



# cornerstone

From DESC | Issue 30 | Fall 2015

## DESC commits to ending veteran homelessness

“Too many veterans answered the call only to return home from war unable to find a warm bed at night”

**D**ESC is playing a major role in the push to end homelessness among veterans in Seattle and King County by the end of 2015. It's an ambitious goal that has been taken up by Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine as part of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Mayors' Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness." The effort has been aided by a very large increase in federal resources available for homeless veterans, and the results are starting to show.



An important indicator of progress toward the overall goal is the declining percentage of veterans among currently homeless people using DESC's services.

The decline in homelessness among veterans can be attributed to an infusion of resources from the federal government and several local initiatives. Between them, these programs ensure that housing resources are available to virtually every veteran who is homeless.

Today that number is right around 10 percent, which is substantially less than our historic average of 16-17 percent. It shows that veterans as a group are exiting homelessness at a much faster rate than other people who experience homelessness. The portion of veterans among DESC's homeless clients has declined to a rate nearly equal to the portion of veterans in the overall population of adult Americans, which is about nine percent (22 million veterans out of 245 million US adults).

The key is matching individual veterans to the type of assistance most applicable to their needs. For example, DESC has many supportive housing units earmarked for veterans in buildings supported by DESC staff around the clock. These units are designed to meet the needs of veterans with more serious problems like mental illness and addictions, and can be occupied by veterans who have aversion to being in programs associated with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, or whose

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Integrated Care



Housing First



Health Services



Survival Services



Crisis Services



Innovation



## Survival Services

# From the Executive Director

If you've been in Seattle for more than a couple years, you know things have changed. It was not long ago that often people who slept outdoors did so either in very temporary locations like doorways or in spaces so remote they wouldn't be seen by others.

Now we see record numbers of people sleeping outdoors in Seattle and across King County. Despite the booming economy and low unemployment rate, the rise in the general population and spike in rent prices has made obtaining decent housing unattainable for a growing number of people.

Some of them end up homeless and utilize emergency shelters across the city. Shelters fill quickly, leaving many people to resort to tent encampments when emergency shelter resources are limited.

Emergency shelter is far from the ideal response to homelessness. Access to permanent affordable housing that allows people the security, autonomy and self-determination all people deserve is what most effectively ends homelessness.

DESC is a pioneer in the Housing First movement for ending homelessness. Housing ends homelessness. But, until there is an adequate supply of such housing, DESC is committed to providing life-saving shelter. Despite their shortcomings, we know from experience that shelters are profoundly safer than trying to survive outdoors.

DESC has partnered with the City of Seattle to open a new emergency shelter in the Queen Anne neighborhood for 100 men who are disabled or over 60. We will also open up 38 shelter beds for women in

# cornerstone

## DESC

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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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## Supportive Housing

1811 Eastlake  
Aurora House  
Canaday House  
Cottage Grove Commons  
Evans House  
Interbay Place  
Kerner-Scott House  
Keys to Home  
Lyon Building  
The Morrison  
Rainier House  
Scattered Site Housing  
The Union Hotel

## Clinical Services

Chemical Dependency Services  
Crisis Respite Program  
Crisis Solutions Center  
Employment Support  
HOME—Housing Assistance  
HOST—Outreach and Engagement  
PACT—Assertive Community Treatment  
SAGE—Outpatient Mental Health Care

## Survival and Entry Services

Connections  
Drop-in Center  
Emergency Shelter  
Rapid Rehousing

“...the answer to homelessness is not to merely create more shelter beds – we must invest in proven strategies that eradicate homelessness.”

downtown Seattle. As good as this will be for the people who spend nights in these beds, it doesn't solve homelessness.

The number of people needing to be indoors is measured now in thousands, not hundreds.

The Seattle Mayor and King County Executive each issued state of emergency declarations about homelessness in November. As important as these declarations are in drawing attention to the crisis and calling for a much stronger state and federal response, the additional services and shelter beds provided in the short term, although helpful, won't be nearly enough.

Too many men and women will still be sleeping outdoors during the winter months. This is the most dangerous situation to be in for people who are homeless. Their lack of access to health and safety quickly translates to public funds being channeled to emergency room and jail costs, without actually addressing their housing needs. These crisis interventions do not address their homelessness or prevent them from sleeping outdoors again.

To address this crisis in the short-term, more shelter beds and support services are desperately needed. But the answer to homelessness is not to merely create more shelter beds – we must invest in proven strategies that eradicate homelessness. Primarily, this means providing them with permanent housing and services relevant to their individual needs.

Despite our best efforts, many people become homeless after leaving psychiatric hospitals. That's because our mental health system was never set up to ensure that their basic needs are met along with their psychiatric care needs.

Discharging someone after an expensive, psychiatric hospitalization without providing adequate long-term housing is like setting a broken bone and not applying a cast. The injury won't heal, and the person may be left with a debilitating disability and return later for even more complicated care.

Meeting this type of challenge and serving those who have fallen through the cracks in social systems is the reason we opened our doors in 1979, and why we still do this work today.

Thank you for your partnership,



Housing First

## Housing First Principles

Housing is a basic human right, not a reward for clinical success.

Once the chaos of homelessness is eliminated from a person's life, clinical and social stabilization occur faster and are more enduring.



Integrated Care

# The power of peer support: New staff member uses his journey to connect with his clients

**D**a'wud Powell-Bey is matter-of-fact when he says that much of his life serves as an object lesson of what not to do.

But that is the past. At age 47, Powell-Bey's story exemplifies the power of finding motivation in oneself and connecting with those who care. It also demonstrates the importance of ensuring assistance is available when someone asks for it. It is a story of why a focus on reducing the harmful impacts of homelessness and substance use is key to helping individuals recover their own lives and achieve their own goals and aspirations.

Once homeless, today Powell-Bey lives in a sober-living house in Lynnwood, where he is the manager. He is about to graduate from Edmonds Community College with an associate degree in social and human services. He is the proud mentor to two people with several years of sobriety. And, he is the new residential counselor at DESC's Lyon Building.

The Lyon Building is a Housing First building located in Pioneer Square. Opened in 1997, this building was pioneering for its time, as it focused on low-barrier access to permanent supportive housing for people living with HIV/AIDS with histories of homelessness, addiction and mental illness.

Residential counselors (RC's) play a major role in DESC's housing buildings. Their job involves much more than providing security and enforcing rules. RC's are integral to building rapport and trust with clients. They help clients see that they are the experts on their own lives and what they need to succeed.

"Why not me to give back? Why not me to be an example of what not to do? Why not me to carry a message of hope?"

"I'm blessed. I'm doing what I always wanted to do. My life is" – he pauses – "awesome."

The road to this place was long and troubled. Powell-Bey grew up on the southeast side of Chicago, where he recalls meeting friends at age 12 for beers and weed every morning before school. He says that was the start of his addictions, which were complicated by mental health problems.



*Powell-Bey at DESC's Lyon Building*

Stints in prisons followed. He says there were 10 in all, for crimes such as drug dealing and stealing. "Most of my felonies I was caught, I was under the influence," he says.

He moved to Minneapolis, notable because "the one time I successfully completed parole was in Minnesota."

Then he decided to move to Bellingham. Living on Bellingham streets, he was using, dealing and drinking (alcohol was his drug of choice). He says he got tired of living that way, and somehow found his way to a sobriety program. There, Powell-Bey met a sponsor who bent the arc of his life.

The man had a home, a business and a

"Why not me to give back? Why not me to be an example of what not to do? Why not me to carry a message of hope?"



### Housing First

“For many, this will be their first experience in their adult lives of opening a door to a home they can truly call their own.”

# Interbay Place opens December 7th

DESC's 11th permanent supportive housing building, Interbay Place, is set to begin leasing apartments on Dec. 7. Ninety-seven formerly homeless and highly vulnerable men and women will come home to furnished studio apartments with support services and staff available on site 24 hours a day.

Half of the apartments at Interbay Place will prioritize people Long-Term Shelter Stayers who make up 26 percent of local shelter users but consume 74 percent of all shelter bed nights. Engaging this population in housing will create more capacity in our shelters and end the homelessness of chronically homeless individuals.

Six apartments are set aside for people living with HIV/AIDS. The remaining units will be leased to the most vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals based on DESC's Vulnerability Assessment Tool scores.

Seasoned DESC employees will lead the program with Danielle Burt serving as Project Manager and Desiree Johnson as Residential Counselor Supervisor for this newest project. The two of them

will head a team dedicated to providing support to residents as they transition from homelessness to life indoors.

Living on the streets and in shelters requires individuals to live in full-time survival mode. For some residents, who have spent years or even decades living outside or in shelters, transitioning into an apartment setting can be overwhelming.

For many, this will be their first experience in their adult lives of opening a door to a home they can truly call their own. Surrounding new tenants with a compassionate and supportive team able to connect them to community resources has been proven to be an effective method of helping chronically homeless people stay in housing for the long-term.

This will be DESC's first building in the Interbay neighborhood. The Interbay Place team will canvass the immediate area to provide neighbors with more information and key contact information. We take seriously our commitment to be good neighbors. We assist our clients with being neighborly, and we commit to addressing any concerns swiftly.

Please join us  
at the  
Opening celebration of  
DESC's Interbay Place



Tuesday December 15, 2015  
2208 15th Avenue West  
Seattle, WA 98119

*\*\*Please note updated times\*\**

Morning refreshments at 9:30 am

**Program & recognition  
at 10:00 am - 12:30 pm**

Please arrive promptly by 10 am for welcome remarks & acknowledgments  
Self-guided tours will follow program

Street parking is limited.  
Using transit or carpooling  
to this event is highly recommended.



Community Partners

“No matter who you are, or what you do, everyone is affected by homelessness in one way or another.”

# Honoring our champion supporters

On Oct. 6 we celebrated our donors, volunteers, advocates, partner organizations and outstanding employees at DESC’s Breakfast of Champions.

In his opening remarks at the breakfast, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray spoke to guests about the homelessness crisis and his plans to address housing affordability: “We are making a difference. You are making a difference.”

William Price, the keynote speaker, shared his story of moving from a homeless DESC client to his current life as a college graduate, husband and father-to-be. He noted that, “We can better the lives of many people. No matter who you are,

or what you do, everyone is affected by homelessness in one way or another.”

Through generous donations of our supporters, guests and sponsors, we were able to raise more than \$25,000 to continue our work serving more than 8,000 chronically homeless men and women each year.

Speaking of the importance of DESC’s community partners, volunteer and donor Kathy Grainger said that, “we need DESC and they couldn’t do their work without us. We are more important than we think, and without us, DESC cannot achieve their goal of ending homelessness. I am more convinced than ever that any time and money I spend supporting DESC could not be better spent. DESC is creating the world I want to live in.”

We expanded our awards categories in 2016 in order to recognize a greater number of DESC supporters and staff. The categories and recipients for this year’s awards were as follows:

- **The Enthusiastic Supporter Award** is given to an individual who has provided long-term support to DESC. This year’s award went to **Professor Hubert Locke**, Retired Dean and Dean Emeritus of the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington.

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Howard Bess, this year’s Exemplary Employee Award winner, with Truth Griffeth, supervisor of our HOME program

# Meet our newest board members

## **Sandeep Kaushik** **Partner, Sound View Strategies**

Sandeep Kaushik is a political and public affairs consultant based in Seattle, WA. He has done extensive public relations and strategic advisory work for elected officials and civic leaders, governments and non-profits. He has worked on multiple political campaigns in the Northwest, including the successful campaigns of Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and King County Executive Dow Constantine, as well as numerous issue and ballot measure campaigns. Recently, Sandeep led a strategic communications effort for All Home (formerly the Committee to End Homelessness), the community-wide partnership to make homelessness in King County rare, brief and one-time.



Prior to his consulting work, Sandeep worked as deputy communications director for King County Executive Ron Sims and as a journalist/columnist for the Stranger, Time Magazine and the Boston Globe. He has a B.A. in history from Reed College and an M.A. in history from Princeton University. He lives in Seattle's Phinney Ridge neighborhood with his wife and two children.



## **Terrence Carroll** **Distinguished Jurist** **in Residence,** **Seattle University School of Law**

Terrence Carroll is a retired King County Superior Court Judge who currently serves as Distinguished Jurist in Residence at the Seattle University Law School where he has taught courses on negotiation and police, law and the community. He has an extensive background in police accountability issues including service as Internal Affairs Auditor for SPD and chair of the

Seattle Public Safety Civil Service Commission.

Terrence has extensive experience in Alternative Dispute Resolution across a broad range of legal disputes. He is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and Seattle University where he is an emeritus member of the Board of Regents.

8th ANNUAL  
**GIMME SHELTER**  
A BENEFIT CONCERT TO END HOMELESSNESS



*Billy Joe Huels of the Dusty 45s about to light up the stage with assistance of upright base player Robin Cady*

## Save the Date!

**Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**The Triple Door**  
216 Union St, Seattle

Tickets available beginning in January  
Check [desc.org](http://desc.org) for details

# DESC commits to ending veteran homelessness continued...



Crisis Services

continued from page 1

military discharge status makes them ineligible for VA assistance.

Many homeless veterans can succeed with less intensive assistance, and various housing subsidies have been made available for those veterans in recent years. DESC is very active in identifying these veterans and connecting them to the resources for which they are eligible and are a good match to their needs. As the largest service provider for single homeless adults in Seattle, DESC may serve more currently homeless veterans than any non-governmental organization in the area. We continue to move a higher percentage of veterans into DESC housing (14 percent of move-ins this year are veterans) than are in DESC's homeless client number (10 percent).

We also operate a United Way-funded Veterans Employment Program that has served 155 chronically homeless veterans over the past 33 months, with more than 60 percent of them successfully obtaining jobs. Using the same evidence-based supported employment model as in DESC's mental health program, the DESC Veterans Employment Program has provided a much-needed service to veterans in King County who need a program that is highly individualized, doesn't use exclusion criteria, and provides long-term case management and employment specialist services to ensure success over time.

While DESC has had much success providing housing and employment services for veterans, the absolute number of homeless veterans in our area is still high. In early November, the number of currently homeless veterans receiving care across DESC programs was 149. To reach the federal goal of eliminating homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015, each one of these individuals will need to be housed in the coming several weeks, or have a viable plan in place for how housing will be obtained. We continue to work with federal and local government partners, including

private landlords, to make this happen.

"I believe that even one veteran sleeping on the streets is one too many," U.S. Senator Patty Murray said while presenting Operation: WelcomeOneHome, a campaign aimed at providing veterans with shelter, housing and other services. "As the daughter of a World War II veteran and a senior member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, I've been fighting for years to make sure our country follows through on its promise to take care of our veterans after they return home."

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that 49,933 veterans are homeless on any given night.

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans states that veterans are at greater risk mostly due to the lingering effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and substance use disorders, which are exacerbated by a lack of family and additional support networks. Additionally, military occupations and training don't always align with the qualifications of the civilian workforce.

Locally, Seattle's economic boom has only compounded the problem. As the country's fastest growing city in the past year, housing costs have risen steeply, to the detriment of people with very low incomes and other disadvantages.

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray has been a vocal proponent of the effort to end veteran homelessness by 2016.

Speaking at the Operation WelcomeOneHome event, Mayor Murray said, "Too many veterans answered the call only to return home from war unable to find a warm bed at night. Cities across America continue to struggle with the rising crisis of homelessness. Seattle is responding in collaboration with our local partners and through our own significant investment in social services and our Seattle Housing Levy."

## The power of peer support continued...

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willingness to help others. Powell-Bey decided he wanted those things, too. The man gave him a job and stuck by him, Powell-Bey says, through relapses and two more prison stints.

“My sponsor never left me when I went to prison. He sent me money and when I got out of prison, he was the first person to come see me,” Powell-Bey says, tearing up. “He helped me so much.”



Da'wud Powell-Bey with his colleague Janice Dillard, Clinical Support Specialist. Powell-Bey became a Residential Counselor at DESC's Lyon Building this November.

Two structures helped center him in prison: a 12-step alcohol-recovery program and the Odyssey Therapeutic Community program, in which he participated through the Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (DOSA).

The Odyssey program, he says, made a huge change in his life by addressing his negative behaviors and attitudes: self-destructiveness, profanity, lack of friends, feelings of inadequacy, not caring about life, not caring about himself. He experienced, he says, a psychic change.

“I learned how to be patient with myself, learned how to love myself,” Powell-Bey says.

He learned how to accept feedback about negative behaviors and respond with, “Thank you, I’ll get right on top of that.” He also learned that “I can’t let another person’s opinions become my reality.”

In prison, Powell-Bey constructed a new vision for his life: stay sober, stay on his meds, see a therapist, go to school, and manage his own clean-and-sober house. In the years since his release, he has accomplished all that and more, interning at DESC this past summer, which in turn led to the full-time job as residential counselor at the Lyon Building.

Powell-Bey sees reflections of his past life in the Lyon Building residents he now works every day to help. He is proud to offer others the kind of help he himself was given. His life experience is a powerful tool allowing him to engage with clients who otherwise might feel unable to relate to staff.

His path through a more conventional based recovery may be different than that of the majority of clients DESC serves, but his experience can be used to benefit those seeking their own self-motivation for change. As he says, his job is to “be there for clients, whatever that may mean for them.” As long as I’m offering hope, I’m doing my job.”

He recently returned from visiting his mother in Chicago. She is, he says, proud of him.

Janice Dillard, a DESC clinical support specialist and chemical dependency professional, supervised Powell-Bey’s internship. She taught him some tools to help manage the challenging behaviors he occasionally encountered from his clients. (He says he told her in response, “Thank you, I’ll get right on top of that.”)

“He was always eager to do more,” Dillard says, “Anything you asked him to do, he was on it.”

Ryan Yanke, project manager of the Lyon Building, echoes her observations about Powell-Bey.

“He really looks at himself as part of the solution,” Yanke says. “We’re lucky to have him.”

Although Powell-Bey acknowledges his past and the challenges of the present, he too, is looking to the future.

“As long as I’m offering hope, I’m doing my job”

## Honoring our champion supporters continued...

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### ■ The Entrusted Volunteer Award

is given to a person or team for their ongoing volunteer work. This year the award went to the **clothing sorting team**, a group of volunteers who have sorted literally tons of donated clothing for our shelter, outreach programs and thrift store.

### ■ The Entrusted Volunteer Group Award

is given to a group of volunteers whose organized efforts made a large impact on the lives of DESC clients. This year's award went to **Puget Sound Oncology Nursing Society** for their years of support with our holiday gift bag drive as well as continued donations of hygiene products and other items.

### ■ The Exemplary Employee Award

is selected from peer nominations and recognizes an outstanding individual who does amazing work day after day. **Howard Bess**, a DESC Case Manager in our HOME Program was nominated by several employees for this award and won the category this year. The HOME Program specializes in outreaching long-term users of emergency shelter and helping them to move to permanent housing.

### ■ The Exemplary DESC Team Award

went to the **Cottage Grove Commons team**. Cottage Grove Commons is a Housing First building which opened in late 2013 in the Delridge neighborhood of West Seattle. The team did an excellent job setting up the new program and welcoming clients to their new homes.

### ■ The DESC Impact Award

is given to a person, group, organization or company that directly benefits the lives of DESC clients through their partnership. This year's award went to **Environment Control** who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help clients of DESC's employment program find work within the community.

### ■ The DESC Legacy Award

is given to a person or organization whose exemplary service and support over time has greatly improved the lives of DESC's clients. This year's award went to longtime volunteer and supporter **Kathy Grainger**.

■ And finally, the **Golden Piggy Bank Award** went to a child who made an impact through a creative and generous contribution. This year's winner was **Miss Evelyn D.**



# DESC

Downtown Emergency Service Center  
*opening doors to end homelessness*  
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