

KP teams up with local agency to help Marion County homeless

Kaiser Permanente and Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) have teamed up to further address the housing epidemic with Project HOME—a holistic, wrap-around housing project designed to assist the chronically homeless population in Marion and Polk counties.

Project HOME is supported by a \$1.5 million grant to MWVCAA from Kaiser Permanente's National Community Benefit Fund at the East Bay Foundation. The initiative will be led by the ARCHES Project, MWVCAA's homeless outreach and sheltering division.

Project HOME was created with the goal of helping unhoused individuals and families secure permanent housing, improve their mental and physical health, and help reduce their dependency on services such as emergency care and law enforcement to address their chronic conditions and daily

needs.

"Our rates of chronic homelessness in Salem are considerably higher than other communities in Oregon. Recent figures show about 64% of our homeless population is experiencing chronic homelessness, which is almost double the national average. This program in particular will be one of the largest housing programs for our homeless in Salem's history," said Jimmy Jones, Executive Director of Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency.

The Marion-Polk region is one of three communities across the nation receiving Kaiser Permanente funding for the Project HOME initiative. Kaiser Permanente selected MWVCAA and the greater-Salem area based on the rise in chronically homeless individuals and limited affordable housing, and MWVCAA's expertise and readiness to implement this work.

"We know that housing is a key driver of health and that's why we are working with partners like Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve, including our members," said Jeff Collins, president of Kaiser Permanente Northwest. "As a health care organization, Kaiser Permanente recognizes that individuals who are homeless have a higher rate of hospital readmissions and emergency room visits while also suffering from poorer health outcomes and higher mortality rates."

Project HOME will include efforts to support Kaiser Permanente members and the community in Marion and Polk counties who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. The ARCHES team will work with Kaiser Permanente's local medical teams to identify high-risk individuals and bring them into the program. As the program evolves, focus will expand to other populations with the goal of connecting over a 100 individuals with long-term stable housing and support services by the end of 2023.

Ashley Hamilton, Director of the ARCHES Project at Community Action, said, "We know that many in our unsheltered population experience worsening health conditions as a result of limited access to medical services while also lacking safe housing needed for recovery or health management. Programs like Project HOME that connect health systems and

housing are all the more critical when creating solutions to end homelessness."

Project HOME is the newest project to come from the partnership with Kaiser Permanente and Mid-Willamette Valley. Other collaborations to address housing and homelessness include Redwood Crossing supportive housing development; Connect Oregon, a close-loop social services referral network; and Built for Zero, a data-driven initiative to help evolve how local homeless response systems work.

"We're proud to partner once again with Kaiser Permanente, to help identify the medically fragile among our homeless neighbors and help them connect to housing," said Jones. "We have lost far too many of our unsheltered to needless deaths the past two years. This project helps to connect our unhoused neighbors to a warm, safe place to call home, where they'll be able to live with dignity and access the support they need to regain their health."

Kaiser Permanente's mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve 12.4 million members in 8 states and the District of Columbia.

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency is Marion-Polk's anti-poverty agency and the area's leading non-profit social services provider. Our programs provide services in housing and homelessness, childcare and youth development, and incarceration reentry.



A homeless camp near Keizer last November.

FILE PHOTO, Keizertimes



By JOANNE SCHAFER

Business is about relationships; relationships with customers, vendors, employees, other businesses, and your community. While there are a variety of ways to create and foster relationships, networking groups are one of the best. They also allow you to learn new things, to connect, to build business, and to give back. While some enjoy networking groups more than others, everyone can benefit from them as long as you are clear

Networking Groups for Connecting and Community

about your intentions, have a goal of what you hope to gain from your participation, and you know yourself well enough to know what type of group would be the best fit for your personality.

If you've wanted to join a networking group and you just aren't sure where to start, or you aren't sure if a networking group is the best way to spend your time and energy, consider the following reasons for further exploration.

Being a business owner can be lonely, especially if you are a solo entrepreneur or you work from home. You can find

community with other business owners and leaders. Attending a networking group simply to be around other people can be healthy and encouraging. The group can offer a safe place to share your ideas, thoughts or concerns with other business owners who can relate.

Attending and participating in networking groups introduces you to people from different paths and a variety of industries. You can use the group to learn about others' experiences and how they approach business. Making connections with people outside of your normal environment can provide important insights and beneficial learning that you might not have experienced otherwise.

Networking groups offer an opportunity

to share leads and make referrals that can help you build your business. While this is an important consideration, keep in mind that the quality of those leads or referrals is dependent upon the source. In other words, make sure the other members of the group have access to your customer base are working directly with your customers, or are your customers. You want those leads and referrals to convert to sales or other key relationships to get the most from the time and energy you spend participating in the group. This goes both ways, so make sure you contribute to the group by providing quality leads and referrals to others.

Possibly the best reason to join a networking group is to contribute to your community by participating in a group that focuses on helping others. These groups sponsor events, fundraisers, or programs that allow you to give back all while you build relationships. Yes, participating may allow you to make connections with people who can bolster your business, but those connections are an added bonus.

Whatever your reasons for joining a networking group or giving one (or several) a try, get clear about your interests and needs so you find the group that is a fit. Also, make sure you are committed to the process: to learning, to connecting, and to giving. That commitment will help you get the best return on your investment.

Joanne Scharer is a Business Adviser at the Chemeketa Small Business Development Center. The Small Business Adviser column is produced by the Center. Questions can be submitted to SBDC@chemeketa.edu or call (503) 399-5088.

Cat of the Week



Name: KIKA
Age: 3

HISTORY: Kika is a black and white domestic short hair. She broke her leg in 2019 which was then amputated.

PREFERRED HOME: Kika is great around people, including kids of any age. However, she doesn't do well around other cats and prefers a quiet home.

WE HAVE MOVED >>> Our new location is 4157 Cherry Avenue, Keizer <<< 503-362-5611

death notice

Mariella W. Dibble

In remembrance of Mariella W Dibble The family will be holding a memorial service for her on

March 28 at 11:00 am.

The Service will be at Keizer Clear Lake United Methodist - 7920 Wheatland Rd N, Keizer, OR 97303. Please join us as we celebrate this extraordinary woman.

Masks and social distancing required.