

Year-round Shelter Construction Begins

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program, which currently offers more than 400 beds county-wide.

The 12,000-square-foot property located at 11380 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Highway is situated in an established business area, centrally located near transit, and within walking distance to groceries, social service agencies, and employment opportunities. The shelter is a valuable community asset made possible thanks to the availability of new funding sources for shelter acquisition and operations through \$5 million from the voter-approved Supportive Housing Services measure. The City of Beaverton has also received or is expected to receive approximately \$9 million in state and federal funding, including American Rescue Plan Act funds. Senate Majority Leader Kate Lieber, Senator Wmsvey Campos, and Representative Maxine Dexter directed state ARPA funds for the shelter and a coordinated care space located within.

“Addressing the crisis of homelessness in our region will take a diverse range of

housing options and services,” said Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici. “The year-round shelter in Beaverton—partially funded by the American Rescue Plan—will provide a safe place for people experiencing homelessness and help connect them with the resources they need. I look forward to seeing the completion of this crucial project and will continue to work with partners at the state and local level to solve the intertwined issues of housing unaffordability and homelessness.”

After a competitive process, Open Door HousingWorks was selected to operate the shelter through a contract with Washington County. They have over thirty years of experience providing shelter services and were selected for their trauma informed approach to staffing, neighborhood relations, and coordinated care services that will provide stability and a link to housing for residents of the shelter when it opens. Other project team members include Ink Built as the lead architect, Shiels Obletz Johnsen, and P&C Construction. The new shelter is expected to open in mid-2024.



Vladislav Kirilov

A Passion to Make a Difference Impaired Vision to Ophthalmic Technician Student

Portland Community College student Vladislav Kirilov has embarked on an inspiring educational journey that is deeply rooted in personal experience and a passion to make a difference in the world of ophthalmology. In 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Southeast Portland resident and recent immigrant to the country began his studies at PCC by attending online classes. Over the past three years, he completed his ESOL requirements and worked on prerequisites to join the Ophthalmic Medical Technology (OMT) Program at the college's Cascade Campus in North Portland. “Stepping into the ophthalmology clinic of my dreams feels like entering a world of endless possibilities,” said Kirilov. “As an aspiring ophthalmic technician, I envision myself playing an invaluable role in this dynamic environment.”

Graduates of the program report an average starting range of \$24 to \$26 per hour, with experienced technicians earning up to \$36 per hour. The program showcases a small cohort of 24-28 students, hands-on training

in a specialized lab, and clinical practicums with more than 40 community partners, providing students with valuable experience under the supervision of licensed physicians. PCC's OMT program is the only one of its kind on the West Coast at the intermediate training technician level, accredited by the International Council of Accreditation (ICA).

Kirilov's decision to pursue this field of study at PCC is rooted in his personal journey. As a child, he navigated the world with impaired vision. His early exposure to compassionate ophthalmologists and ophthalmic technicians inspired him to become a beacon of support for others facing visual challenges. By joining the program, Kirilov hopes to empower individuals with the same care and support that transformed his life. “These individuals were my heroes, guiding me toward a clearer future,” he said. “Now, I am inspired to follow in their footsteps, aspiring to become a hero for others facing visual challenges. By pursuing this program, I hope to empower individuals with the same care and support that once transformed my life.”

In his eyes, entering the world of ophthalmology gives him options. He envisions himself as a member of an eye care team, contributing to accurate diagnoses and providing crucial support during surgeries. His ultimate goal is to be a guiding light for

others, just as the ophthalmic professionals were for him. Kirilov is grateful for the support he received from PCC during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly through emergency grants and food pantries. These resources were a lifeline that helped him navigate school during the pandemic, reminding him of the importance of community and support in times of need.

“As a student, navigating through the uncertainties posed by the pandemic was overwhelming, and these grants were a lifeline that helped me stay afloat,” he said. “The college's food pantries, in particular, were a beacon of hope.” Thanks to that support, Kirilov continues to receive training across various ophthalmic fields as well as hands-on experiences to cultivate practical skills. From conducting intricate tests that aid in accurate diagnoses to providing crucial support during surgeries, he sees himself contributing to and enhancing patient experiences. “I witnessed the impact ophthalmic professionals had on my life and I'm eager to be part of a team that changes lives through vision care,” he said. “The thought of being that guiding light for someone else, just as those professionals were for me, fuels my passion for pursuing this path.” For more information about the OMT Program, visit <https://www.pcc.edu/programs/ophthalmic/>

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