



DANA WEAVER SORTS THROUGH A MOUNTAIN OF DONATED CLOTHING AT ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OF LANE COUNTY

“There are places in the country where the tipping fee is quite low, and it’s cheaper to put it in the landfill in the short run than it is to pay us to divert it,” Palmer explains.

In those cases, the Cascade Alliance helps nonprofits set up online book sales or thrift stores. Nonprofits from New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and New Jersey have all pursued this alternative revenue stream with advice and mentorship from St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County.

Palmer says she thinks St. Vincent de Paul has core values that guide its success in its mission to help, including a mentality that “everybody works.” As program manager, she answers high-level operating questions, but she also cleans floors and helps organize books.

“If there’s a problem here, everybody’s on deck to help,” she says. “I think it’s this mentality that makes St. Vincent de Paul so special. Everybody shares in the burden of making sure we’re successful.”

See www.svdps.us for more info.

The Teacher

While working as a math and computer science teacher in a Santa Monica, California high school, UO education studies professor Joanna Goode noticed a troubling trend: Although the school was ethnically diverse, that diversity did not translate to her computer science class.

“I realized this was getting at an issue much bigger than my school and classroom,” Goode says. “Why is computer science marked as a white and Asian male space? I returned to graduate school to figure that out.”

Since then, Goode and her colleagues have developed a curriculum called “Exploring Computer Science,” and it deals with barriers to entry that students of color and girls face when entering the world of computers.

School districts in Illinois, Utah, the Silicon Valley and Massachusetts all use the curriculum, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has said that within three years all high schools in the Chicago Public Schools system will offer Goode’s curriculum.

Goode says that changing perceptions plays a role in making computer science courses diverse.

“There’s this whole belief system of who computer scientists are and what they do,” Goode explains. “Students would describe computer scientists as geeky and wearing lab coats, but the description over and over again was white and male.”

Teachers and counselors also feed into this belief by deciding that some students are suitable for computer science and others are not, Goode says.

Her curriculum seeks to provide an introduction to computer science, creating an entry point to the subject so that even students who didn’t have early access to

computers can still participate. Computer science should be open to everyone, Goode says. It’s not only for geeks, and it never really was.

Although Goode has a national presence, she says she’s had a difficult time implementing her ideas locally. “Eugene is a hard place to make changes,” she says, “but a great lesson I’ve learned is to make collaborations with like-minded individuals.”

She’s connected with Eugene’s Early College and Career Options (ECCO) High School at Lane Community College and delved into the Eugene Digital Dojo, a partnership between LCC and the city of Eugene that encourages students to learn computer science in a social environment. The program was recently named Digital Equity Project of the Year from the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors.

“It helps to share knowledge and resources and connect to other people who care about what you do,” Goode says. “You don’t have to do it by yourself and, really, you shouldn’t.”

Check out exploringcs.org to learn more about the curriculum.

The Builder

Andrew Heben sits inside a wood-paneled tiny house in Opportunity Village Eugene (OVE), a transitional community he helped create in west Eugene for the unhoused. The house smells of newly cut wood, crisp and fresh. The entire community is only two years old, but in that time, Heben and others have started another tiny houses project, Emerald Village Eugene, and communities around the country are paying attention to Eugene’s marvelous microhousing — the newest tiny house to grace the village is a donated 112-square-foot structure built in Berkeley, California, by high school students.

“In respect to traditional responses to affordable housing, I think this is unique mostly in that it just costs tremendously less,” Heben says. “We have a pervasive homeless population, even though we’ve had 10-year plans to end the issue that have come and gone. So I think Opportunity Village is a really good model to get people off the street.”

The village houses 30 individuals or couples who contribute \$30 a month in utilities, attend a weekly meeting and help with maintenance. Low-income housing can cost \$150,000 per unit, but the entire OVE

project has cost under \$100,000 in private donations to get started.

It’s no surprise that cities around the country have started noticing the success story happening right here in Eugene. Previously known as Opportunity Village, the nonprofit itself changed its name to SquareOne Villages in June to accommodate its multiple projects.

“I always thought that there was potential for expanding this, and that’s why a lot of people are interested, because it’s providing a model that people can take and implement in other places,” says Heben, who delivers his presentation on tiny houses around North America, using Eugene as an example.

He visited the Canadian city of Victoria, BC in May, and the very next month the city approved a project similar to Opportunity Village. Other cities that used the OVE model as inspiration include Clear Lake and Eureka in California, as well as Madison, Wisconsin.

Heben says that homeless advocates often travel up the West Coast visiting villages in Portland, Seattle and Eugene, drawing ideas and inspiration from the models they observe. He’s quick to say that OVE drew from Portland’s Dignity Village and Seattle’s Tent City 3 and 4.

Having a successful model like OVE is important, Heben says. “The next hurdle is always siting the project and getting people to accept it in their backyard. I think that’s where we might be able to offer the most as an example of something that has existed for two years.”

He adds, “People might say, ‘If you put this in my neighborhood, it’s going to result in an increase in crime,’ and that’s simply not true based on the experience we have.”

All OVE documents are available online as examples for other communities to use.

As Heben, SquareOne Villages Executive Director Dan Bryant and volunteers move forward with Emerald Village, their next tiny house project, Heben notes that part of OVE’s success came from bringing ideas to life.

“Before the [Eugene] City Council approved finding a site for us, we built a prototype of one of our microhousing units,” Heben says. “It was on a trailer that we took downtown, and it generated excitement because we showed people what we wanted to do. If you show people something they can see and touch, it’s more likely to actually happen.”

Go to squareonevillages.org for more.

The Explorer

As part of a medical team visiting Guatemala about a decade ago, Nancy Hughes was close to retirement age — she had no idea that she was about to found StoveTeam International, a Eugene nonprofit that would help more than 380,000 people.

“I was a mother and a grandmother. I didn’t know anything about nonprofits,” she says.

When she met a young woman in Guatemala who couldn’t use her hands because an open cooking fire had burned them shut at the age of 2, Hughes learned that cooking fires in developing countries cause millions of deaths each year through smoke inhalation, with millions more suffering serious burns.

“I think nobody knows about it because it affects women and children,” Hughes says.

Back in Eugene, she brought her message to the Eugene Southtowne Rotary Club, and together they wrote matching grants to purchase and distribute fuel-efficient stoves to Guatemala. They delivered around 120 stoves per year, but the process took time and it was difficult to transport the heavy cement stoves.

“We did that for a few years, but



ANDREW HEBEN