



THE REDMOND Spokesman

A special good morning to subscriber Ken Lawson

redmondspokesman.com @RedmondSpox

47-unit affording housing project set to open

From a press release

Housing Works is hosting a grand opening celebrating the completion of Midtown Place, a 47-unit affordable housing apartment community designed to support working families and individuals living in Redmond.

The event will be Wednesday, Feb. 23, starting at 1:30 p.m. Speakers will include government officials and partners involved in bringing this

“The city of Redmond has long recognized the relationship between affordable housing and the growth of new businesses and has included housing in its economic development program.”

— David Brandt, executive director of Housing Works

development to fruition.

The \$12.4 million development, located north of downtown Redmond at 736 NW 5th Street, features one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments

and is the first affordable housing development in Central Oregon to include apartments for households earning up to 80% of the area median income.

These homes are designed for active families and feature efficient, open floorplans and patio/deck access extending the residents' outdoor living space.

Planning for the project began in 2018, working closely with the Redmond Urban Renewal Agency, to transform a long vacant lot into workforce housing for downtown and medical district workers.

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The \$12.4 million development is located north of downtown Redmond at 736 NW 5th St. Submitted photo

ABOUT THIS SERIES

The Bulletin wants to offer insight by telling their stories through a new series, Faces of Homelessness, and answer some of those questions. Every two weeks this year, Bulletin reporters will introduce readers to a different homeless person.

The Bulletin will profile individuals of all kinds experiencing homelessness on all fronts in Central Oregon. Readers will meet people who look and sound like them, and many people who do not.

The series spawned from conversations The Bulletin convened with local service providers, advocacy groups and elected leaders. They shared that misconceptions some community members hold about people experiencing homelessness are some of the biggest barriers they face in responding to homelessness, and this series seeks to broaden the conversation.

The goal of the series isn't to advocate for any one outcome, but to paint a more honest picture of the complicated reality of homelessness in Central Oregon and shed light on the preconceptions and misconceptions about those living unsheltered.

The time is right for the series: A 2021 survey from Invisible People, a national homeless advocacy organization, found most people (70%) surveyed think homelessness has increased in their communities (and they're right: The homeless population nationwide and in Central Oregon has increased in recent years).

But the survey also found many hold misconceptions about who is actually homeless. Survey respondents guessed 21% of those experiencing homelessness were veterans, while the Department of Housing and Urban Development puts that figure at 8% nationwide. Meanwhile, respondents guessed those under 25 made up 18% of the population, while HUD estimates the share is 26%.

Meeting the community members who experience homelessness won't "solve" the issue. But by seeing eye to eye with the faces of homelessness, The Bulletin hopes we can help us all remember the people behind the issues we're discussing.

faces of homelessness

MEET CENTRAL OREGON'S HOMELESS COMMUNITY

Homelessness in Central Oregon was scarcely noticeable as recent as five years ago. Today, no one can ignore there are hundreds of people without a house to call their home.

Who faces homelessness in Bend, Sisters, Redmond, La Pine? Who are the real people impacted by skyrocketing housing prices, decisions about shelters or plans to sweep informal camps? Who do we mean when we talk about those who are homeless, experiencing homelessness, unsheltered or unsheltered?

BY ZACK DEMARS • The Bulletin

Heather Fluke

After closed doors, Redmond is where she wants to be

Heather Fluke used to tell homeless people to move along as part of her job.

Working for the city of Salem's parks department at the time, Fluke, now 47, wondered why the people she cleared out of parks until 2016 didn't just go get jobs.

She's had a change of heart since then. Now homeless herself after suffering injuries, lost jobs and scuttled plans, Fluke has come "full circle," spending most nights this winter at Redmond's Winter Shelter after returning to Central Oregon this fall.

"You just don't understand until you're in it, and I didn't," Fluke told The Bulletin last week as evening temperatures approached freezing. "I don't know if I can put it into words yet because I'm just in the middle of it. It's humbling."

Fluke is from Salem, but this year isn't her first in Redmond. She lived in the city two decades ago for a few years, she said.

Prior to becoming homeless, Fluke had a job, a house and a plan — but over time, those things fell away one by one.



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Heather Fluke, 47, sits in the Redmond warming shelter at Mountain View Fellowship Church.

After she worked for the city of Salem and just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fluke had a job in merchandising for Home Depot. It was a good job: She traveled for work, and she could afford a new truck and to rent a house.

But when a novel coronavirus turned the world upside down, it touched her life, too. Travelling to Home Depots across the region was suddenly much more difficult and retail sales were suddenly much less common.

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Spokesman Calendar

Events in and around Redmond

The Redmond Spokesman welcomes event information for its community calendar. Submissions are limited to nonprofit, free and live entertainment events. Deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday for the following Wednesday's paper. Items are published on a space-available basis and may be edited. Contact us at news@redmondspokesman.com or fax 541-548-3203.

WEDNESDAY 2/2

Current Fiction Book Club: The club will be discussing "Great Circle" by Maggie Shipstead; 1 p.m.; free; Roundabout Books, Online; roundaboutbookshop.com or 541-306-6564.

THURSDAY 2/3

February Parks Advisory Committee: A regular meeting will be held; 3:30-5 p.m.; free; Redmond City Hall, Online; redmondoregon.gov or 541-923-7710.

Prevent Diabetes Central Oregon: Learn techniques to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes; 4-5 p.m.; free; Your Health Central Oregon, online; yourhealthcentraloregon.org or 541-536-3435 ext.1848.

The Ballybogs: The Irish traditional music band will perform; 6-8 p.m.; free; Porter Brewing Co., 611 NE Jackpine Ct. 2, Redmond; porterbrewingco.com or 541-504-7959.

Songwriting Dance Party: Join local singer-songwriter Casey Hurt Thursday nights, where he creates retro pop and soul dance tracks right on the spot; 7-10 p.m.; free; General Duffy's Watering Hole, 404 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; facebook.com/Generalduffys or 541-527-4345.

FRIDAY 2/4

Redmond Coffee Clatter: Join for a morning of networking and hearing about what Friends of The Children has going on; 8:30-9:30 a.m.; free; Friends of The Children, 1258 SW Lake

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The Spokesman uses recycled newspaper

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