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'City of Roses'



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PHOTO BY OLIVIA OLIVIA/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

José Serrica stands at the base of the Hazelnut Grove camp along North Greeley Avenue, a controversial community that has brought together dozens of homeless people in an effort to get them safe and warm for the upcoming winter.

# No Where Left To Go

## Homeless campers hold tight amid tensions with neighbors

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A group of men stand over a pot of boiling water, stirring in vegetables and pasta, as the sun sets early on the Hazelnut Grove homeless camp along North Greeley Avenue. Dogs run around, barking and welcoming guests, before José Serrica, one of the camp's leaders, calls everyone to dinner.

This is daily life at the camp where dozens of adult males and a few females struggle to put together some semblance of normal life as a collective community. There is no running water. There is no Internet. There is no elec-

tricity. The campers are making due with what little they have.

Serrica says he doesn't know what's in store for the camp, with calls to close it from the adjacent Overlook Neighborhood Association, and support to keep it open from the Mayor as part of a housing emergency.

He maintains that the campers are peaceful, and self-policing.

"We have a no drug-use policy, and monitor the community in shifts, allowing everyone to take a turn doing something, whether it's cooking, cleaning, helping out with supplies, or looking out for others," he says. "But

despite this I think people are worried we are bad for the community, and some might want us gone."

Only a week ago, the Overlook Neighborhood Association issued a blistering letter lambasting the Portland City Council for allowing the homeless camp and another nearby camp to exist and called for them to be disbanded. The city is preparing to issue a permit to allow Hazelnut Grove for up to 25 of the campers to stay, but the permit can be revoked and another camp nearby was not included and looks like it will soon be forced to disband.

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