

Piloting Change

Dale's Northeast Portland Homecoming

In early spring 2022, Dale sits in the sunny living room of his tidy Northeast Portland apartment. The nearby kitchen sports new stainless steel appliances, while on the other side of a sliding glass door a small patio overlooks the tree-lined street. "I was born and raised here," he says of the neighborhood. "All my family is here." But this new apartment is a kind of a homecoming for Dale—he lived for seven years on the streets of downtown Portland.



Dale is far from the only senior who has lived on the streets of our community. Multnomah County's 2019 Point-In-Time count showed that 23% of those experiencing homelessness were over 55 years old—a 15.1% increase over 2017. Overall, only 1 in 3 older adults who meet the criteria for housing assistance actually receive it. Statewide, Black Oregonians experience homelessness at a rate three times greater than their share of the population.

When he was homeless, Dale says, "I stayed away from my family for like five years. I was totally off the grid." During those years, Dale says, "I was on meth really bad. I was a hopeless to die alcoholic. I had just lost touch with reality. I never came inside. I never slept in a bed in seven years. I never watched TV. I ate out of garbage cans and drank out of mud puddles. If I was sick I'd be sick in a doorway with people walking by."

Even though he has roots in Northeast Portland, Dale stayed downtown during those years. "I felt more accepted down there being homeless," he says. "I didn't feel like as much of an outcast. I was caught up in this

world where I didn't think I'd ever make it out of it. Not alive." It wasn't a stretch to believe that. Dale had seen fifteen people die in less than two years. "Fifteen people that I knew personally," he says. "Not just passing by, but we drank together, we camped out together, we ate together. And they never made it out of downtown."

Dale's grim prediction for himself almost came true. One day when he was collecting cans on Burnside, a man came after him with a knife. "I trip and fall down," Dale remembers, "and he's on top of me, standing over me, trying to

stab me, stabbing and stabbing and stabbing, and I was trying to fight him off. I could see it in his eyes. He was seriously trying to kill me." That moment, Dale says, was an awakening. "I knew I had to get out of downtown. I knew I had to do something."

People experiencing homelessness, including older adults, experience high rates of violence. A recent study of 350 adults aged 50 and older in Oakland, California, found that 10.6% had experienced physical or sexual victimization in just the prior six months. The same is likely true for Multnomah County.

Dale didn't know how to change his situation, but a doctor at Central City Concern's Old Town Clinic asked him if he'd ever heard of the Recuperative Care Program. "I said no," Dale recalls. But with encouragement he entered the program, which offers three months of housing and treatment to help people transition out of homelessness. The program was a lifeline, but one Dale says he almost didn't grasp. "I was so high off

Continued on page 3



From the
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 Laura Golino de Lovato

Northwest Pilot Project is deeply knowledgeable about the challenges low-income seniors face with housing, and the opportunities that are available for them. But we do not do our work alone. We work in partnership with over three dozen other nonprofits, and with foundations, faith communities, volunteer groups, and government. Yet for the last year I've heard repeatedly how the network of organizations that provide housing and homeless services are not working together because they are "siloeed." That's news to me! And to my calendar!

Social and human service nonprofits like NWPP work with each other and with housing providers, public agencies, government, and individual volunteers *every day* to create service delivery systems, draft and enact policies, implement housing plans, deliver health care to the people we serve,

and much more. Dale's story is just one example of the great work we do together. Each of us has our own distinct mission, geographic area and group or groups we serve. I guess you could call that being siloeed. I'd call it specialization.

It's important to keep in mind that the older adult who is getting into housing by working with us will get other services that we don't provide – physical and behavioral health care, social enrichment, etc. – from other organizations. There is no one organization that provides every service that an individual needs. Where we do need improvement is across sectors such as health care, the judicial system, corrections, and government.

The work that social and human service nonprofits do is complex, and it is often the work that government has done in the past. For many com-

munities – like ours – it's the nonprofits that provide the safety net for the most vulnerable in our community. And until very recently, resources have been scarce. With the Supportive Housing Services measure adding millions of dollars into our organizations – from rent assistance to outreach – and with more innovations to come, we are moving forward. And we are doing it together.

**A BIG WALK-A-THON
 THANK YOU!**

For Northwest Pilot Project, the highlight of the spring was returning to the South Park Blocks on May 1st for the *in-person* 2022 Walk-A-Thon. After two years of being virtual, I am ecstatic to report that you, our supporters, made it a fantastic event! Through the generosity of our sponsors and dedication of fundraisers like you, we raised \$171,000, well above our goal of \$150,000. **THANK YOU!**

The funds you raised for Walk-A-Thon not only allow us to help clients with rental application fees, deposits, and rent assistance, but also furniture, fees for state identification, and cell phone minutes. This money supplements NWPP's other funding sources, such as the Supportive Housing Services measure voters passed in 2020 and that we share with our many partner organizations. These funds started reaching us in July 2021 and have allowed us to expand our Permanent Supportive Housing team. In this month's cover story, you can read about Dale, just one of the clients whose lives have been impacted by this vital program.

Thank you for your support and generosity. With your help we can achieve our goal of keeping seniors housed!

Laura



NWPP Board of Directors at the 2022 Walk-A-Thon with former and current executive directors. From left: Carol Maresh, Alan DeLaTorre, Joe Gillock, Barb Gorman, Carmen Schleiger, Susan Emmons, JoAnn Herrigal, Laura Golino de Lovato

Dale's Homecoming continued

meth that I wasn't even going. And then my cousin showed up, and he's like, 'man, I'm here to take you out to your new place.'"

Once he entered the program, Dale says, "I kept all my appointments. I stayed the course and they said they could get me housing." Dale was worried he wouldn't pass the background check and other requirements. "I went ahead and signed up for it and took a chance," he says, "and they got me into a building downtown. And that's how I got connected with Northwest Pilot Project."

Northwest Pilot Project helped Dale pay the rent on his downtown apartment with resources from the Metro 300 initiative, a collaboration with Kaiser Permanente, Health Share of Oregon, and other social service organizations. While Dale waited for his Social Security benefits to be approved, his NWPP Permanent Supportive Housing case manager, Evan, helped him get a bus pass and navigate other obstacles to getting settled in his new apartment. Dale was one of the first seniors served through NWPP's newest team: Permanent Supportive Housing, an approach that pairs services tailored to client needs with rental assistance and housing. In Dale's case, a permanent rental subsidy makes his housing affordable. This model is built around relationships and proven best practices, and helps agencies like NWPP get housing for the most vulnerable seniors with the highest barriers. The expansion of our program was funded by the Supportive Housing Services ballot measure passed in 2020, which brought Northwest Pilot Project and our partner organizations the

“There's people out there that want help, that don't even know how to get help. But this has meant so much to me. Just don't give up hope.”

resources we so sorely need to address the housing and homelessness crisis in our area.

Dale was off the streets, but he still wanted to get out of downtown. "So when this opportunity came for me to get back to Northeast Portland you know I jumped on it, because I'm close to my family, within walking distance," he says. "That means a lot because they're really my support."

Today, Dale's kids are back in his life. "I met my daughter after twenty years," he says. "I never thought I'd ever see her again." He was able to travel to Atlanta to spend Christmas with his daughter and her two children (with another on the way). "I was just ecstatic," he says. Dale's two sons, who live in Las Vegas, visit him in Portland. And he has family nearby, too. "I got my cousin coming over every day now," he says. "I got my aunt, my uncle, and my sisters. So this has been really overwhelming, to tell you the truth, to have all this stuff happen so fast like that."

Dale now has stable housing and family support. But his years on the street have taken a toll on his health—he's lost three toes to diabetes and his teeth to meth. "I'm trying to get my dentures," he says, "so I'll be able to digest my food better. That's really been a downfall of my life, because I feel self-conscious about my smile, and I really don't want to

be around people. Sometimes I go without eating, because everything I think I want to eat, I can't eat." But with an appointment two weeks away to get dentures, Dale is excited. Doctors told him he'd have 30 to 40 percent chewing capacity with the new teeth. "Man, I'll take 5 percent," he says. "That's going to be such a life-changing moment."

Dale knows there are still many people on the streets. "I can see it in their eyes, when they've been out there for so long that they think there's no way out, and they just give up," he says. He hopes sharing his story will help others. "I hope somebody sees it and says, 'if he can do it, I can do it.'"

Now, Dale adds, "I just try to take it one day at a time. I don't try to overwhelm myself or anything like that. And I'm so grateful to have an apartment like this and that there's programs like Northwest Pilot Project that's willing to help those that want help. It's going to be a lot of trial and error. There's people out there that want help, that don't even know how to get help. But this has meant so much to me. Just don't give up hope."



Dale, pictured in front of his apartment, with a newly-acquired bike he plans to restore.



2022 Walk-A-Thon

After two years of virtual events, it was wonderful to see many of you in person on a beautiful day on the South Park Blocks. Thank you for supporting the work of helping low-income seniors find and keep housing!

Save the date: next year's Walk-A-Thon—Sunday, May 7th, 2023.

Thanks to:

124 walkers

735 donors

20 sponsors

This year's Walk-A-Thon raised **\$171,000** for the programs and services of Northwest Pilot Project.

With the support of our sponsors – businesses, community partners, and government – 100% of your donations go to meet specific housing needs for seniors in our community.

Presenting Sponsor:

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most enthusiastic supporters we have ever known and we are so grateful to her for the huge difference she quietly makes in the lives of the seniors we serve. Thank you Ann! ★

Our Volunteers are the Best!

We couldn't pull off this event without our wonderfully talented and dedicated volunteers!

Youth Charity League Members

Diane Pierce

John Middleton

Quete Capuia

Rick the Sound Doctor

Myles Hoggans



Top Individual Fundraiser

♥ Ann Middleton Raises an Incredible \$30,001!

Ann has been a megastar supporter participating in our Walk-A-Thon since 1990. After nearly 20 years of service on our board of directors, Ann left the board but kept on working hard for NWPP's seniors. She travels around most weekends to estate sales searching for high quality items our seniors need as they transition into their new homes. Ann is one of the



Raffle Winner! Alice Frost takes home the Sonos Soundbar



Top Team Fundraiser Terwilliger Plaza Raises an Amazing \$14,659

Terwilliger's support of NWPP is yet again unmatched in the team category. We are humbled by the generosity of the 22 members of this mostly senior team and their donors. Thank you for all your support over the years of our work and the seniors we serve.



**Thank you to all
who fundraised for NWPP!**

You fundraised and walked as individuals, teams, families, church groups, and as groups of friends united by a passion for the services NWPP provides. On behalf of our Board of Directors and the clients served through NWPP, THANK YOU! All of you made a positive impact on the lives of low-income seniors in Multnomah County. Our profound thanks to all 2022 fundraisers! We truly could not do the work we do without each and every one of you.



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Lindy Bartell
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Tickets to Ride

For Northwest Pilot Project clients, stable housing is *always* the priority. But it's far from the only need. Once a low-income senior has a roof over their head, our case managers can focus on other things they need to thrive. Transportation is often high on the list.

That's why we have the **Ken Johnson Memorial Bus Ticket Fund**, named for a former client of ours who deeply touched the heart of an NWPP supporter. In his memory, she contributes monthly to help provide bus tickets for current clients who wouldn't otherwise have access to transportation.

Many low-income people depend on public transportation to get around Portland. A simple bus pass might not seem like much, but for our clients it's critical. For one thing, they often have regular medical appointments to keep. Riding the bus or MAX light rail also means being able to shop for more affordable groceries, pick up prescriptions, or see friends and family.

For just \$28 for a monthly Honored Citizen pass, you can provide life-changing mobility for one of our clients. Will you join in and support the Ken Johnson Memorial Bus Ticket Fund? Please consider becoming a monthly donor to ensure the benefit is ongoing.

Supply Drive

Over the last two years our team has worked hard to keep our low-income senior clients safe and supplied with essential items. These things are not only important for fighting COVID-19 but are essential to maintaining a life of dignity, which includes a clean home and healthy lifestyle.

Many of our clients live in subsidized housing with no income and depend on NWPP for personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies that are not eligible to be purchased with food stamps. After the long closure due to the pandemic, our cupboards are bare and we need your help restocking!



Needed Supplies

Shampoo, conditioner, soap, deodorant (mens & womens), body lotion, razors, shaving cream, batteries, light bulbs, brooms, dust pans, toilet paper, paper towels, laundry detergent, dish soap, and sponges.

Ways You Can Help

Donate new items: Purchase needed items locally and drop them off during our office hours or through our AmazonSmile wishlist.

Donate funds: You can donate online or use the enclosed envelope and we will purchase the needed items directly. www.nwpilotproject.org/donate

Organize a supply drive: We can help you to coordinate with friends, family, church, or work groups to set up a supply drive.

For more information about donating to NWPP clients visit our website and click on "support us" or contact Heidi Chimuku at heidic@nwpilotproject.org or call 503-478-6864 for assistance organizing a supply drive.



Thank You!



**NORTHWEST
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Coming Soon! The Emmons Place Apartments



From the street, it looks like any other new building under construction. But Emmons Place isn't just any new building. This building is as special as its namesake.

For over 35 years, Susan Emmons has been a housing advocate extraordinaire; 30 of those years at the helm of NWPP. Constantly pushing for more and better housing for the lowest income, most vulnerable seniors, Susan set the bar high for the type and location of housing for the older adults we work with. Emmons Place meets that bar. Located in the Northwest District, a walkable neighborhood with shopping, transit, healthcare and parks, this new building will have 144 studio apartments, 78 of which will have rents affordable for the lowest income members of our community. Forty-seven units are designated for seniors.

NWPP appreciates working with Northwest Housing Alternatives (NHA), and looks forward to its partnership with Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) in providing placement and service delivery when the south part of the building opens in October 2022.

Susan Emmons (center) flanked by Trell Anderson, executive director of NHA, and Laura Golino de Lovato at the construction site in June.