



Danielle

OCCUPIER; UNEMPLOYED AND HOMELESS

What do Occupy Eugene and the Occupy movement represent to you?

To me, the occupation represents, specifically here in Eugene, people being mad as hell.

Why did you get involved directly and what are you doing?

I got involved because I am homeless, and it is illegal to camp out here, and I have multiple camping tickets. It is illegal to camp in different parts of Eugene. So technically if you're homeless, you cannot sleep anywhere. And if you do sleep somewhere you're risking getting either arrested or fined or ticketed. And all that stuff clutters up the courts. I got involved to stand up for basic human rights; we have the right to live. You know, this was supposed to be a free country, and it's really not.

Specifically, out here I am working in the kitchen. I know what it's like not to eat for weeks and to have to find your food out of a garbage can and then go in and get sick from that food. You have no resources. I'm out here to feed people, keep people happy and help people. Everyone has to eat, and food brings people together.

What do you hope the Occupy movement will change?

For me personally I hope it will change the way that people view people, because we need to be human and humane humans. I think everyone is so busy with their lives that they forget that we really don't need as much as we are taking in. I remember having so much stuff, and now that I have nothing I realize I could have given so much stuff to people who really needed it. I think we really need to focus on the economic situation. There are no jobs out there. I'm hoping this will create a stir in the big corporate companies and help them realize that they need to make a change. If they don't make a change, people are going to be mad as hell. I hope — any kind of change would be great, from wherever it comes from. That's the reason people are here.

Katie Dee

OCCUPY EUGENE ORGANIZER;
WORKS MULTIPLE PART-TIME JOBS

What do Occupy Eugene and the Occupy movement represent to you?

The movement represents to me the normal regular people in the middle class and lower, the 99 percent, those of us who make less than \$1.3 million a year; it is our efforts to make visible the struggles that we face every single day. We don't really have a voice in our government any more because Congress has been bought and paid for, and the president has also received lots of donations from the financial sector, and he doesn't have a whole lot of choice as to what he can do. We have a really long list of things that we believe in and it's a complicated message for the corporate media. There's just so much wrong with the world right now, so it's really hard to narrow it down into a sound bite that goes along with the consumer media culture. It represents the alternative to consumer culture that we are all sort of mesmerized by right now. ...

People like myself — I have type I diabetes, no fault of my own, but because of that I have really expensive health expenses and medicine that I need to stay alive, and it's not provided for me; I need to come up with the money to do it on my own — and people who are out there with chronic conditions — it's really hard for us to find insurance. I have to get it through an employer, and if I lost my job I wouldn't have insurance. I would quickly go bankrupt and probably end up on the streets. That's just not fair.

The 1 percent needs to be taxed so that we can pay for these things. We need to stop all of the wars because that's what we spend most of our budget on, and it's complete bullshit.

What is your role and why did you become directly involved?

I am on the communications committee and the sobriety support committee. After about four years of college I ended up as an administration assistant at a big corporate-like nonprofit in San Francisco, and I decided to go back to school for my master's degree, and now I have four part-time jobs which do not add up to a 40-hour-a-week job. After eight months of paying for COBRA health insurance for \$300 a month I finally got it from my employer, and if I lose that job, I'm homeless. I live paycheck to paycheck and I'm out of money by the 15th of every month. I get paid on the first of every month and two weeks later I'm out of money to buy food, so I go to the food pantry. I have four jobs! It's ridiculous. I'm following all the rules, I have student loans because I couldn't live on the \$800 a month I earned as a GTF (graduate teaching fellow) and I'm just really fed up and I want to do something about it.

What do you hope the Occupy movement will change?

I hope that it creates visibility that this type of living and this type of deliberate action is possible, and right now we're showing the rest of the folks at home who are still in front of the television and zonked out because they're tired of working all the time. We're showing them that it's possible to live differently and make decisions differently and make an impact on how this country is run and the world is run, which needs to happen because we're pounding our species into the ground; we're destroying the earth and we don't have much time left.



Joe McFadden

FOOD NOT BOMBS

What do Occupy Eugene and the Occupy movement represent to you?

As social activists the Occupy movement is an awesome example of people getting together to express their disgust and outrage with a system that is not simply corrupt but is corruption itself. It's great to see that people are becoming radicalized because it fails to meet basic needs of many individuals. The solidarity and momentum within the movement has been impressive. The fact so much can be done with so few resources only reinforces the idea that not only is everyone entitled to decent food, shelter, a living and so forth but that it can be done with a lot of heart and some sweat.

Why did you get involved directly, and what are you doing or have you done?

Some of us have spent time abroad and/or in other U.S. cities that have had movements of resistance to the effects of the economic collapse. Food Not Bombs' mission of politically addressing the root cause of hunger got many of us directly involved with Occupy Eugene. It made sense since many of the people we feed are strong supporters and participants in Occupy. We served its first meal after the Oct. 15 march (before the on-site kitchen was set up). We continue to show our support in providing them with food donations and attending rallies and meetings.

What do you hope Occupy Eugene will change?

We can only hope that Occupy Eugene will increase awareness, solidarity and ideally attain better conditions for people who have been living on the margins of society, some since well before this economic downturn. We must recognize our beautiful and unique differences but also realize our common struggle. Occupy Eugene addresses local concerns while still embodying the basic elements of Occupy Wall Street. So far it's been useful in reducing crime related to some of the street families in town. There's now a street family coalition between families that before were feuding. Since the city itself currently doesn't really have the infrastructure to deal with homelessness, let's not simply hope, but push for new liberated spaces.

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