



SEATTLE WELCOMES AURORA HOUSE!



Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn at the opening of Aurora House. Photo by Nathan Tain

“IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL HOUSING PROGRAM.”

When DESC purchased the site on Aurora Avenue last year where Cyndi’s Pancake House once stood, neighbors were sad to lose their favorite weekend breakfast haunt. But there were plenty of cheers when the doors to Aurora House opened in its place last month, offering stable, affordable homes to 87 homeless and disabled men and women. Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn and Laura Green Zeilinger, Deputy Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, were in the house to welcome new residents. “It takes a community to build a successful housing program,” stated Zeilinger, “from individual donors, corporations and private foundations, to all King County citizens who voted for the policies that support low-income housing and mental health services like we find here today.” Aurora House includes a beautiful rooftop deck and atrium, 87 state-of-the-art studio apartments, and staff on-site 24 hours a day to meet client needs around the clock.

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VILMA AND ERIC SAY GOOD BYE TO HOMELESSNESS



Vilma came to the US as a refugee, escaping a brutal and abusive spousal relationship in Honduras. Her undocumented status made it difficult for her to seek employment or to access public benefits. She spent many nights in DESC’s main shelter waiting patiently for an apartment to become available. Today she keeps a pot of bean stew simmering on her stove and a stack of magazines near her bathtub. As one of the newest residents of Aurora House, Vilma cherishes the sense of security that comes with her new home as well as the many staff who continue to support her on her journey to reclaim her life.

“I’M HUMBLLED FOR ALL I HAVE. TO HAVE FOUR WALLS AND A PILLOW TO LAY MY HEAD AND THANK MY CREATOR.”

Eric was wheelchair bound and living in a tent near the railroad tracks when police noticed his declining health. Clearly in crisis, they offered him help through DESC’s Crisis Solutions Center, where he received medical attention, counseling, and a temporary bed while he recovered. When Aurora House opened its doors, Eric was one of the first to receive a studio apartment. His recovery plan includes extensive medical supervision and care as well as community involvement to regain independence and build social skills. Ask Eric how he feels about living at Aurora and he says “To have four walls and a pillow to lay my head and thank my creator for all I have, I’m humbled.”



cornerstone

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DESC works to end the homelessness of vulnerable people, particularly those living with serious mental or addictive illnesses. Through partnerships and an integrated array of comprehensive services, treatment and housing, we give people the opportunity to reach their highest potential. At DESC, uncommon efforts produce uncommon results that eliminate homelessness, one person at a time.

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1811 Eastlake	Lyon Building
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CLINICAL SERVICES

Chemical Dependency Services
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HOST - Outreach and Engagement
MIST - Engagement, Housing and Stabilization
PACT - Assertive Community Treatment
SAGE - Mental Health Services

EMERGENCY AND ENTRY SERVICES

Emergency Shelter
Connections

SOMETHING OLD/SOMETHING NEW THRIFT STORE

200 Third Ave S / (206) 748-9080

DONOR PROFILE: SUPPORTING DESC COMES NATURALLY FOR MIMI



Mimi Sheridan

Since DESC opened our doors in 1979, Mimi Sheridan has been there. Once you hear more about her life, you understand why Mimi chooses to partner with DESC to make King County a safe and humane place for all of its residents.

Mimi literally grew up in state psychiatric hospitals in California, where her mother worked as a psychiatrist. Mimi herself received her first masters in psychiatry in the 1970s and came to the Puget Sound to manage intake at Seattle Mental Health. She later joined, and eventually chaired, the board at King County Mental Health and was on the Mayor's task force to end homelessness.

Later in her career Mimi worked in community outreach for neighborhood planning and earned her second masters in Urban Planning and Historic Preservation. Her career as a clinician and later a planner provides Mimi with a unique insight into DESC's work. Mimi has built her career around making our communities more beautiful, livable and humane.

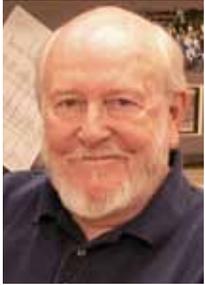
It's easy to see how she learned of DESC and why she began to support us, but when asked what keeps her coming back, she simply answers "Why would I stop?"

**MIMI HAS BUILT HER CAREER AROUND
MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES MORE
BEAUTIFUL, LIVABLE AND HUMANE.**

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A TRAGIC MISUNDERSTANDING: MENTAL ILLNESS AND VIOLENCE



Bill Hobson

BY BILL HOBSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our nation and our community have been rocked by a recent series of shootings from the one at Café Racer here in Seattle to the public school tragedy in Newtown, Conn. These violent acts have prompted yet another wave of efforts to keep guns from the hands of the mentally ill.

Mayors and city councils and state legislatures across the nation have already passed or are seriously considering laws that do just that. Few of our public leaders are pausing to ask themselves if this is the most effective way to curb violent acts and almost none of them are asking what the real relationship between mental illness and violence actually is.

Fortunately, there is a lot of research about that relationship and none of it suggests that keeping guns out of the hands of people living with mental disorders will have any appreciable effect on gun violence in America. There is a tragic misunderstanding about the relationship between mental illness and violence and this misunderstanding prevents enactments of meaningful initiatives to keep us safer and it leads to bigotry and discrimination against people living with psychiatric illnesses.

CONSIDER THESE FACTS:

1. The vast majority of people with mental illness are not violent.

A 2010 article published in the Journal of the American Psychiatric Association found that only 4% of all violent acts committed in the US between 1999 and 2005 were by persons with psychiatric illness. And less than half of those involved a firearm. Shouldn't public officials be more concerned about the people committing the other 98%?

2. The American public is significantly misinformed about the relationship between mental illness and violence.

A 1999 MacArthur Foundation-funded longitudinal study of public attitudes toward mental illness found, "the proportion of Americans who describe mental illness in terms consistent with violent or dangerous behavior nearly doubled between 1950 and 1996." The study goes on to state that "the vast majority of Americans now believe that persons with mental illness are dangerous."

3. Inaccurate understanding about mental illness and violence leads to stigma and discrimination.

The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003) found that stigma leads to low self-esteem, isolation and hopelessness and actually discourages those who need help with a mental illness from seeking it. Shouldn't we try to create a society that encourages people to seek mental health treatment when problems arise just like we encourage people to see their primary health provider when flu-like symptoms emerge?

There are meaningful things we can do to be safer as a society that do not further stigmatize this historically misunderstood population. We need a much better mental health system but we cannot build one if state governments continue to manage their budget problems by reducing funding for treatment. We need a major public awareness campaign to provide the good people of this nation with the facts about mental illness and violence. In our state, Senate Bill 5571 intends to do just that. We need a system of early detection and intervention and the most logical place to locate it is in our schools and universities. There is so much that can be done to make us safer but a rush to the quick fix of "keeping guns from the hands of the mentally ill" is not one.

EMERGENCY WINTER SHELTER BECOMES HOMELESS



WHEEL, the Women's Housing, Equality and Enhancement League, found its winter shelter almost out on the streets shortler after the new year when they lost their lease. A grassroots nonprofit operated by currently and formerly homeless

women who are dedicated to eradicating homelessness, educating the community, and empowering women living with homelessness, one of WHEEL's most critical programs is a severe weather shelter for homeless women. When told their traditional shelter space would

no longer be available to them, they feared for the health and safety of the 35 women who relied on the shelter each evening.

Knowing those women would have no place else to go, DESC invited WHEEL to set up their shelter in the space used by our Connections day service program on Third Ave and Yesler Way, which is otherwise unused overnight.

WHEEL members told us, "We are so grateful to DESC for this opportunity. This partnership strengthens our ability to serve the homeless community. Two organizations with different goals and missions have come together to save lives on these cold winter nights."

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MEDINA FOUNDATION: CHANGING LIVES FOR THE BETTER FOR OVER 30 YEARS

When DESC opened its doors in 1979, The Medina Foundation, a landmark among the Seattle philanthropic community, was there with one of the first private contributions. Now 33 years later, Medina continues to be one of our most assertive supporters and, as a partner with DESC, shares credit for significant advances in how we as a community address homelessness and care for our most vulnerable citizens.

The Medina Foundation understands the importance of providing unrestricted funds; this has allowed DESC to invest their grants where they are most needed. Throughout the years their support has been instrumental in keeping our emergency shelters open, expanding clinical programs, and even supporting research efforts. On behalf of the thousands of homeless men and women whose lives have been enhanced by the generosity of Medina Foundation, we say thank you.



photo by David Entrikin

“WHEN NORTON CLAPP FOUNDED MEDINA FOUNDATION, HE DID SO WITH THE HOPE OF MAKING THE WORLD A LITTLE BETTER AND HE RECOGNIZED THAT MILLIONS OF OTHERS SEEK TO DO THE SAME. DESC MAKES THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE EVERY DAY FOR SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. MEDINA FOUNDATION IS PROUD TO BE A LONGTIME FUNDER OF DESC.”

*- ADRIENNE QUINN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MEDINA FOUNDATION*

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