

Piloting Change

Rising Rents Leave Many Seniors Homeless

In our community, it takes an average of one and a half years on a waiting list to move into subsidized housing for a senior age sixty-two and older. If you are under sixty-two, the wait can be more like three to four years.

There are few temporary options for vulnerable seniors while they wait for permanent affordable housing. NWPP Housing Specialists often have to negotiate a combination of resources to ensure seniors are safe while they remain on housing wait lists. We know that the conditions of one's environment affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. While it is better than being on the streets, often the short-term or temporary housing options greatly affect our senior clients' health. Recently we had the privilege to sit down and talk with Ralph, a Northwest Pilot Project client who at age 77 moved into permanently affordable subsidized housing after cycling through shelters, hospitals and rehabilitation facilities for a year and a half.

Ralph is a Portland native who worked as a bartender at some of Portland's most iconic establishments for fifty-two years. When he turned seventy-five years old and should have been settling into retirement, he instead began one of the most difficult periods of his life. He received a rent increase he could not afford and was forced to move from his apartment.

After 32 years, home is unaffordable

In the early 1980's Ralph moved into a small studio apartment in downtown Portland that had daily, weekly and monthly rental units. The 1920's building was intended for salesmen who would drive into town, stay for a short period and then move on to the next city. To this day, the building includes all utilities and weekly maid service. The building has studio, one-bedroom and penthouse units ranging from 300-425 square feet. When air travel became more affordable, the traveling



Ralph in his new studio apartment

salesmen stopped coming and the units turned into monthly rentals.

For many years, Ralph paid \$200 per month for a studio that included a small kitchen and private bathroom. After the original property owners passed away, a management company took over and slowly began to increase the rents, gradually pricing out many of the low-income tenants. The studio Ralph had rented for all those years now rents for \$900 per month, far beyond what he can afford on his monthly income.

Homeless

In 2015 Ralph had to move out of his apartment. He stayed temporarily with a friend but quickly found himself outside with nowhere to go and became homeless. He got onto shelter waiting lists and was able to move into a temporary shelter for veterans where he was connected to Northwest Pilot Project.

His Housing Specialist at NWPP, Erica Parkinson, helped him to apply for subsidized housing where he would be able to live independently and pay 30% of his income in rent, making it permanently affordable to him. But it would take time to get into subsidized housing.

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From the
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 Laura Golino de Lovato

If you're a regular reader of NWPP's newsletter, you've seen our stories about the seniors we help with housing, like Ralph, many of whom were homeless when they came to NWPP for assistance. For a small group of them, about 7% of those we see each year or about 100 seniors – homelessness is a long-term situation. It's ongoing and harder to end because they are struggling with a serious physical or behavioral disability. For seniors, a serious health condition that goes untreated, such as diabetes, is as debilitating as drug addiction. There's a name for this very damaging combination of long-term homelessness and disability: "chronic homelessness."

Chronic homelessness is a cycle that is extremely difficult to break because of the challenges of securing enough income to pay for housing in a very expensive rental housing market, and the level of severity of disabilities that, without treatment, aggravate the situation. And while it affects only a small number of seniors we see, the impact on our community is immense. The US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) sites studies that show that a chronically homeless person costs taxpayers \$30,000–\$50,000 each year.

For seniors who are chronically homeless, the toll is enormous. The rough and stressful conditions of living in a tent, car, and homeless shelter or outside cause the aging process to

Chronic Homelessness Cycle



US Interagency Council on Homelessness

accelerate. The National Coalition for the Homeless suggests in their Fact Sheet on the homeless elderly that street conditions are so severe that “a fifty year old living on the street may possess physical traits resembling a 70 year old.” We have seen many such clients.

In our 49 years of providing housing assistance to seniors we know that there are 3 key parts to successfully housing chronically homeless seniors: subsidized rent, medical/health services, and supportive services. Last year, NWPP decided to provide enhanced case management services to the most vulnerable seniors needing housing assistance. We successfully increased case management from 180 to 210 seniors. This year, we hope to bring a special focus to those seniors who are the most challenging to house. We will be joining colleagues from other housing-related social services in demanding more new

housing units paired with medical and health services. This type of housing is often called “permanent supportive housing” (PSH) or just “supportive housing.”

Permanent supportive housing, or PSH, is housing paired with supportive services for persons with disabilities, physical or behavioral. The idea is that “chronically homeless” individuals - those who are homeless and disabled – have a unique set of barriers that make it difficult for them to be successful in housing without supportive services. Those services could be addiction treatment, mental health services, or regular transportation services to medical care. In the long run, the cost savings of PSH to the community outweigh the upfront costs. And an additional benefit of PSH is that it has been shown to improve the health and well-being of the individual while reducing health care costs for the community.

It's important to note that our community needs more housing units for the extremely low income clients who need supportive services. The most effective way is to create more housing units with services and not simply repurpose existing units by adding services to them.

For seniors, stable housing is a key to aging in place and staying independent. The intensive and focused case management NWPP provides includes help getting benefits, finding housing, working with landlords, and connecting to physical and behavioral health providers. We know the way to help seniors obtain stable housing and we hope you'll support us in doing so.

Onward!

Laura

Rising rents continued

Ralph remembers struggling to get up and down from the sleeping mat on the floor at the shelter. He said, “As rich as this country is, for people like me who paid taxes my whole life, I don’t think I should have had to live in shelters on the ground for so long before getting into housing affordable to me.”

Soon after moving into the shelter he was hospitalized with double pneumonia. His Housing Specialist coordinated with the hospital social worker and moved Ralph into a rehabilitation center until he was strong enough to live independently again.

With the help of a veterans program through Central City Concern, Erica moved him from the hospital into an SRO (single room occupancy) where he shared a bathroom and didn’t have to sleep on the floor. During this time Erica helped Ralph connect with a primary care doctor and he began to receive regular medical care.

However, during a heat wave in the summer of 2017 when he was seventy-six years old, Ralph had a stroke. He ended up hospitalized and again in a rehabilitation facility for two months while recovering.

Permanent affordable housing

All the pieces finally fell into place in late November 2017 when Ralph was approved for a studio apartment downtown just a few blocks from his long-time apartment. Ralph endured nearly three years of homelessness before finally finding an affordable home. His studio is light and bright and has a wall of windows that looks onto the South Park Blocks in downtown Portland and he loves it.

Ralph is determined to stay inde-



pendent and walks a minimum of ten blocks each day with his walker to build back his strength after his stroke. He says, “Erica was my life saver; she went above and beyond so many times to help me during my darkest days, I am forever grateful.”

A huge need

Unfortunately, Ralph’s story is not unique. Northwest Pilot Project

receives an **average of 80 calls from seniors each week** looking for help with their housing situation.

We are thrilled to see Ralph safe and stable in permanent housing. Here at NWPP, each time a senior moves into permanently affordable housing we stop to celebrate it as a success. At the same time, we know our community can do a better job of ending the homelessness of seniors quickly or, often, preventing their homelessness in the first place.

The negative impact of homelessness on the health of our seniors is well-documented. The long-term housing success of seniors who move into permanent and affordable housing is well-documented. NWPP will continue to help seniors like Ralph access permanent housing, and we will continue to push for significantly more affordable housing for the growing senior population in our community.



From the BOARD CHAIR Mark Reber

With summer’s approach, I’ve enjoyed several camping trips to some of Oregon’s outdoor gems, Cape Perpetua and the Metolius River. On those trips, I reflected on the stark contrasts between recreational camping outdoors and the harsh reality of camping for many seniors who seek our services. Their camps, whether in cars or near public places, bring little comfort or security. My family and I can pack up and go to our home when we tire of camping; those for whom a tent has become their home, cannot.

The reality of our clients’ circumstances stayed with me, but I had a renewed sense of joyful appreciation for the recent Walkathon. Because of you, NWPP staff, and scores of volunteers, this year’s Walkathon was another great success. The weather was beautiful, our walkers cheerful, the atmosphere buoyant and the funds raised went directly to NWPP’s Emergency Fund. And those dollars mean more seniors will find a home and live with dignity and hope. Thank you, once again, for making that possible.



39th Walk-A-Thon a Huge Success!

Thanks to:

-  168 walkers
-  23 businesses
-  3 churches
- 1 synagogue
- 1500+ pledgers
- 23 corporate sponsors!

This year's Walk-A-Thon raised **\$161,000** for the programs and services of Northwest Pilot Project.

We are delighted with this result! Our thanks to all of our wonderful walkers, volunteers, people who pledged walkers and all the businesses that give us their support.



With the help of our 23 corporate sponsors and business supporters we are able to use all the money we raise to meet specific needs in our community rather than pay overhead. This year's corporate sponsors include:

Presenting Sponsor:



Gold Sponsors:



Silver Sponsors: Cantel Sweeping, Classic Pianos and AtoZ Moving, Columbia Trust Company, Income Property Management (IPM), Northwest Housing Alternatives, REACH Community Development, TriMet, Willamette Dental Group

Bronze Sponsor: Concepts in Community Living, Michael DeShane & Keren Brown Wilson, Eastside Lodge, Escape from New York Pizza, Huber's, J. D. Fulwiler Insurance, Kaiser Permanente, Noho's Hawaiian Café, OneAppOregon, Rose Villa, Susan Utterback CPA

Business supporters: Bowery Bagels, Grocery Outlet, Hot Lips Pizza, Pacific Office Automation

2018 Walk-A-Thon Super Stars

Grand Prize Winner Ruth Schuld Raises \$6,252

Ruth has been participating in our Walk-A-Thon since 1997! This year she raised \$6,252 and once again won our grand prize. In 21 years of walking she has raised a total of \$100,643. She recently celebrated her 97th birthday. Ruth Schuld is one of the most enthusiastic fundraisers we have ever known. We crown her our queen of fundraising!



Incredible Teams

- Terwilliger Plaza, \$27,094
- Kairos United Church of Christ \$8,782
- Fastest Runners of All! \$1,941
- Team Uproar \$1,594
- Park Blocks Brigade \$1,410
- Jack Potts Team \$1,265
- PGE \$1,200
- P'nai Or \$1,099
- Rose Villa \$850
- Class Academy \$772
- REACH CDC \$420

Amazing Individual Prize Winners

The following walkers won first prize in their age group raising the most money of anyone their age:

- 0-10 Years – Kai Jones-Childs \$1,250
- 11-25 Years – Lauren Murphy \$1,270
- 26-54 Years – A.C. Caldwell, \$4,435
- 55+ Years – Karen Day \$4,073



Our special thanks to Hollowdog, the band that donates their time and talent, provided terrific music again this year. www.hollowdogmusic.com



★
★ Thank you to all who walked for NWPP!

You came as individuals, teams, families, church groups, schools, business groups and as groups of friends united by passion for the services NWPP provides.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and the clients served through NWPP, **THANK YOU!**

100 percent of the money raised by you, our wonderful supporters, goes directly to help low-income and homeless seniors, because all of the Walk-A-Thon expenses are covered by our event sponsors.

Our profound thanks to all 2018 walkers. We truly could not do the work we do without each and every one of you.

- Evren Acar
- Erik Anderson
- Luke Anderson
- Donna Arentz
- David Barringer
- Ruchi Barve
- Israel Bayer
- Sue Beardwood
- Louise Beauchamp
- Chiarra Bettiga
- Elliana Blough
- Libbi Blough
- Mandy Brenchley
- Randi Brox
- Bryant Burks
- Geovoney Burks
- A.C. Caldwell
- Brenda Carpenter
- Chelsea Carpenter
- Avery Cenicerros
- Pasha Cenicerros
- Alison Cha
- Donna Childs
- Steve Cox
- Brenna Crocker
- Mary Crocker
- Bill Cunitz
- Sammy Dabbs
- Karen Day
- Francesca DeNiro-Wallace
- Susan Emmons
- Olivia Flamm
- Connie Foss
- Mateo Frederickson
- Alice Frost
- Rishika Gautham
- Tom Gavin
- Loni Geiger
- Jan Gerber
- Todd Gergen
- Joe Gillock
- Justin Godsy
- Jeanie Golino
- Noelia Gomez-Sanchez
- Linda Goodman
- Barb Gorman
- Jane Gott
- Marva Guenther
- Kathy Haines
- Margaret Hamachek
- Thomas Hegenbarth
- Sabine & Bob Hines
- Beth Hirschfield
- Dov Hirschfield
- Elisha Hirschfield
- Shirley Holland
- Lorraine Irwin
- Scott Jackson
- Candace Jamison
- Sumana Jayaraman
- Liv Jenssen
- David Johnson
- Jessie Jones
- Kathy Jones
- Kai Jones-Childs
- Joan Jozwiak
- Salina Karia
- Silas Kettlewell
- John Knapp
- Gloria Kovach
- Raghav Krishnan
- Atticus Larsen
- Dale Latham



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Photos by Diego Diaz



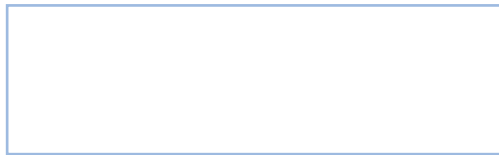


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We need your support to help more low-income seniors in our community. Your support makes our work possible and helps us continue to change lives. **Thank you!**

YES! I want to contribute to NWPP's Emergency Fund.

It's easy! Just fill out and return this coupon in the enclosed return envelope to NWPP, 1430 SW Broadway, #200, Portland, OR 97201

It's easy to give online too! Visit our website at nwpilotproject.org/donate

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500

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