

Celebrating the Success of First Micro-Village

Sleeping pods and more act as transitional housing



This picture demonstrates the ways guests make the sleeping pods feel like home! Photo courtesy of WeShinePDX.org

Five formerly homeless and vulnerable Portlanders have found stable, permanent housing, thanks to the new approach of a WeShine micro-village. Volunteers, donors, the board and church members gathered Friday, Aug 11 at Parkrose Community United Church of Christ to learn about what's next. "Everyone has worked very hard for this success," says Janet McManus, WeShine's Executive Director and Founder. "We've learned a lot, but we also knew that a 10-pod micro-village would work well for our guests. Two more villages are in the works."

WeShine, a two-year-old nonprofit started by neighbors in Northeast Portland, opened its first village a year ago with space for 11 people, on property owned by Parkrose Community United Church in Christ. "We felt compelled to act to help people."

says Christine Tanner, chair of the board. A micro-village is a community of approximately 10 secure "sleeping pods" and three small community buildings for shared space, located in a neighborhood close to transportation and businesses. "Guests" can rest safely, have access to hygiene and meals, secure their belongings, and learn healthy ways to advocate for themselves and their needs. In addition to the small size and comprehensive services, neighborhood engagement contributes to the micro-village model's success. Villagers must sign Good Guest agreements, and the village and neighborhood associ-

ations work together to develop a Good Neighbor agreement.

"People living in the micro-village learn the skills to be community members," says Ruin Riggs, Service Resources Coordinator. "I've seen people really blossom and grow here." WeShine funding comes from the Multnomah County Joint Office of Homeless Services WeShine designs, builds, and operates neighborhood-based micro-villages that provide safe transitional shelter and services, where Portland's vulnerable unsheltered adults can live as they prepare to become successful tenants in permanent affordable housing.



The Welcome Desk of Mt. Hood's new Equity Center. Photo courtesy of Mt. Hood.

New Space Focuses on Students Needs

Mt. Hood Community College Unveils Planned Equity Center

Mt. Hood Community College's (MHCC) student basic needs team recently announced plans for a new equity center, designed to meet the needs of students who are looking for a place to relax, study, meet, eat, and access resources. The equity center will be built in the former bookstore.

The project is a result of several key occurrences, including the

COVID-19 pandemic, which left many students in a state of food and housing insecurity and revealed a need for more student resources. According to the MHCC Student Basic Needs team, the equity center will provide a range of resources and support to students. It will be a multi-faceted space, featuring the food pantry, housing support, and other resources such as laptops and hotspots. The center will offer a "living room" feel, making it a comfortable place for students to hang out, study, and socialize.

The location of the equity center has been carefully chosen to ensure it is easily accessible to students. It is centrally-located di-

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