



Shared Housing Services Chronicle

2018 Spring/Summer Edition 1

Important Dates and Information:

- We are seeking home providers for our Adult and Youth programs
- Visit our website for additional program information.
- Save The Date;
Hilltop Street Fair
Aug. 25th, 2018
1am-7pm
- Donations and Volunteers always welcome.
- Shop on-line?
Remember to use amazonsmile.com and a portion of the proceeds will benefit SHS
- Check us out on Facebook

901 S 11th St., Tacoma, WA 98405

P. 253-223-4674 F. 253-223-0315

www.sharedhousingervices.org



News From The Executive Director

The 4th of July has just passed which means the *'lazy days of summer'* are upon us. Here at Shared Housing Services, the months leading up to summer have been very busy. We held our Annual Dinner Auction last March at the STAR Center in Tacoma, and due to the generous support from our attendees, donors, and sponsors combined with the incredible dedication and hard work from Board Members, Staff, and Volunteers we raised over \$135,000! A huge, heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone that helped to make this event a success.

Much is happening around the world and nationally on a daily basis, but our attention is focused on the widening housing crisis throughout Pierce County. Low inventories of rental units and increasing housing costs, taxes, and services are making it more difficult for people to remain in their homes or to find affordable housing. Over the last five years in Pierce County, median rents have increased by 49% while median household income has only increased by 4.4%. We are seeing an increasing number of people on fixed incomes (seniors and disabled persons) and low-income households inquiring about our programs. Our programs and services are more relevant and needed in the community than ever before in assisting people to have a place to call home.

Because of the current housing environment, I want to take this opportunity to enlist all of you to help spread the word about Shared Housing Services to seniors and others who have a spare bedroom and could use some help to remain in their home or who just want to help out a fellow community member needing an affordable place to live. **Together we can truly make a difference in a person's life.**

From all of us at Shared Housing Services, we wish everyone a fun-filled, relaxing and warm summer.

Mark Merrill, Executive Director

News From The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors enjoyed a busy first half of the year, and the next half should not slow down. After participating in the planning and partnering with Staff on our Tenth Annual Dinner-Auction, the Board was pleased with the results, and we thank you immensely for your continued support and generosity.

Some grant funding allowed us to contract the services of a consultant to conduct a campaign readiness assessment to determine the best course of action for future improvements. The process has been ongoing for several months with Board and Staff interviews, surveys, and stakeholders meetings. The consultant has completed her assessment, which will be the focus of the Board and Staff Annual Retreat in early fall. We are looking forward to acting on all the recommendations and engaging the future challenges and opportunities.

We have just completed an extensive Equity workshop led by an expert in the field. The workshop specifically addressed how to explore and develop a shared understanding relating to the concept of equity, and to hone in on what we need to know from the equity concepts to strengthen our organization and to help the clients we serve. The Staff joined the Board for the workshop that proved to be a lively exchange for all of us to appreciate, understand, and respond to the ways our clients are affected by their environment.

This summer, Board members will be concentrating on outreach initiatives in the local community, as well as on initiatives to overhaul our marketing approach, and recruiting new Board members. Please refer to us anyone interested in joining a nonprofit Board, particularly with skills or affiliation in the medical, real estate, retail, or construction fields.

On behalf of my Board colleagues, I wish you a most pleasant summer.

Michel Rocchi, President Board of Directors

Transitional Family Housing Program Update

Summertime is finally here and our families are enjoying the free local family events in the area such as the Hilltop Movie Nights and Metro Park free lunches. To avoid any school-age summer learning loss, five resident kids are attending the summer camp program with our community partner, The Al Davies Boys & Girls Club. According to one of our residents they are excited their children get to chance to have fun and have something positive to do in summer.

We also have welcomed a new family of four in our housing program. They have jumped right in working on their financial goals and bettering employment opportunities. Their youngest son is participating in the Hilltop Artists' Glass Blowing Summer program. The new family has enjoyed their transition and they look forward to gaining the support to making permanent housing a reality in the near future.

It pays to be debt free! One of our families has been working hard to pay off ALL of their debt! What an huge accomplishment for this single mom of three!

Back to school we go! Later in the summer we will be partnering with the Auto Warehousing Co. on backpacks and school supplies for our school-age children in our program!

Adult Homesharing Program Update

In June SHS was able to fill the last room in "Grandma's House". **Grandma's House** is a Shared Housing Rainbow among the rain. Originally owned by "Grandma", the home has been shared by family members and loved ones in need of a helping hand for years. After Grandma passed away, the home was converted to provide housing to low income individuals needing a safe, affordable place to call home.

SHS has successfully housed Pierce County residents at **Grandma's** for the past few years. SHS recently sat down with 4 of the 8 tenants of **Grandma's House** to see what they felt is so successful about our program. The tenants were extremely happy with their private rooms, shared bathrooms, and were taking full advantage of the communal living spaces such as the kitchen,

outdoor fire pit and the park-like backyard. Several tenants have used their time at **Grandma's House** to secure better employment, purchase vehicles and save money towards their futures. Every day we see shared housing continue to be successful!

SHS is excited to have Juleeann Fisher aboard to oversee our Adult Homesharing program and shine a light on accomplishments like **Grandma's House**.

Youth Host Home Program Update

It has been an exciting first half of 2018 for the Youth Host Home (YHH) Program. The YHH program entered 2018 with five youth clients in active host homes. As of June, the YHH program has 16 active Providers, served 15 young people, with four graduating into permanent housing. The YHH program is making a positive change on youth homelessness. Young people ages 16 - 24 enter the YHH program homeless with little to no support or resources. Once housed in a host home, they

receive the services, support, and resources needed to build self-sufficiency towards realizing their goals and permanent, independent housing.

An example of how the YHH is making a difference in the life of a young person: A recent client entered into the YHH program with multiple barriers including being enrolled in Felony Drug Court. His unstable housing situation made it difficult to attend weekly classes, drug testing and paying the \$1,700 program fee. The client was housed in a host home which provided him

with stability and he began working with our case manager on addressing other barriers. Within four months of being housed the client found full-time employment, paid off his court costs, and completed his mandatory classes. We are excited to announce that on June 30th he graduated the Pierce County Felony Drug Court program. At graduation, the Prosecuting Attorney and Program Director cited the client truly started to engage in the **court's program**, and make necessary changes in his life, only when he overcame being homelessness and found stable housing in the YHH program .

"Connecting people and fostering independence through innovative and affordable housing, because everyone needs a place to call home."

Contact Information:

Mark Merrill, Executive Director - markm@sharedhousingservices.org

Shellie Cox , Executive Assistant - shellie@sharedhousingservices.org

Juleeann Fisher, Adult Homesharing Program - juleann@sharedhousingservices.org

Janelle Frazer Youth Host Home Program - janelle@sharedhousingservices.org

Jamihlee Mella Youth Host Home Program - jamihlee@sharedhousingservices.org

Drena Sellers, Transitional Family Housing Program - drena@sharedhousingservices.org