives of others. Your donation helps our program participants gain the skills, confidence, and access to resources they need to begin their journey to find purpose and dignity.

We don't intend to keep people "In" our programs, perpetually dependent on our housing and services. We inspire hope and deliver the services, skills, and resources so that they too can live independently and sustainably.

You are literally, "Raising Hope" when you donate to Rogue Retreat. Thank you for all you do.

We are so grateful.

If you choose to get involved, please mail your gift to: 711 E. Main St. #25, Medford, Oregon. Or find us online at: www.rogueretreat.com/ways-to-give

HAIRCUTS AND A TRIM LIFT SPIRITS



Last month, we had four generous hair stylists volunteer to give free haircuts to our campers at the Urban Campground. When asked how they happened to get involved, their answers were varied. Andrew "Scissorhands" Reynoso from Alchemy Hair Salon said his fiancé works next to the Rogue Retreat office. He'd become a barber in October and met Scotty, a camp host from Hope Village. Scotty asked Andrew if he'd like to offer his services to the residents. Andrew had some free time and called another barber, Dakota Trammell who said, "Yeah, let's do it."

Megan Pawlicki, from The Olive Branch, is friends with Alex from Rogue Retreat. Alex asked if she'd offer free haircuts, and Megan immediately went on Facebook to see if other stylists might be interested. Michael Padgett answered the call and they joined Andrew and Dakota for a few hours. None of these young people knew what to expect.

Andrew said it was cool to see there are services for the homeless community. He'd only heard of shelters but didn't realize there was a campground and individual huts (Pallet shelters). Megan said she was impressed with "how well the camp ran and how it was set up."

As for the clients, Megan commented, "Everyone was in good spirits, and I was impressed with the people."

Dakota said he thought they would mostly be people with addiction problems, which is a hard road. "I wasn't expecting to see the many mentally handicapped people. It made my day helping people who were just displaced, not by any actions of their own, so to speak."

Andrew described his favorite part of the day. "I liked talking with the clients, meeting them - the chit-chat and stories. They have a great sense of humor. It was nice to see their spirits light up when they got their hair cut. I like what Rogue Retreat is doing and helping out with the community. Dakota and I want to be available in the future if you guys need it."

Dakota related a tender moment. "Midway through the day, when I got an understanding about what was going on and the reality of it all, I got emotional for a while. It felt good to be helping. It was great to see their attitudes change the second they sat down. This is something I want to go back and do again."

In all, these four heroes performed their scissor magic on about nineteen grateful people and trimmed several beards. We applaud their generous hearts and wish them well in their professions.

Have a skill? Maybe it could be put to good use at Rogue Retreat. Call the office at 541-499-0880, and we'll get you plugged in.

CLEAN SWEEP NEGOTIATES RAILROAD PROJECT



A group of Clean Sweep volunteers in front of the Clean Sweep trailer

We are thrilled with the progress of Rogue Retreat’s Clean Sweep Program. Todd Diehl heads it up and supervises a fluctuating crew of five to ten men or women who volunteer to sweep streets and pick up litter in the Medford area. You might have seen them wearing their green vests and waving at passing cars that honk their support.

Diehl’s long-range goal has been to make the program self-sufficient instead of relying on grants. His negotiations with the Railroad are bringing that dream to fruition. We had a chance to interview Todd and learn more about this project.

What does the Railroad Project entail?

“They need brush cleanup along the tracks from Ashland to Grants Pass. I have five guys doing brush removal three days a week for seven hours a day. Once we get it done, it will turn into maintenance so it’s not so heavy to do the following year. The Railroad picks the area of track they want done and we do it.”

What are the benefits of having this contract?

“If we can, I want to try to make it a temporary part-time job for our participants to get job experience. They are getting used to being back in the workforce, and this will give them a legitimate resume. Some of these guys haven’t worked in years.”

How many more people will be able to participate in Clean Sweep?

“For our regular crew, we have

about 10 daily. This Railroad contract will bring that up to 15 people.”

What changes do you see in the men and women who get involved in Clean Sweep?

“It changes how they feel about themselves. Our litter patrol volunteers like it when people honk at them. They feel a sense of pride to be contributing. Those who are working on the Railroad are using weed-whackers and equipment. They are working hard and regularly, like they are part of society again. It makes them feel more important.”

Do you have future plans in the works?

“Ultimately I’ve been modeling Central City Concern in Portland. I’d like to get an employment and resource center to help our folks with resumes, driving them to work, that kind of thing. I’d like to network with companies that say they are having trouble finding workers. I can offer workers who are already vetted, guys I’ve worked with. I believe in doing a lot of “hands up.”

How can we support you?

“Cans are always welcome. We’d love it if someone wanted to donate brush removal equipment, safety hats, and glasses. Also, if you see our green-vested volunteers around town, honk to encourage them!”

Todd, thanks for the great job you are doing. It’s truly making a difference in real lives in real-time.

“My recovery must come first so that everything I love in life doesn’t have to come last.”

OnTrack Rogue Valley offers treatment for alcohol and drug abuse, DUII education, a Domestic Abuse Alternatives Program (DAAP), teen counseling including minor-in-possession (MIP), medication-assisted treatment (MAT) counseling and anger management counseling.

OnTrackRogueValley.org

In Medford: 300 W. Main St. (corner of Holly), 541-772-1777

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STEPHEN



Steven, Rogue Retreat participant (Medford Urban Campground)

Hope. It's a word that is familiar to most of us.

I've thought of the concept of hope, of it being something that could be aspirational, such as, I hope this, that, or the other might or might not happen. Of it being something that resides in a dimension beyond the human, as though a power greater than ourselves reaches out to me with unconditional love and infuses me so I can do for myself what I never thought I could do. I think hope carries me when sometimes I can't carry myself.

Hope for me is akin to, if for only a moment, resting within the wings of an angel. I believe in hope because I know what life looks like when hope is lost. It's as if the world is steeped in shades of grey, watered down to muddy brown, wrapped in soggy despair.

Chad, the Executive Director of Rogue Retreat, speaks often to our staff about hope. He says that without it, you don't really have anything. I get that. Most of you know that feeling too. When Chad talks about hope, I've thought, yep, I know what you're talking about.

But that knowing went a cut deeper the other night.

I'm a new contractor with Rogue Retreat working with the Development Department team

to raise funds so we can help unsheltered people - so we can do what Chad says we must do, "inspire hope in our clientele, in ourselves, and among those who give so generously to this work."

My background in marketing, communications, public relations, and video production feels especially fulfilling when it supports the humanity of people, people like me and you who care about the ones we love and the communities where we live and work. On behalf of Rogue Retreat, I need you to know that your interest in what we do really matters - mostly to people you and I will never meet.

Part of my job with Rogue Retreat is to produce a video that tells our story. You'll be able to see the huge difference your contributions make and how much a part of this story you are. Chris (also with Rogue Retreat and my talented partner on our video project) and I wanted to record what the "secret sauce" is that Chad talks about - that which helps people learn to live sustainably and independently. We also want to show you what the world looks like through the eyes of unsheltered people who haven't yet had the opportunity to become a Rogue Retreat program participant.

Recently, Chris and I had the good fortune to work with the "Livability Team," a unit of the Medford

Police Department. The program originated in 2019. According to the Medford Police Department website, it "adds dedicated police and code enforcement personnel to the downtown area and Bear Creek Greenway in an effort to find a balance between enforcement and outreach and address livability concerns such as homelessness and chronic nuisance houses." The Livability Team works in partnership with Rogue Retreat and other nonprofits.

Chris and I were given the opportunity to film with this special group of officers for our video. We filmed Sgt. Kirkpatrick help an unsheltered man access more than \$2,000 of his own money because he didn't have ID that would allow him to cash his own social security checks.

We recorded Corporal Jewell when he was greeted with smiles and hugs by Michelle, a woman who was formerly unsheltered. Because of his intervention on her behalf, she is now living in the Rogue Retreat Urban Campground with her partner. With deep gratitude as well as a delightful sense of humor, Michelle explained how fortunate she felt to have met Corporal Jewell, though she was quick to say when she met him while living on the Greenway, she didn't like him too much. Corporal Jewell laughed at

her playful jab.

Michelle is not one hundred percent clean and sober. She doesn't have to be to qualify to live in the Rogue Retreat Urban Campground. However, she and others sheltered there aren't allowed to use drugs or alcohol while living in the campsite.

In the company of Corporal Jewell and Officers Tim Pickens and RJ Josepheson, Chris and I drove to the Greenway with the intention of learning first-hand what life is like for people who have nothing more than a tent or a sleeping bag to call home.

Officer Pickens stopped to speak with a man who was sitting on a log - just a few yards away from Rogue Retreat's Urban Campground. The older man looked as though he had lived on the streets his entire life. His clothes were black, maybe from embedded dirt, or maybe it was just their color. I couldn't tell. He was stooped over, and as I watched Corporal Jewell talk with him and gently enquire about his day, I caught in the older man's eye a look of sadness that made my heart clench.

I glanced at Chris who was filming the interaction, and without a word spoken, I asked if he thought I should interview the older man. With barely a movement, Chris nodded. Stepping

closer, I introduced us and asked if we could interview him for the video. He agreed and told me his name was Stephen. I asked him if he was unsheltered. He said he was, then told me the most profound story of loss - of the losses - he had experienced. His daughter had died, his wife died, and his parents were gone as well. The grief from his accumulated losses had been so severe, he had walked away from his business and drowned himself in drugs and alcohol.

Stephen went on to say that at one point, he pulled himself together and went back to reclaim the business he had worked a lifetime to build. By the time he returned, however, it was lost to him. With tears streaming down his face, he talked about the agony of losing everything and everyone he loved. Then, in a voice that sounded like it originated from a bottomless well of despair, he said he'd gotten into a street fight and lost his right eye. With a degree of anguish I have rarely heard before, Stephen looked into my eyes and said, "I lost my eye. On top of everything else, I lost my eye too."

What Stephen didn't know is that I too had lost everyone I loved. I lost more as well. I know that feeling that not a soul in the world would have cared for a moment if I lived or died, and because of it, I didn't care that much either. That feeling is abject and utter hopelessness. I met Stephen there without telling him so. Stephen and I have a shared experience between us, and that shared experience is catastrophic loss.

Why I'm not on the streets is a wonder to me.

It appears Stephen has an addiction to drugs or alcohol. Who would blame him for dulling the pain, even for a moment? Then the moment becomes a day, and that day becomes a month, and then a month becomes a year. For Stephen, it's been seven years on the streets. He's 70 years old.

Without thinking, because the world seemed to have stopped spinning around me, I knelt before Stephen and touched his hand. Then I held his hand. He was surprised at my gesture, and through his tears he exclaimed how warm my hand was. With a cracking voice full of shock, not wonder, he said, "I can't believe you would touch me." He wasn't worried because of Covid, he was shocked that I would touch... him. It was the simplest of human kindnesses, yet he could not believe it had been extended to him.

I cried. Stephen cried. And then I told him to please go back to the Urban Campground that Rogue Retreat had established. I told him that in the campground he would have a safe place to store his possessions; he would have access to a shower; he would receive clean clothes; and he would have regular meals. Imploringly, while looking deeply into Stephen's eyes, and feeling as if my life depended on his choice, I said he would have more to hold onto than my hand if he gave the Urban Campground a chance. There, he would have many hands to help him, to hold him.

When the moment passed, the officers (maybe alarmed at my reaching out to someone who, unknown to me, had exhibited signs of aggression previously that week) suggested that Chris and I

move on and let Stephen be with his feelings while he made the choice for himself as to where he wanted to be. Corporal Jewell told me later that he had been working with Stephen for a few weeks to get him into the Urban Campground. Just the day before, Stephen had agreed to give it a try.

I was so taken by my experience with Stephen, that when I got back into the police car, in order to not totally lose it and cry my eyes out, and then feel embarrassed at my big reaction to what Officer Pickens experiences daily, I awkwardly tried to make conversation while pretending that, "Yep, I've got this." But then all of a sudden, it dawned on me that I had witnessed something I had never seen before. Four police officers, with a unique skill set that combines deep compassion and empathy with extraordinary strength and stamina, help change the way we see people who often end up behind bars by not putting them behind bars.

The truth is that when I was with the Livability Team officers, I witnessed power without force. Literally.

There's something that is sometimes said in 12-Step meetings and elsewhere, "There but for the grace of God go I." That's the first thing I thought when I was holding Stephen's hand.

I've since wondered if maybe a butterfly had flapped its wings in South America and somehow Stephen got caught in the tsunami as a result of a wind force that had picked up enormous strength traveling over a great distance, and why for me, I only experienced a passing thunderstorm with a

few downed trees and a slightly crumbling foundation. Who knows... why you, not me, or me, not you? Who knows... why?

The other thing I've thought about since meeting Stephen was what I felt when our eyes connected. There, I met someone who had seen much, lost much, but the biggest loss might very well have been his loss of hope.

You don't want to see that. Lost hope is worse than sorrow, or rage, or grief, or indifference, or even cruelty. Lost hope is unexplainable, untenable, unbearable.

I now know in a deeper way what Chad has been talking about when he says we inspire hope, and because of it, we restore lives.

I've always wondered if angels walk among us. I'm now convinced. They walk among us at the Urban Campground or at our many shelters, and in our offices. They may put on police uniforms and with the utmost strength and compassion, truly help those who need help the most.

I am grateful to be in the company of angels. I am grateful I had the opportunity to meet Stephen and that he had the opportunity to meet the Livability Team and through them, the caring and compassionate Rogue Retreat team. I am grateful that with the help of countless community partners and you too, we are inspiring hope and restoring lives.

Angels walk among us.

Hope thrives there.

VIDEO:

WHO IS ROGUE RETREAT

People often ask what Rogue Retreat does or who Rogue Retreat is. This question seems simple on the surface but becomes much more complicated when you dive into it. We wanted to create a video to help address these questions and provide clarity to our community partners, donors, and anyone who is interested in the work that we do here at Rogue Retreat.

We didn't just want to tell people what Rogue Retreat does, but we wanted to share who we are. Rogue Retreat is an organization based on inspiring hope and restoring lives. As we created this video, we interviewed staff, participants,

and community partners to find out who Rogue Retreat is and how Rogue Retreat supports the homeless in our community.

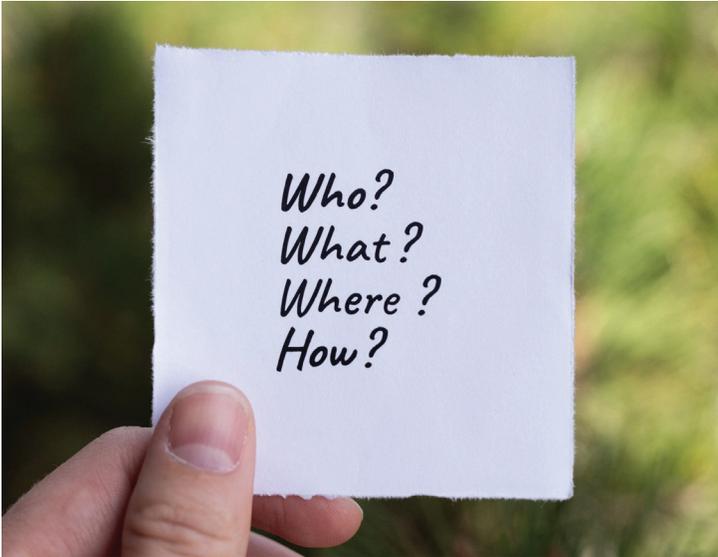
While producing the video we discovered that Rogue Retreat isn't just a housing organization or even a supportive services organization. We are an organization made up of individuals with a heart for helping people in need. The humanity of homelessness is something else we uncovered, we tried to peel away the stigma of homelessness and actually show the individuals for who they are.

So many amazing people agreed to be interviewed for this project. We'd like to make a special thank you to the Medford Police Livability Team, they not only agreed to be interviewed but also took us along with them on the Greenway to see what things are really like. We were able to meet some amazing people living in Rogue Retreat's programs.

The video has taken over two months of planning, production, and editing. It's finally finished and ready for you to watch. You can find the video at www.RogueRetreat.com

TRUTH BE TOLD

UNDERSTANDING ROGUE RETREAT'S PART IN ASSISTING THE HOMELESS



Is Rogue Retreat's main function to house the homeless?

Although it may appear that Rogue Retreat is a housing organization, our attempt to house the homeless is only a small part of our success strategy. Rogue Retreat Executive Director Chad McComas said, "We wrap ourselves around people so they can get on their feet."

This commitment involves a huge effort from our staff and many partners in the health and well-being industries. As Justin Hon, an Urban Campground host said, "We meet the unsheltered where they are at and help them meet their highest potential."

To that end, Rogue Retreat is putting forth its best efforts, which includes housing. We offer multiple tracks to support our homeless neighbors at this basic level as they seek a stabilized home situation. We can currently provide temporary shelter for over 300 individuals in our Medford locations. Here's a quick overview.

Urban Campground: from the greenway to a safe campground

Thanks to the Medford Police Livability team, many campers have moved their tents and sleeping bags from unsafe conditions to a secure, supervised campground. Currently, our 75 sites are full. Restroom

facilities are on-site, and showers are available off site. Campers submit applications and agree to basic rules to participate in our communities.

Urban Campground: a step up for the most vulnerable

If an opening occurs for one of our 25 Pallet Shelters, campers can become eligible to move to better quarters with locking doors and a bit more room to move around. Currently, these are being used for our elderly and mentally fragile participants. Read more at: www.rogueretreat.com/housing-programs/urban-campground

Kelly Shelter: indoor bunks, regular food, and a sense of community

Partnering with Access, Rogue Retreat created the Kelly Shelter, a year-round facility to bring people in from the elements. It currently offers 64 beds. Shower and laundry services are available on-site. Participants can be part of this restorative program for six months as they work with their mentors and service agencies to move forward. Read more at: www.rogueretreat.com/housing-programs/kelly-shelter

Hope Village: 17 tiny home duplexes offer 34 private units for men, women, and couples

This was a dream of Rogue Retreat, St. Vincent DePaul, and the Jackson County Homeless Task Force. In this

fenced, secure community, residents find a greater sense of stability. Shared facilities include a kitchen trailer, a restroom and shower trailer, a laundry room, a community center, a park area, a dog park to care for their service animals, and a vegetable garden to try their hand at growing their own food.

The village is safe, sanitary, and supervised by on-site staff and an overnight camp host. Residents pay a nominal fee to live here. Daily village chores and weekly house inspections teach them how to care for their living unit and become good future tenants and neighbors.

This eight-month transitional program strives to move participants to more positive and permanent situations. Some move into residential treatment, some reunite with family, or move into a Rogue Retreat apartment, or available community rental. Read more: www.rogueretreat.com/housing-programs/hope-village

Havens: shared housing offers support for men and women who've come through community recovery programs:

Rogue Retreat has five homes for those who've come through the recovery process and are ready to take the next step. Again, each participant has a mentor and support team to give them the best chance for full integration into a healthy, productive life. Read about each Haven: www.rogueretreat.com/shared-recovery-housing

Housing Retreat: getting it all together

This apartment complex is owned by the Housing Authority of Jackson County and operated by Rogue Retreat. It is a rent-subsidized program for people who are currently and chronically homeless. Participants are responsible for paying 30% of their adjusted gross income as they take on more responsibility working and running their lives. After a successful year, they will receive their own HUD vouchers and hope to move to permanent housing.

Restart Retreat: a second chance to rebuild responsibility for people who've lost their housing

The two sites in this program offer twenty-one affordable apartments for our homeless who need a fresh start. Participants in this program already have a consistent, reliable source of income and can afford to pay affordable rent, but due to less than desirable credit/rental/criminal histories, they find it difficult to find a landlord who is willing to take a risk and rent to them. Participants are responsible for paying full rent while they demonstrate their consistency.

Redwood Inn: help for fire victims who lost their homes in the Alameda Fire

This 47-room motel is a wonderful new addition that was granted to Rogue Retreat to refurbish. It will be used as temporary housing, first for those who lost their homes in last year's fires, then for others who need temporary housing.

Even with these resources, we are limited to offering only temporary housing to only a fraction of the people needing help. The swell in rental prices, jobs lost to Covid, and fires that wiped out much of our low-income housing in our valley continue to contribute to an already urgent situation. We appreciate the support from our community leaders and individuals who have gotten involved. In the future, we hope to see long-term strategies develop that offer permanent housing solutions for our neighbors in need.

Through mentorship, training, and skill development, our goal for each participant is to help them regain their dignity and stability to become a responsible, contributing part of our community. Thank you for being a vital part of Rogue Retreat. You are making a huge difference!

If you have a question you'd like addressed, please contact us at newsletter@rogueretreat.org

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

BECKY SCHWEP FROM URBAN CAMPGROUND



Becky Schwep, Rogue Retreat Urban Camground

talking and he asked me to come work for Rogue Retreat.

Which program are you working with?

I'm a Guest Host at the Urban Camground and I love it! After the Medford Police Livability Team brings people off the street, we provide a safe place with food and shelter. La Clinica and case managers connect with the campers. Some need help with drug addictions and a damaging lifestyle. I help our guests get settled and get what they need.

Is food provided at the campground?

Yes. The Kelly Shelter provides dinner on the weekends and the Medford Gospel Mission brings dinner during the week. The Jackson County jail brings breakfast, so campers are on their

own for lunch.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Dealing with people in that raw place right off the street and seeing how many people move forward. Big changes happen in the short time they're here.

What heart-warming situations have you experienced?

The residents really help each other. If someone needs to go to the hospital and another has a car, they'll give a ride. If someone cuts a finger, another will share a bandaid. They are extremely giving to each other and so loving. I've seen them go out of their way to help the elderly guests with their needs.

What personal benefits of working there do you enjoy?

I like that it's outdoors and the way my coworkers band together

to help our guests. There are some basic rules, but the campground has a sense of freedom which is uplifting. I also like the spontaneous ways that come up for us to help our guests.

What do you think about the Pallet homes?

They seem to provide a sense of safety. Because they lock, guests know their stuff won't get stolen. It feels like more of a space of their own.

How has working at the Urban Camground changed your outlook?

Like I said, I've been surprised at how generous the guests are toward each other and at how generous people have been to make it work. I don't think this would be possible if donors hadn't come alongside to create this space.

How did you first get involved with Rogue Retreat?

I'd written a book about grace and met Pastor Chad while at the Oregon Christian Writers Conference. Recently we were

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ASHLAND URBAN CAMPGROUND:

THE ROUTE TO WHERE WE ARE



Linda Reid, Housing Program Specialist City of Ashland



A team from Pallet setting up a shelter

Urban Campground for several months and was proving to be highly successful in providing non-congregate shelter while supporting households to transition out of homelessness. At that time as well, the City was considering a pilot project that consisted of purchasing pallet shelters and placing them in the parking lots of churches already participating in the City's overnight parking program. Based on the needs and resources identified by service providers and homeless advocates, the decision was made to implement an urban campground modeled on the Medford Urban Campground project.

Historical Overview

The City of Ashland is a municipality with primary missions to maintain city facilities; provide safety services such as law enforcement and fire protection; regulate building and development; and provide services that promote the health and welfare of citizens through social service funding and programs, such as senior services and housing supports.

Services and programs to reduce instances of homelessness in the community were primarily funded through the general fund and federal pass-through grants. Ashland's shelter system relied on donated or leased space in churches and community buildings to provide basic sheltering for homeless populations during the coldest months of the year. The winter shelter system also relied heavily on community volunteers to staff the shelter and provide food and resources to the shelter guests.

New Challenges

This all changed due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the recent impact of the wildfires. Ashland found itself in a situation where the citizenry requested the City take a more proactive role in providing services and resources to alleviate the issues of homelessness and maintain public health and safety for all residents. These additional requests came at a time when Ashland was facing budget shortfalls and increasing community needs from every

sector.

When the Ashland Winter Shelter Program had to close suddenly in March of 2020 due to Covid and the need for social distancing and safe work practices, the traditional system of shelter came to a crashing halt. Suddenly, the 45 shelter guests had to be quickly transitioned to alternate accommodations. Some of them had friends or family they could stay with until the weather changed, but many had to be transitioned to the streets.

Urgent Solutions

The City was a critical partner in helping to coordinate and provide resources to help in that transition. Options for Helping Residents of Ashland (OHRA) decided that the most vulnerable to COVID infection should be transitioned to non-congregate accommodations. OHRA partnered with Access and the City of Ashland to relocate and pay for 10 vulnerable households to reside in hotel rooms throughout the City to keep them safe from the spread of infection.

As the pandemic wore on and more and more vulnerable households came forward needing non-congregate housing to stay safe, the City was able to dedicate Community Development Block Grant funding to continue paying for hotel rooms. Initially, the City and providers were responding to the issues as they arose, but as the pandemic wore on, a more proactive plan was needed to address COVID safe sheltering.

The City engaged providers of

services to homeless populations and members of the faith-based community to elicit feedback on the extent of the community need for sheltering; on agency capacity for undertaking new activities; and to brainstorm creative solutions. City staff met with several providers of homeless services in the region to discuss options for Covid safe sheltering. Out of those discussions, two things became apparent. There were limited spaces large enough to accommodate the safety measures required to continue in a congregate sheltering model, and there were limited funds to continue to provide non-congregate sheltering in hotels.

A Plan Solidified

At that time, Rogue Retreat had been operating the Medford

While the City's mission is not directly related to providing services to homeless populations, the City does have a mission of providing for public safety and being responsive to the needs of the community as they arise - even more so in times of increased need due to multiple community-wide crises. As a small municipality with limited resources, however, the City needed additional resources to meet the extreme needs presented by the pandemic and recent wildfire events.

A Network is Established

For several years, the City and Rogue Retreat had been in communication regarding

Why are COVID-19 cases in Oregon rising?

Along with increased social gatherings without face coverings, **more transmissible variants are in Oregon.**



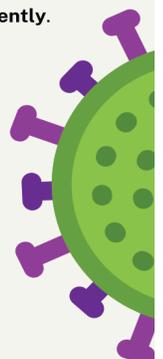
Variants of concern have **mutations** in the virus genome that **cause the virus to act differently.**

50%

One variant, B.1.1.7, has now become the dominant variant in Oregon statewide. B.1.1.7 is 50% more transmissible and may cause more severe disease.



The good news is that it appears that **COVID-19 vaccines are effective against variant B.1.1.7.**



NEW BARBEQUE RAISES COMMUNITY AT HOPE VILLAGE

Excitement buzzed our way from Hope Village when the Camp Host, Scotty Ball, picked up a new barbecue and assembled it for the residents. We had a chance to ask Scotty about it.

Q: We understand you and some other folks bought a BBQ for Hope Village – how cool. Are you also the cook?

A: I cook a bit, and we have other people who cook too.

Q: Can each resident use it to cook their own meals?

A: Yes. They can cook and clean up the grill after themselves so it will last a long time.

Q: What made you decide to do this?

A: I knew the folks would like to be doing some barbecuing, and the one we had was pretty much dead. It barely made it through last year and took a dive two months ago. I worked on those before and know

how to repair them, but with all the parts it needed, I decided it was better to get a whole new one. We all got together, including me, and pitched in, and I went to get it. They were out of the first one, but I found a better one for a bit more. Everyone sort of pitched in.

Q: Has it created more of a sense of community?

A: Oh yes. On Tuesdays, we have a community meeting and go over life skills and can barbecue afterward. One of my case managers has a karaoke machine. I'm thinking that maybe we can have a community barbecue and karaoke and have weekend get-togethers.

Q: Do you think more barbecues would be helpful? I think one is enough. This one has five burners and one side burner for a pot. Last weekend, we put lots of hot dogs and hamburgers on, and it handled it great. Also, we have the kitchen to do things, say if someone wanted



Hope Village residents barbecuing on their new barbecue

to make homemade potato or macaroni salad.

Scotty, thank you for going above and beyond your job as a Village

Host. You are a real asset to those you serve and an inspiration for the rest of us.

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT:

DANIELA NICELY

We caught up with Daniela Nicely as she was racing off to a meeting. She was gracious to pause and answer a few questions about her experience at the Urban Campground.

Daniela's path to Rogue Retreat began like many of our campers who encountered Medford's Police Livability Team members. Through their persistent coaching, she finally gave Rogue Retreat a try and is so glad she did. She says the Livability Team finally won her over!

Daniela had been without a home for five years and was camping behind a pawn shop in Medford. One struggle on top of the others was dealing with the trespassing tickets she kept getting.

We asked about her life now and what she's grateful for. She laughed, "No more tickets!" Vivacious and enthusiastic, she explains, "I am so grateful to have a place in the Urban Campground. I go to meetings and



Daniela Nicely, Rogue Retreat participant (Medford Urban Campground)

have a support network to work on my health. They are also helping me get my ID back so I can eventually get a job again."

Her hopes for the future include helping young people navigate a healthier path. "I'd like to help build up community, so the youth don't end up on the street like I did."

Daniela, you are a delight, and we wish you success on the road ahead. Certainly, the most potent message comes from someone who's been there and can point out the pitfalls. It's a great vision to pursue.

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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>