

What We Must Know Today

By Richard Harwood

www.theharwoodinstitute.org

As I wrote this late last night, it was not yet clear who would be the next president of the United States, and it didn't matter in terms of what we need to understand today. The actual results only make this clearer. Huge underlying cleavages exist within the nation, and they do not have to do so much with partisan polarization as they are about a large swath of the nation feeling forgotten, no longer seen and heard, left out and left behind.

I encountered these deep-seated sentiments in my travels across the country when I listened to Americans in places like Mississippi, where I was last week, or eastern Kentucky, or the interior of Washington State, or even Hawaii, and many other places along the way.

Too many kids feel they do not have a shot at the American Dream and feel abandoned by adults, their schools and even their own families. Too many adults have fallen victim to an opioid

and heroin crisis and have lost hope and that has left their families in disarray. Too many people are working two or three jobs and are still unable to make ends meet.

And make no mistake – too many false promises have been made to too many people, leaving in their midst growing cynicism and disaffection.

Meanwhile, there are those who live in more vibrant areas of the nation who too often turn their noses up at those who feel left behind, wondering aloud how people can be so “stupid” to support one candidate or another; who sneer at the anger; who dismiss people's concerns about the changing nature of communities.

Our task is not so much to somehow bridge partisan polarization as some would have us believe. It is more basic than that; something more humane. It is to see and hear one another. To seek to understand how people can feel their lives are spinning out of control. To find ways to re-energize and support families. To bring some modicum of hope back to struggling and dying

towns.

As I have traveled the nation, the number one issue I hear consistently is people's yearning to restore a sense of belief that we can get things done together and a “can-do” spirit. Yes, this requires that we learn to “talk” with one another. Even more, it demands that we find ways to build a common future together—to do things together. Talk is not enough and it is not the magic elixir so many think it is.

I watched in horror as this presidential campaign unfolded and our now president-elect attacked women, people of color, the disabled and many others. I condemn those statements and beliefs.

But, I also know that so many Americans who cast their votes yesterday did so with pain in their hearts about where their lives stand and with utter disdain for a politics that does not heed their calls for help and hope.

We can no longer afford to point fingers of blame, cast aspersions and question one another's motivations. It's time to get to serious work.

Medicine Wheel Recovery Services Announces the Planting Roots Housing Program

In an effort to prevent and end Veteran homelessness in Columbia County, Medicine Wheel Recovery Services is proud to introduce the Planting Roots Housing Program. With the increased recognition of the value community adds in helping reestablish the lives of those in need, the Planting Roots staff are working to form partnerships with other programs and individuals within Columbia County and the surrounding area.

The grant from the Oregon Health Authority enables the program to serve up to 30 Veterans and their families concurrently.

Eligibility Criteria

- Honorable Discharge Status from a branch of the U.S. Military
- Mental Health Assessment (can be done during program intake)
- Low-Income Individual or Family
- If employed, the Veteran agrees to contribute 30% of income towards rental or mortgage costs

Services Provided

- Rental or mortgage assistance, housing stability plans and placement, peer support, skills training, outreach and referrals, Behavioral Health, positive relationship building with landlords and rental agencies, barrier removal – financial and other (e.g. utilities, deposits, cleaning & pet fees, other move-in costs) – not an exhaustive list.

The housing staff at the Planting Roots Program works closely with our community partners to provide a comprehensive support system for individuals and families. The ultimate success of the program would be to transition our Veterans and families into permanent, long-term and stable housing.

To learn more about this program, please contact:

- Eli Addison, Veterans Housing Specialist
 - Terri MacEllven, Peer Support Veterans Housing Specialist
- 58147 Columbia River Hwy., Ste. C
St. Helens, OR 97051
Office: 503-867-5408
Email: eaddison@medicinewheelrecovery.com
terrimacellven@medicinewheelrecovery.com
Website: www.medicinewheelrecovery.com

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Publisher and Managing Editor
Scott Laird
503-367-0098
scott@vernoniasvoice.com

Contributors
Chip Bubl
Tobie Finzel
Richard Harwood
Karen Kain
Dr. Carol McIntyre
Aaron Miller
Karen Miller
Shannon Romtvedt
Robert Schattschneider

Photography
Karen Kain
Scott Laird

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