

## **Conversation**

Welcome Home Community Co-op  
Location: The Mt. Vernon SDA Church  
4520 East College Way, Mt. Vernon, WA 98283  
November 8, 2019

Started at 8:30 am - closed at 9:30  
Larry Paise - Facilitator, President of WHS

**Safe Parking:** Ellen Anderson & others are organizing a trip to several churches down south that are currently and successfully providing Safe Parking options to people in their communities. Please contact Ellen about the field trip to tour Safe Parking Programs.

**Rogue River Retreat Permanent Shelter Tour:** Sarah, Keith J, and Arlene will be going to Medford to tour their permanent shelter and tiny home village.

**Play re: Homelessness on Feb. 15th:** Donations are welcome for the cost of putting on a play at the Lincoln Theater in Mt. Vernon on Feb. 15th. Please hold the date & let Stella Ireland, Nancy Brown, or Wende Sanderson if you are interested in being a sponsor for some of the cost of doing this or know of a good source to help cover production expenses.

**Free Medical/Dental/Visual Clinic:** The Northwest SDA Church in Burlington will host a free medical/dental/visual clinic on Feb. 15th and 16th through a program called Love Heals. This free clinic will be held at the Skagit Adventist Academy and North Cascade SDA Church. They have a \$12,500 matching grant. They will need 200-300 volunteers to provide these services. This is a great opportunity for people who don't have regular health care.

**Welcome Home Skagit (WHS):** WHS will be starting to set up their 2020 budget. WHS has three purposes: Education and Advocacy, Programs, and Transitional Services (homelessness to housing). Email Larry at [office@welcomhomeskagit.com](mailto:office@welcomhomeskagit.com) if you have thoughts regarding that.

This group now has its 501c3 status as a sponsored project of Angels for Angels.

Donations may be made online via our Donate button -  
[www.welcomhomeskagit.com/donate-now](http://www.welcomhomeskagit.com/donate-now)  
Paypal and credit cards gratefully accepted!

*If you wish to write a check, all tax-deductible checks must be made payable to "Angels for Angels" and indicate "Welcome Home Skagit Project" in the memo*

*field. Give your check to a Welcome Home Board member. We will make sure it gets to Angels for Angels for deposit to our account.*

**Care Kits:** The Care Kits consist of a sturdy yet light 45L duffle bag, a 7' by 9' tarp, a 72" by 80" moving blanket, socks, and a hat have been meeting a dire need for many people living out in the cold and wet weather. People living outside have told us that these items have helped immensely to keep them more protected from the cold and wet conditions in which they're sleeping.

**Awareness re: Causal Factors of Homelessness:** Outside of people's circumstances, there are many other causal factors for homelessness in general. As a community, it's important to consider those contributing factors.

Examples: The building owner will tell people they have to move out so that the building can be renovated. People relocate, expecting they will be able to move back but are unable to afford it when the rent is raised post-renovation. As wages have increased in the state of Washington, the rents have increased accordingly. People in higher income brackets can absorb this increase but not for those who may be working full time but still only earning less than \$20/hour or trying to live on Social Security or other benefit programs.

Additionally, neighborhoods are becoming gentrified by eliminating the affordable housing & replacing those rooms or apartments or small homes w/much more expensive homes or condos or businesses. Many very large homes are built & sold because there is so much more profit to be gained than building smaller and far more affordable housing. People are turning their spaces that were previously standard rate rentals into Airbnb spaces rented out a much higher rate.

**Success Stories:** Pastor Don Bryan mentioned that it's important to note the success stories of people in this County who have ultimately improved their situations and have moved from homelessness to drug & alcohol-free existence, permanent housing, and employment.

**Identification of Barriers for those experiencing homelessness:** One major challenge faced by homeless people is obtaining State-approved identification (I.D.) and the expense involved with doing so. Some forms of I.D. will not be mailed to you without a street address. Without a voucher for it, some forms of I.D. cost \$80. Without a birth certificate, you cannot get certain forms of I.D. To obtain a birth certificate; you have to have identification. These barriers are likely an issue that would be good to pursue with one or more of our legislators.

**11/29/19 Meeting:** Please note that there will not be a Friday Morning meeting the day after Thanksgiving, 11/29/19.