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Bud Clark SUCCESS

New housing a
dent in fighting
homelessness

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After six-months of providing affordable housing to thousands of Portland's most vulnerable and chronically homeless, the Bud Clark Commons has been deemed an early success by both residents and the city.

As part of a 10-year plan to reduce homelessness, the apartment complex on Northwest Broadway Avenue near Union Station, provides a safe place to call home for 130 low-income residents, while also providing tenants and the public a multi-resource center and computer lab, a day center, on-call management, and mental health and addiction services.

cessibility of the staff and the mental health services provided.

"Before I was more of a loner," he said. "But since I've been here, I interact more with people."

He said access to staff is also very easy. "When you need someone, you get in touch with them right away."

Witt said he also tries to do anything he can to help out around the complex.

"I emptied a vacuum for a staff member," he said with a smile. "I am also pretty good online."

One unique quality of Bud Clark in comparison to other housing for homeless people, in addition to the plethora of services within the building, is the lack of sobriety requirements for tenants living on site.

"One reason this (Bud Clark) is working as well as it is, is that they didn't put restrictions on it," said Annie Adams, a tenant since July.

"We don't require people to participate,



Tenant Annie Adams enjoys some time with a canine companion in the community room of the Bud Clark Commons, where she has lived in her own affordable housing apartment unit since July. Previously she was homeless for more than seven years.

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—Annie Adams, Bud Clark Commons tenant

The eight-story building, including a 90 bed men's shelter, was made possible through partnerships between the Portland Housing Bureau, Home Forward (formerly, the Housing Authority of Portland), Transition Projects, Inc., and Multnomah County.

Although there is more need for affordable housing for residents in Portland, a recent report on the progress for Bud Clark Commons said the day center alone has served more than 4,000 people, including 300 who have found permanent roofs over their heads.

Doreen's Place, the name of the men's shelter that provides space for homeless men, particularly veterans, has served 300 individuals and helped 80 find homes, including 40 Veterans who now live in permanent housing.

The commons took two years before opening its doors in June, when a waiting list to receive a unit was already 150 names long.

Today, the waiting list to receive housing in the building has reached 300.

Resident Christian Witt, who has lived at Bud Clark for six-months now, spent more than 23-years of his life hitchhiking around the country while battling alcoholism and mental health issues.

Now, he said his favorite part about living in the affordable apartment units is the ac-

but they tend to," said Rachael Duke, building manager of the commons.

Adams said moving into a new home and trying to deal with all of life's obstacles is often very difficult, and change is a process that needs to be taken one step at a time.

"A lot of people, when in that survival mode, have to deal with it in whatever way is best for you," she said.

The transition from the streets to a home can be a difficult adjustment for some tenants who have been homeless for decades.

Adams, mother and grandmother to two boys, was homeless for seven years before moving to the commons. She was overwhelmed when she heard she had her own place to live.



Rachael Duke, building manager of the Bud Clark Commons, a new 130-unit affordable housing complex and multi-resource center downtown, speaks about the facility to a visiting college architecture class.

"I was excited, but I was also very apprehensive. I felt guilty because there are so many people out there who need it," she said. According to Adams, her life made a turn for

the worst after recession, along with thousands of others, when she suddenly lost her

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