

Pathways Newsletter



Our Five-Step Journey

Welcome Home Skagit is alive and well, making great headway in our quest to end homelessness. Long before we were officially an organization, a Five-Step Plan was developed by the experts in our field, those with lived experience on the streets.

We are delighted to publish this newsletter, which is full of exciting details about our current progress and where we are headed on this important five-step journey. Come, walk with us awhile.



Cora Steinhauer and Kiri Good working on the five-step plan, pictured in the background. Both ladies were without homes at the time this picture was taken.

Something to Celebrate

We have been awarded an \$18,500.00 grant from the Skagit Community Foundation for the operation of our Homeless Support Services. Thanks to this generous donation, we are able to solidify the second step of our five-step plan.

Our Goal

Our Five-step plan to transition those experiencing homelessness to stable housing includes:

1. Distribution of care kits and other essential needs
2. Supportive Services
3. A Resource and Drop-in Center
4. A year-round low barrier shelter.
5. Short-term transitional housing, to permanent housing.



PATHWAYS

A Newsletter by Welcome Home Skagit



Step One: Distribution of Care Kits and other Essential Needs

Step one of Welcome Home Skagit's five-step plan to transition those experiencing homelessness to stable housing is the distribution of duffle bag and hygiene kits along with other essential needs. The duffle bag kits, that were highlighted in the Welcome Home Skagit Newsletter Vol. 2, in 2019, continue to be assembled and distributed as needed, through our Essential Needs Program. Sarah Vogt and Nancy Brown, pictured below, have spent countless hours purchasing, assembling and distributing the kits. Each kit contains a large heavy blanket, a tarp, wool socks, and a knit hat, all placed in a sturdy duffle bag. The cost of each kit is around \$40. If you would like to contribute to this project specifically, every dollar makes a difference in this much-needed service.

Another vital and growing component of the Essential Needs Program is a clothing and needs distribution managed by Welcome Home Skagit as part of Hope Village, a quarterly event hosted by the Mount Vernon Seventh-day Adventist Church. Hope Village offers a variety of goods and services including Skagit County Health Department representatives with information and supplies, Skagit Regional Health interns, who provide free medical examinations, Skagit Connections offering free showers via their shower trailer, and an automotive team that provides free vehicle services, not to mention the pizza slices and other delicious snacks .



Volunteer Needs

We are currently looking for volunteers to offer free haircuts, a much-needed service for our friends on the streets. If you would like to participate in Hope Village, our next event is coming right up on Saturday, May 21st from 10 am to 2 pm. If you are interested in volunteering for a Hope Village event, you can contact Sarah Vogt at sarahvogt@welcomehomeskagit.com.

Working Together

Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below to be taken to our volunteer sign-up page



"IS IT NOT TO SHARE YOUR FOOD WITH THE HUNGRY AND TO PROVIDE THE POOR WANDERER WITH SHELTER—WHEN YOU SEE THE NAKED, TO CLOTHE THEM, AND NOT TO TURN AWAY FROM YOUR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD?"

-ISAIAH 58:7 NIV

PATHWAYS

A Newsletter by Welcome Home Skagit



Step Two: Supportive Services

Step two of Welcome Home Skagit's five-step program is to offer supportive services to those who live on the streets or are in danger of losing their housing. Sarah Vogt, Welcome Home Skagit's Director of Homeless Support Services, is a powerhouse of energy with an impressive network of resources to help her clients overcome difficult hurdles and reach their goals. She has been volunteering her time, for several years, to offer dynamic peer support to her friends and neighbors on the street.

The support services Sarah offers range from giving out bus passes and gas cards to assisting her peers in making appointments, providing transportation to those appointments and advocating on their behalf. She is a well-known presence in many local agencies, and frequently gets referrals from staff members. Sarah knows, all too well, what life on the street is like. That lived experience is part of what fuels her drive to help her friends and neighbors reach their full potential. Her assertive, decisive personality helps establish assurance and confidence in the people she serves, that they can navigate and access the confusing milieu of support services available to them. If you are interested in providing financial support or getting involved in this vital program as a volunteer, the needs are huge, and the workers are few. You can contact Sarah at sarahvogt@welcomehomeskagit.com.

New Resources to Celebrate

Recently Welcome Home Skagit was awarded an \$18,500 grant from the Skagit Community Foundation to provide needed supplies and services and a small monthly stipend to support Sarah in her dynamic community outreach endeavors. This helps to solidify the second step in Welcome Home's goal of ending homelessness, providing support for folks like Jeff Nelson,, one of the first recipients of this program, pictured with Sarah on page 5 of this newsletter.

Clean Sweep Program

True to his desire to be of service in his community, Keith Johnson is continuing to expand his Clean Sweep Program, removing trash from the streets of Mt. Vernon and Burlington. He is pictured here, along with Brian Falk, hard at work, with the tools of their trade. Look for more information in future newsletters about the Clean Sweep Program and how you can participate in cleaning up our communities.



Keith Johnson



Brian Falk

If you are interested in providing financial support or getting involved in this vital program as a volunteer, the needs are huge, and the workers are few. You can contact Sarah at sarahvogt@welcomehomeskagit.com



PATHWAYS

A Newsletter by Welcome Home Skagit



Step Three: A Daytime Resource Center

We are excited to announce several new developments that usher us right into step three of our five-step plan, which includes a daytime resource center. We are doing our due diligence on leasing a 2,852 square foot building that can provide a resource center, offices, and even the possibility for a thrift shop that can offer clients a means to start paying forward by helping to serve the community while gaining employment experience in the retail industry. This building is at a great location in South Mt. Vernon, close to downtown and right on the Skagit Transit Bus Route.

Once our building is procured, we have plans for reigniting and reinventing the Friday Morning Meetings, where our five-step plan was developed in the first place. We wish to express deep gratitude to the Mt. Vernon Seventh-day Adventist Church for starting those weekly meetings and continuing to host them until Covid shut us down. We are convinced that those weekly meetings are a vital key to all the progress we have made towards our goals and will continue to be an invigorating life force in achieving all our hopes, dreams, and future endeavors!

We look forward to those weekly meetings and are pleased that they will likely be held in a more accessible location for our friends and family members who live on the streets. We consider those with lived experience to be our greatest consultants and most knowledgeable resources in all our endeavors to end homelessness.

How You Can Help

If you are interested in providing financial support or getting involved as a volunteer

You can contact Sarah at
sarahvogt@welcomehomeskagit.com

Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below to be taken to our donation page to make an online donation



Overnight Shelter in Concrete

In February and March of 2020, Welcome Home Skagit operated an overnight shelter in Concrete. Hosted by the Mount Baker Presbyterian Church and funded by Skagit County, this shelter offered a warm, safe place, for our unhoused friends and neighbors to sleep during those bitter cold winter nights. Look for more stories about this much-needed service in future newsletters.

Making A Difference



Marvin Yates and his adorable dog, Gizmo, were frequent participants in the Friday Morning Meetings.

PATHWAYS

A Newsletter by Welcome Home Skagit



Step Four: A Year-Round Low Barrier Shelter

A Small but Vital Beginning

Before Covid shut everything down, great progress was being made towards providing safe overnight parking for people living in their vehicles. We are delighted to announce that progress is again underway for a safe parking program. The following invitation was sent out to multiple churches in Skagit County and is now being extended to all our readers and supporters.

The Mount Vernon Seventh Day Adventist Church located at 4520 East College Way, Mount Vernon, WA, will be hosting a Q and A session on May 17, 2022, from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. The subject of discussion will be "Overnight Safe Parking." We are asking our community of faith-based organizations to attend this meeting. It is the first of many future "United in Christ" community meetings bringing all denominations together to serve God and our community united in the body of Christ.

OVERNIGHT SAFE PARKING PROJECT

As you may know, back in September of 2019 the City of Mount Vernon gave approval for churches to host safe parking in their parking lots for homeless individuals living in their vehicles, thus waiving any permits or fees. Unfortunately, Covid made it impossible to move forward with this project until recently.

Welcome Home Skagit is excited to announce that we are available for the management of this project alleviating the pressure on churches to find volunteers and the stress associated with security and cleanup.

We will be onsite during the hours of operations for the entire length of stay. In addition, we will provide care coordination for each of our homeless friends bridging the gap between resource/service providers and unsheltered individuals through our Peer Support Program.

Skagit Connections Shower Trailer will be onsite at each location during the length of operations. Making it possible for folks to use toilets, showers, and washing stations.

The following is a link of the latest City of Mount Vernon Ordinances for overnight safe parking projects for you to review. <https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/MountVernon/html/MountVernon17/MountVernon17210.html>

Friends many hands make light work. There are many ways for your church to get involved in supporting this project.

Join In person or online via live stream and chat.

We pray that you will attend.

Mount Vernon Seventh Day Adventist Church
Community Service Ministry

Sarah Vogt
360-840-8136

Sarah Vogt
Welcome Home Skagit
Homeless Intervention
Director of Homeless Support Services
360-840-8136



Jeff Nelson, pictured above, was one of the first recipients of Sarah Vogt's Peer Support Program.

Support Our Efforts to End Homelessness in Skagit County By Donating Today

PATHWAYS

A Newsletter by Welcome Home Skagit



Step Four: A Year-Round Low Barrier Shelter

Emergency Weather Day Shelter

Because most of us at Welcome Home Skagit have experienced living on the streets, we know how devastating extremely cold weather can be. As a result, many of us ushered in the new year by hanging out with our friends who still live on the streets. An emergency weather day shelter for our homeless community was hosted by The Mount Vernon SDA Church and Managed by Welcome Home Skagit between December 27, 2021, and January 7, 2022. During this time, we served a total of 20 people. We offered prayer, compassion, hot meals, and a warm safe place for people to rest their heads.

Although each individual who stepped foot through those doors touched my heart, one particular instance stands out the most. Tired, cold, and seemingly defeated, a young couple arrived with two small children. They were living in their car with no place to go for warmth. Little did they know that less than two hours later they would leave the building with a new sense of hope; a precious commodity not always easy to grab ahold of in such circumstances. BUT GOD had a plan for this young family all along.

We immediately initiated an intake with Family Promise. From there, an interview was scheduled for the very next day. However, if they were accepted in the program, no space would be available until the following week. We then contacted Friendship House and were able to get them a hotel voucher until space became available at Family Promise. Only through the collaborated efforts of each of these entities and the grace of God was any of this possible.

Thank You to Skagit County Emergency Planning and Skagit County Health Department for your coordinated efforts and quick planning during this emergency weather event. Thank you, Skagit Transit, for faithfully providing transportation to and from the church every two hours that first week of snow. Thank you to the Community Action Street Outreach Team, The Skagit County Sheriff's Office, and the Mount Vernon Police Department for getting the word out and being the front-line workers who daily battle homelessness in Skagit County.

Thank you to Nancy Brown who hand-delivered all the food that was provided by Tri-Parish Food Bank. Thank you to all the Volunteers who jumped at the opportunity to serve when you saw the need. Thank you to Family Promise and Friendship House for providing such needed programs within our county. Thank you to the Mount Vernon SDA Church for your compassionate hearts which led you to open your doors. Most importantly, THANK GOD for putting it all together!

The collaboration and teamwork that was demonstrated by so many individuals and organizations is an awesome example of how much can be accomplished if we coordinate our efforts and resources to meet the needs at hand. May many more of our unhoused neighbors find hope, courage, and shelter as we work together to make our community a better place!

By Sarah Vogt
Director of Homeless Support Services
Welcome Home Skagit



PATHWAYS

A Newsletter by Welcome Home Skagit



Step Five: Short-term Transitional Housing Leading to Permanent Housing

It is Only a Matter of Time!

We are delighted with the progress we have made toward achieving our Five-Step Plan to end homelessness in our community and beyond. Many of the folks on our board of directors have lived experience, including our president, Curtis Steinhauer, and his wife Cora. Because of their unique experience on the streets, they are highly motivated and qualified to build this organization in a way that is empowering, honoring and relevant to the needs of our unhoused friends and neighbors.



Curtis and Cora Steinhauer in their permanent home after 12 years without a place to live.

Community Outreach



We look forward to the time when Step 4 and Step 5 will be achieved for all of our friends and neighbors who live on the streets, and new goals for expansion will be set. Though it was a long time coming, Curtis and Cora finally held the keys in their hands to the home they now call their own. They, along with the Welcome Home Skagit team, are committed to sharing their experience and resources so that others can hold the keys to a place called home.

Thank you for supporting Welcome Home Skagit with your prayers, with your contributions, and with your presence. We deeply appreciate you!

CONNECT WITH US

**Be sure to follow our social media pages to stay up-to-date
with the latest events and volunteer efforts**



www.facebook.com/welcomehomeskagit



www.instagram.com/welcomehomeskagit

PATHWAYS

A Newsletter by Welcome Home Skagit



Upcoming Events

Safe Parking Q & A Session

Local churches are invited to a question and answer session about working together to provide safe overnight parking for people living in their vehicles.

Location:

4520 East College Way,
Mt. Vernon, WA 98283

Date: May 17, 2022

Time: 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Look for future sessions.

Hope Village:

This is a quarterly event hosted by the Mount Vernon SDA Church. Our team will be providing clothing and other essential needs. Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering.

Location:

4520 East College Way,
Mt. Vernon, WA 98283

Date: May 21, 2022

Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Next Quarter's Hope Village:

August 2022

Specific date and time to be determined.

Skagit Connections Shower Trailer:

The Skagit Connections Shower trailer is available periodically at the Concrete Community Center. Future locations to be announced. Our team will provide volunteer support as well as clothing and other essential needs at many of these shower trailer events. We are seeking volunteers to staff the shower trailer at this and other locations as they are arranged.

Welcome Home Skagit

P.O. Box 1527

Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1527

Gratitude Corner

At Welcome Home Skagit, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to a multitude of organizations and individuals who overcame the challenges of the pandemic in order to meet the needs of our unhoused friends and neighbors during that difficult time. Working in collaboration with you continues to be an honor and a pleasure!

We would also like to extend a very special thanks to all of our loyal supporters who gave us hope to survive the isolation imposed upon all of us during the pandemic. Your faithful support is allowing us to pick up where we left off so we can achieve even bigger dreams of service.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who made it possible for us to purchase a passenger van which is being well utilized in the Homeless Support Services program. Be sure to look for more on that heartwarming story in future publications.

