

48
years of
community service
‘City
of
Roses’



Stabilizing Our Community

Legacy bricks raise capital for Allen Temple rebuild

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BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A homeless group of mostly women finds mutual support and camaraderie to survive the hardships of winter as they fight to survive the cold at a makeshift campsite along a highway in northeast Portland.

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The dozen or so tents and ragtag shelters on a grassy enclave on the side of the road was an all too familiar sight. But finding out who lived there and what they faced was a revealing portrait of the city's homeless epidemic.

The camp was mostly women who were supporting each other in a struggle to stay alive outdoors in winter. One female from the group almost died recently if not for the help of her companions, a shocking experience, but one that is not uncommon on the streets around Portland.

Last year, 80 people died while trying to survive homelessness in Multnomah County, according to a new report just released this month.

The homeless group of women I stopped to talk to said they had been bouncing

Surviving Together

Revealing portrait as homeless struggle through winter

around various locations for the better part of a year, usually near a freeway off ramp or underneath a freeway overpass. They said they frequently get kicked out of their camping spots by Portland Police or the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Lex, 32, the group's designated "camp mom" for the past year, said the frequent moves are a strain for everyone involved.

"People get suicidal when they move," she said. "People get, you know, violent."

The 80 homeless deaths recorded last year marks the second highest count since Multnomah County started tracking the deaths in 2011. The top three causes of death were accidental, natural, and suicide. Drugs or alcohol contributed to half the deaths. The median age of those who died was 49 and 17 of the total deaths were female.

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