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Project Newsletter



Streets to Stability

Aug. 18, 2023

One year's worth of data!

What will you find inside this issue?

- Brad's story - one person's step from chronic homelessness to shelter
- Safe Rest Village Program Outcomes - by the numbers
- Reedway Safe Rest Village and Sunderland RV Safe Park are open
- Community Guidelines Ensure Shared Safety
- "Can Tiny House Villages Be a Homelessness Fix?" Bloomberg article on Portland's Safe Rest Village program

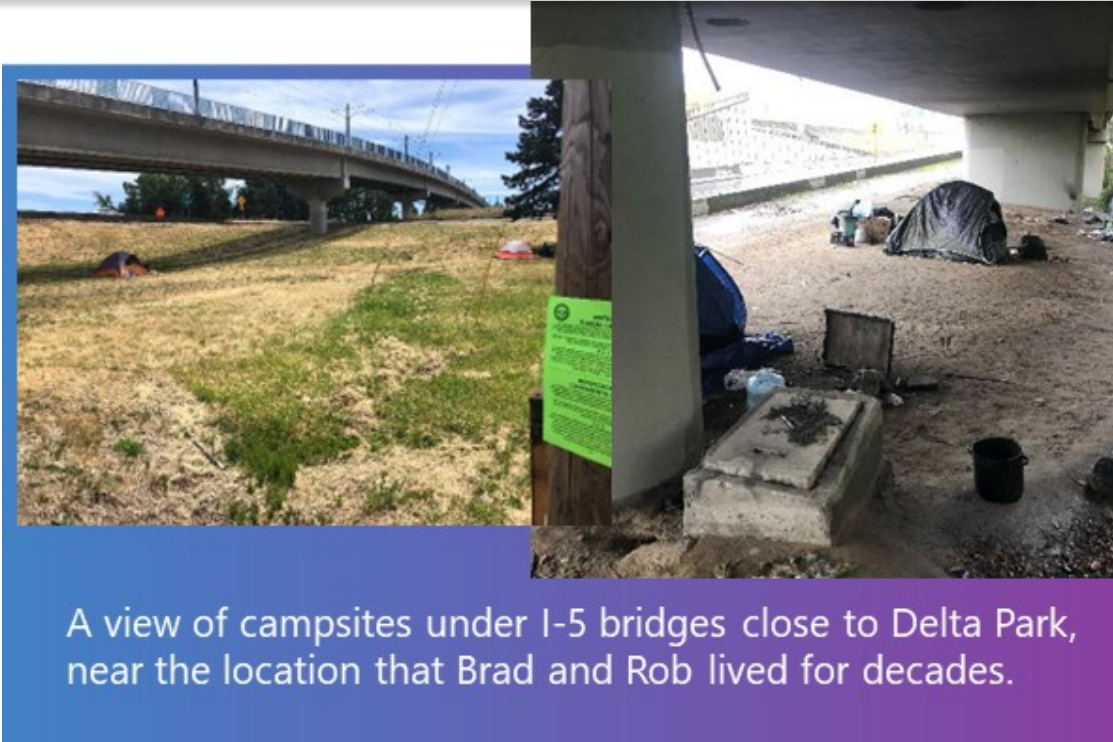
Read on to learn more...

Brad's Story

(shared with permission, names changed by request)

While he is in his early 70s and has been living under an I-5 onramp unsheltered for 22 years, Brad was not ready to take the offer of shelter at a [Safe Rest Village](#) without support for his friend Rob, who was also looking for the same supportive services. Brad has been supporting several of the older folks who are chronically homeless who lived near him.

Navigation peer staff from the Mental Health & Addiction Association of Oregon (MHA AO) have been engaging and building a relationship with him for months. MHA AO staff kept showing up, offering support, and honoring his voice and choice while sharing their personal lived experience each time, gradually earning his trust. He never took them up on offers of help or services. Until he was ready.



Last week, he was ready, as things had been changing for him over the past couple of months. Brad moved in to Reedway Safe Rest Village, and it brought comfort knowing that his friend Rob was also going to be able to get in. Rob, in his 60s, has been living outside unsheltered for 24 years. He too moved into Reedway last week. Brad and his friend are starting a new path in life.

Safe Rest Villages, and other managed outdoor shelters, offer spaces with services and staff to support people moving from chronic homelessness. With these services, people may feel more comfortable than moving directly to housing, where the shift is too sudden, too isolating.

Return from being chronically homeless – generally defined as having more than one disability and periods of houselessness over a 2-year period – is not easy. It takes time, courage, trust, and often the help of someone reaching out to offer support.

As our updated [Safe Rest Village Dashboard](#) illustrates – reflecting one full year of reported data – the Safe Rest Village model has been helping many who are chronically houseless.



Program Outcomes - A Full Year's Data

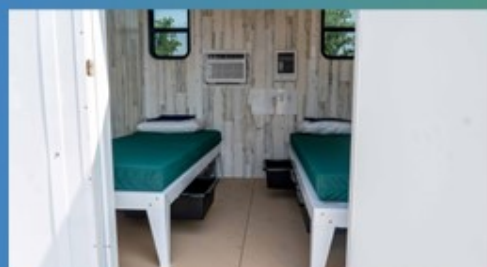
The [Safe Rest Village Data Dashboard](#) has recently been updated to include data for the entire past fiscal year (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023), and the Safe Rest Village program continues to provide good outcomes for many in need, particularly those who have been chronically homeless, who face significant barriers. (We use the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of chronically homeless.](#))

There were many outcomes worth mentioning from this past year:

- 51% of all people sheltered reported as non-white or multiracial
- 345 people were served (sleeping units can serve either one or two people)
- 211 sleeping units were available during this period
- 143 people moved through the villages to other destinations, exited the sites
- 70 of those who exited (49 %) moved to temporary or permanent housing
- 35 of those who exited to temporary or permanent housing had been chronically homeless (24 % of that total who exited, 50% of those who exited *to housing*)

There is much more to explore in the [Safe Rest Village Dashboard](#), so go [check it out](#). Just remember this data reflects only those sites that were open between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023. Menlo Park Safe Rest Village opened in December 2022, and Peninsula Crossing Trail opened in May 2023 – so both have less than a full year’s data.

Reedway and Sunderland are open



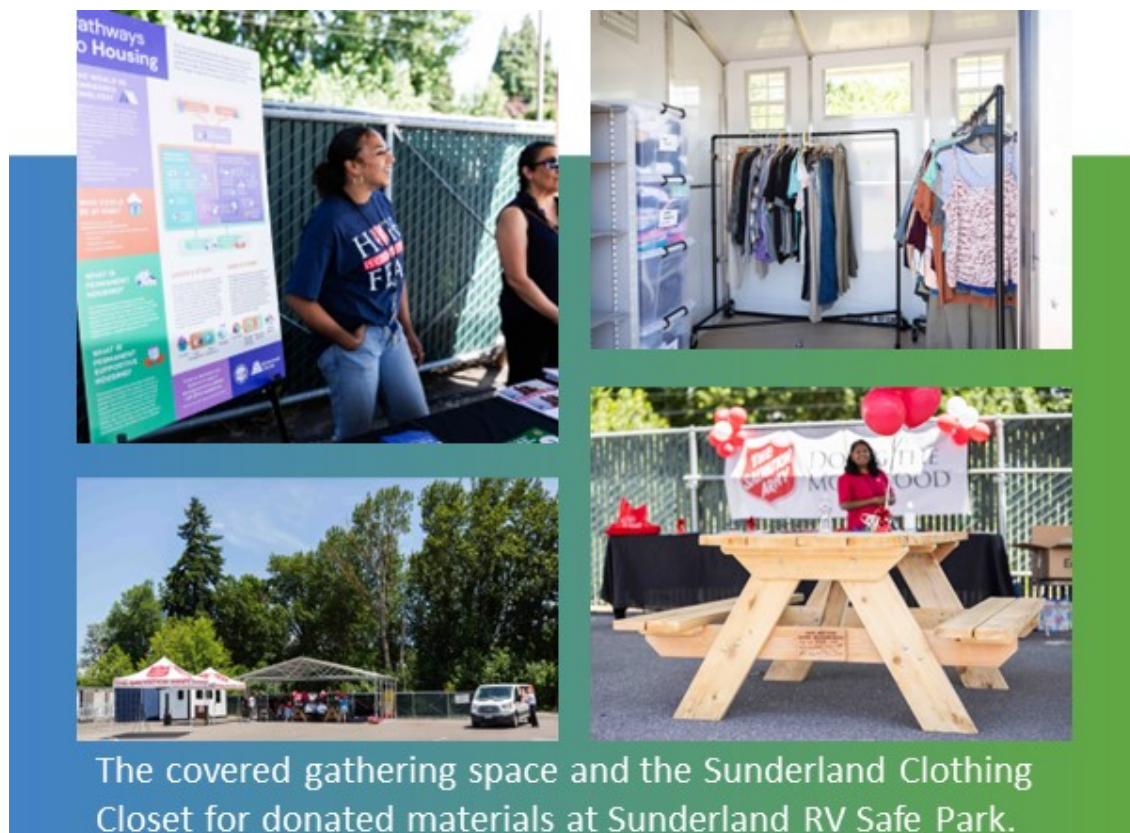
Reedway Safe Rest Village

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open! Both [Reedway Safe Rest Village](#) and [Sunderland RV Safe Park](#) (the City's first site for people living in their RVs) have opened.

This increases our total sleeping unit count systemwide to 326 (noting that 55 of these will include personal RVs, once Sunderland is full.)

Sunderland RV Safe Park is managed [The Salvation Army](#), while Reedway Safe Rest Village is managed by [Urban Alchemy](#).



Community Guidelines Ensure Shared Safety

Ensuring physical, social, and emotional safety for all inside and around each Safe Rest Village is paramount for our team and all our shelter operators. With seven sites now open, there are some differences in how each of our four different shelter operators manage their sites, support their villagers, and address behavioral concerns. There are, however, some common themes across all community guidelines, such as:

- no drugs or alcohol
- no violence

As many have asked about these, we've posted the community guidelines on the respective [Location Page for each of our Safe Rest Villages](#). Please feel free to share these with your neighbors as you'd like.

Bloomberg's "Can Tiny House Villages Be a Homelessness Fix?"

Bloomberg's CityLab reports on challenges — and solutions — faced by communities worldwide. Just this week, local writer Hannah Wallace published an article about [Safe Rest Villages](#).

Wallace introduces us to Jonathan G., a man who'd been experiencing homelessness in Portland for at least two years. Jonathan now lives at the Multnomah Safe Rest Village operated by [All Good Northwest](#) which provides meals, access to drug treatment, mental health care and employment assistance. The Bloomberg article begins, in part:

Since late December, home for Jonathan G. has been an eight-by-eight-foot shelter on a parking lot in southwest Portland, Oregon. Inside, there's just enough room for a mattress and some shelves. But the tiny, prefabricated structure has something very important to its lone occupant: a door that locks.

"Before, I'd go to lunch and come home [to my tent] and half my stuff was taken," says G., who has been living in homelessness since 2021 and requested anonymity. "Here, you don't have to worry about leaving your place and having stuff stolen."

"You have electricity, you have showers," G. says. "There are people who are advocates that help you with your next step — housing, work, whatever. If you need a dentist or medical help, they are there to help you." He could do without some of the rules — no guests, for example — but the pros definitely outweigh the cons. "It's a good stepping stone," G. says. "It's much better than being out on the street."

-- Excerpt from Bloomberg article by Hannah Wallace

For Jonathan G, like Brad's story at the beginning of this newsletter, Safe Rest Villages can serve as a critical, intermediate and stabilizing step toward permanent housing.

In the interim, the privacy and safety of villages can help people recover from the trauma of living on the streets, according to Professor Todd Ferry, an architect and senior research associate at Portland State University's Center for Public Interest Design.

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quoted in the article. They are a different way to shelter people.

The shelters – and the resources they provide – are meeting a critical gap in the continuum of services for people experiencing homelessness in Portland.

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Reach the Safe Rest Village team at safestrestvillages@portlandoregon.gov or by phone at 503-823-1340.

Questions, comments, concerns—all are welcome.

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