

JRC: How did Cascadia's financial instability affect your job?

MM: It was difficult, but the immediate support was given through our supervisors and colleagues. You focus on the work and the clients, and you roll with the punches. I've worked at four or five nonprofits. Every single one has gone through changes, disruptions and financial crisis. There were always periods of what felt like impending doom around financial instability. That's indicative of what people's priorities are. When there are cutbacks, it's traditionally for poor people, those who are mentally ill and people who are addicted.

JRC: Portland and Multnomah County instituted a 10-year plan to end homelessness by 2015. Can we do it?

MM: In 1997 I attended my first conference in Boston to reduce homelessness. We talked about a 10-year plan, about funding and strategies to end homelessness. Now we're in this other 10-year plan, so to speak. I don't know if Portland is any further along or any different than other places.

Portland's culture is really respectful and hypervigilant to our clients' needs, but outside of this culture, there's still the stigma and discrimination towards our people, my people, this population.

I'm more focused on immediate stuff, my job at hand. Street Rise is in its third month of a five-year grant that provides permanent housing for homeless youth. Our first year's goal is to get 30 people into permanent housing. That goes up to 75 people in five years. That's certainly a positive note toward this overall plan.

JRC: How does working with homeless youth compare to working with older, chronically homeless populations?

MM: Adults get themselves into treatment and services as a result of years of consequences from substance abuse and legal complications. Young people don't have those years of consequences, so there has to be other ways of promoting or coaching them into different lifestyles or healthy choices. Focusing on people's strengths is one way to do that. The

other way is to reinforce the behavior that is positive and healthy.

I've been really impressed by homeless youth services in Portland. There's a homeless youth continuum that's separate from adult services. Oftentimes there's been a gap for young adults transitioning from adolescent services that Portland has been really good about filling. Back in Massachusetts, young adults would come out of the foster care system at 18 and they couldn't receive adult services until 21.

JRC: How did Outside In earn its queer-friendly reputation?

MM: Our estimate is that over 45 percent of homeless kids are queer. That's a phenomenal amount of people that are homeless because they were asked to leave as a direct result of being queer. We have Queer Zone, an arm of our program that offers straight allies groups, community outings with [the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center] and QCenter and sexual identity groups to support each other. As young adults struggle through their sexuality and identity issues, they have people role-modeling different types of communities. It's about setting up a culture where people can be who they are, whoever that is, particularly for people who were kicked out of their environment for being who they are. If I grew up with queer role models, my process might have been a little easier years ago.

JRC: Do you and your wife, Kendall Clawson, regret losing your legal marriage license in Massachusetts since moving to Oregon, where same-sex marriage is banned?

MM: We've been together 19 years. It was very exciting being married for about a year before we moved. Of course [losing married status] was disappointing, but that was no reason to not move. I have high hopes that one day we'll be legally married here. We've had some good karma as a couple and individually. We were both able to have really good, interesting, challenging jobs, buy a house and feel settled here in a short time. The queer county has embraced us. It was really a good move for us. JO

For more information about the STREET RISE program at Outside In, visit www.outsidein.org.



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