

## RELIGION



A new building is on the drawing boards for the Blanchet House, a longtime downtown landmark for feeding and housing the disadvantaged.

## Support Grows for New Blanchet House

### Site would continue decades of service to the needy

The Blanchet House of Hospitality, a Portland based non-profit, has received \$1.3 million from several community partners and leaders as gifts for the campaign for a new and improved building to serve the homeless and needy in Portland.

These gifts will help ensure that the Blanchet House will be able to house and feed the disadvantaged as it has admirably done for nearly 60 years.

In February, the downtown charity received a \$500,000 donation from Scott Duffens who witnessed firsthand the impact his gift would have by volunteering to serve during a recent lunch shift and was moved by the simple yet effective operation.

In addition to this personal gift, the Blanchet House received recent gifts from three of the areas re-

nowned charitable organizations: the Murdock Trust awarded \$450,000; the Collins Foundation awarded \$200,000; and the Maybelle Clark MacDonald Fund awarded \$150,000 towards a new building to house the services that Blanchet House provides.

"Words cannot begin to convey our gratitude for these amazing gifts" says Board President Rich Ulring. "Our project will replace a blighted corner of Old Town with an attractive and energy efficient new building specifically designed to increase our capacity to help those in need."

Ulring said the charity still has about \$1.3 million to raise, but due to the amazing support of our private donors, charitable foundations and the local business community, is on track to break ground later this year.

The new location will be almost three times the size of the current facility, making it possible to greatly expand the services offered and featuring a unique indoor queuing area for those waiting to be served. Consistent with the current Blanchet House, there will be housing located above the kitchen for formerly homeless residents who work at the Blanchet House. The construction process is expected to last 12 to 13 months.

Executive Director Brian Ferschweiler added, "During the next 16 months we will continue normal operations at our current location while making sure our focus remains on those in need during this transition."

The Blanchet House began its service to the Portland community in 1952 when a group of University of Portland students began to devise a plan to help the needy. They started by serving a simple meal consisting of beans, bread, butter

and coffee. Many of the original founders are still involved and active on the Blanchet House Emeritus Board.

Today Blanchet serves roughly 800 meals a day, six days a week, and totaling nearly 300,000 free meals per year. Blanchet also provides housing to 30 men, who must remain clean and sober to live and work at the Blanchet House.

The men are assigned specific duties and work daily shifts preparing meals in the kitchen that they later serve, followed by clean-

up and maintenance of the cafeteria. Residents team with Blanchet's 4,000 annual volunteers and together continue the organization's simple mission, "To feed, clothe and offer shelter to those in need."

Over the past 59 years, Blanchet has prepared more than 14 million meals, provided more than one million nights lodging and distributed tens of thousands of items of clothing - all without public funding. For more information on the Blanchet House visit [blanchethouse.org](http://blanchethouse.org).

## Back to School Supplies

As the beginning of the school year is creeping back in, one local learning center will be holding a school supply event to give kids throughout the community the op-

portunity be prepared for the upcoming year.

Peep's Learning Center has organized the free "Ask and it shall be given" school supplies distri-

bution which will be held Saturday, Aug. 6 from noon to 2 p.m. inside the church at 5637 N.E. 14th Ave.

For more information or to donate supplies, call 503-208-0225 or e-mail [info@peepslearningcenter.org](mailto:info@peepslearningcenter.org).

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