

# HELPING HANDS FOR HOMELESSNESS

safety | security | collaboration | care | acceptance | health | dignity | humanity | belonging | community

**Welcome** back to the Sitka Homeless Coalition's Newsletter! We are excited to share more with our community about what we've been working on to serve our neighbors in need!

We also want to take this opportunity to announce the start of our annual **Shelter Sitka Campaign!** Throughout the months of November and December, we will be raising awareness and funds to support our efforts to provide essential services to those experiencing homelessness in Sitka! We hope that you will be able to contribute to our goal of raising \$25,000 or that you will be able to attend one of our many events happening in the next 2 months! We hope you enjoy this newsletter and that you continue to stay connected to SHC and our mission!



The Sitka Homeless Coalition's mission is to promote safe, secure housing for all, and to strengthen support services in collaboration with a strong network of partners to build an overall culture of care, health, dignity, and belonging in our community.

**Home.** There is so much depth to this word. Having a home is more than just a structure. Home equals security. Home equals safety. Home helps a person to feel whole. Human. Contain a strong sense of self, connection to those around. Dignity and an ability to hold one's head up with pride.

These are all traits that the Sitka Homeless Coalition would like to embody moving forward. The Board of Directors had a retreat in September to brainstorm the vision, mission, and goals for the coming year. The Sitka Homeless Coalition Board, staff, and volunteers prioritized drafting a fresh mission statement to capture not only how far we've grown, but also to inspire us to continue the strong, dedicated work needed on the path to creating not just spark of hope, but igniting a flame of possibilities and actual, tangible positive change for our special little town. Housing and access to services for all. Every. Single. Sitkan.

Thank you all for your continued support over the recent years. We could not do or be all that we are without the citizens of Sitka working together on such a worthy cause. Changing the world, life by life, human to human. We are only as strong as our weakest link. There is power in numbers. United we can make Sitka the best "Home" it can be, for all.

Amanda Roberts, Board Chair

## Upcoming Events

### November

- Community Walk, Nov 9, 10-11am
- Sea Mart Tabling, Nov 12, 4-6pm
- Round About Awareness, Nov 15, 10-11am
- Project Homeless Connect, Nov 16, 11am-1pm
- Sea Mart Tabling, Nov 26, 4-6pm

### December

- 1st Night of Shelter Operations, Dec 1
- **SHC Annual Meeting, Dec 5, 6-8pm @ the Naa Kahidi**
- Community Walk, Dec 28, 10-11am

# Hítx'i Sáani Updates

## Project Update: Hítx'i Saani Community

This Hítx'i Saani Community will be the first of its kind in Sitka: offering a safe, stable housing environment for up to 12 Sitkans experiencing homelessness. Our aim with Hítx'i Saani is not only to provide housing but also to empower residents with the support they need to thrive.



Denise and Andrew at the Hítx'i Sáani site.



The site is now connected to sewage and water infrastructure.



An architectural rendering of the site.

## What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

Permanent supportive housing combines affordable housing with access to critical support services for individuals experiencing homelessness. This housing model is a proven, compassionate approach to breaking the cycle of homelessness by providing residents with consistent, long-term support in a home of their own. Hítx'i Saani is a crucial part of creating sustainable solutions for our community's most vulnerable members, offering both housing security and a pathway to independence.

## The Cozy Corner

Unscramble the following words, keeping in mind what an unhoused person needs to feel warm, safe, and cared for.

1. NEPSLEGI AGB
2. GOLN SNOHJ
3. AHND SWEARMR
4. SNEKNIDS
5. THA DAN SLEVOG
6. TYIHMANU
7. ETNT
8. THO FEFOEC
9. SPIONCMAS
10. POUS

1. SLEEPING BAG
2. LONG JOHNS
3. HAND WARMERS
4. KINDNESS
5. HAT AND GLOVES
6. HUMANITY
7. TENT
8. HOT COFFEE
9. COMPASSION
10. SOUP

## Project Progress & Updates

Since breaking ground, the Sitka Homeless Coalition has made significant progress on this ambitious development. The once-undeveloped land has transformed, now fully connected to city water and sewage infrastructure. Underground utilities installation is currently underway, a major milestone that brings us closer to realizing this community. Despite facing some delays in material shipments and the finalization of permits, we're moving forward with confidence, adjusting timelines and resources as needed to keep momentum strong. Our team is fully committed to completing the 13-unit development by September 2025 and bringing this vision to life.

Andrew Hinton, Executive Director

# Staff Spotlight



Denise Shaffer,  
Programs Director

**Hobbies:** Skiing, City League sports, music!  
**If Denise were a tree, she'd be...** an apple tree- it bears fruit and has beautiful flowers

## Denise, what led you into a career of working with the unhoused?

Primarily, my faith, which is at the center of all that I do. My past work with migrants, and being a grandchild of migrants myself, taught me the importance of home and the suffering of those who long for it. I moved to Alaska as a Jesuit Volunteer at Covenant House Alaska, where I worked with young adults experiencing homelessness. These experiences made me realize that I want to work with those who do not have a home, to instill a sense of dignity, belonging, and community in all I work with.

## Describe your role as Programs Director of the Sitka Homeless Coalition.

As Programs Director, I wear many hats. I have the honor to ensure that all of our programs are running smoothly and effectively. I design, implement, gather feedback and data on all the services we provide. I also work to create closer interactions with the wider community, so that SHC is part of the broader culture of caring in Sitka. Most importantly to me, I have the great joy of developing meaningful relationships with our clients.

## What are your top priorities for the Sitka Homeless Coalition for the next year?

I want to emphasize "trust to transition". We want to build trust within the community of the unhoused and within the broader community of Sitka, so that we can transition our clients to housing.

Chip Camden, Board Vice Chair

## Program Spotlight: The Dinner Program

**A spotlight on the Dinner Program is a spotlight on how deeply food insecurity and housing insecurity are connected.**

In November of 2023, SHC piloted the Dinner Program with AC Lakeside. After 5 months, **this program provided 2564 meals to over 200 Sitkans!** We are so grateful to Lakeside, and especially to the team at the Deli, for their efforts to make this program possible!

At the Dinner Program, our clients were able to join the "community of shoppers". With complete autonomy over how to use the \$12.50 allocated to each person, many clients grew in decision making and budgeting skills. One client noted that they maximized their \$12.50 by getting a taco, a sandwich, AND a coke!

The ease of access and complete autonomy meant we were able to reach many more neighbors in need than we ever imagined! Not only were our clients individuals who were experiencing homelessness, but we also served individuals without access to cooking appliances, persons struggling with navigating or waiting for SNAP/WIC benefits, and families that were cost burdened by high rent and other costs of living.

Again, a spotlight on the Dinner Program is a Spotlight on how deeply food insecurity and housing insecurity are connected. Every individual served through the Dinner Program was experiencing housing insecurity, and because it was difficult to meet their need for shelter, their ability to find affordable and available nutritious and safe

foods was also compromised. **Because of this program, over 200 Sitkans were able to better meet their food needs despite the housing challenges they were facing.**

**Thank you to all of the volunteers and donors who made this program a success!** A special thank you to the White E, St. Michael's, St. Peter's, and AC Lakeside for your generous and essential donations to this program!

Due to budget constraints, we will operate a lakeside dinner program every Tuesday from 4-5pm starting on Dec 3, and we will serve a community meal every Thursday starting Dec 12. **If you would like to volunteer, donate, or learn more about the Dinner Program this winter, please reach out through our website or the links below!**



**SITKA  
HOMELESS  
COALITION**

Thank you for reading! We hope you continue to support and join us in our mission! Please visit our website to learn more about how to donate or get involved!