TINY HOME PROJECT

We broke ground!

With the help of our community and partners, we were delighted to break ground on the Tiny Homes Village last April. This new and exciting project continues to progress as we are closer to providing these ten affordable homes that will serve the long-term housing needs of successful Sponsors participants who are at greatest risk of continued homelessness.

The need for this project is great: Lane County is experiencing a housing and homelessness crisis that continues to rise rapidly. Individuals with conviction histories experience homelessness at a rate of **four to six times greater** than the general population, and The Oregon Department of Corrections estimates that 50 percent of people released from prison each year are homeless. These statistics compel us to make a transformative difference through the Tiny Homes Project and expand our housing services to support the successful reintegration of people with criminal histories.

This project would not be possible without our supporters, and our team at Sponsors is extremely grateful for the outpouring support we have received to build the Tiny Homes and create positive, lasting change within our community by breaking the cycle of homelessness, poverty and crime.

The goal of this project is to build a housing community debt-free so that we can funnel our resources to best serve and support each participant on their road to stability.

We are in the final stretch of fundraising, and **we need your help!** A gift from you will have a significant impact in raising the $75,000 needed to completely fund the $1.2 million project. **You can partner with us today in the opportunity to improve our community by supporting people who are committed to changing their lives.**

Walk with us at this year’s Walk for Recovery

Skinner Butte Park, September 14th, 2019

Former and current Sponsors participants, staff, and their family and friends will be joining thousands of people at the Oregon Recovers’ Walk for Recovery this fall. As part of the Sponsors Team, we will be raising the awareness necessary to create lasting policy change and generating essential funding for the public education and advocacy work of Oregon Recovers. Oregon has the 4th highest addiction rate in the country, while ranking 50th (that’s last place!) in access to treatment. With more than 400,000 Oregonians struggling daily to cope with addiction, it is a disease that truly impacts everyone – and is of personal relevance to many who work and receive services at Sponsors. **Supporters of Sponsors are welcome to take a stand and walk with us.** Learn more about how you can register and join the Sponsors Team by contacting Mentorship Specialist Amy Myers at amyers@sponsorsinc.org.
Creating success stories through the RLAN Program

Sponsors proudly partners with the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Lane County Sheriff’s Office to provide an early release program known as RLAN (Released from Lane County), with the goal of reducing recidivism and encouraging productive lifestyles and healthy habits by providing a range of supports on the Sponsors campus. The 30 to 90-day program, which operates weekly from Monday through Friday, serves an average of eight people at a time on a rolling basis. Participants spend the first 60 days at the Work Release Center of the Sheriff’s Office before transitioning to Sponsors.

Lane County remains the only county in the state with a program like RLAN, which has successfully served 240 people since it first started in 2015. RLAN promotes a transitional reentry process that allows for community-oriented reintegration, as participants are able to reunite and connect with their families and spend time at home while not at work. Those who have gone through the program leave with a successful head start in finding long-term housing and employment upon release from the county jail.

“Creating success stories requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the unique needs of each individual,” said Jordan Rahier, who advocates for the incredible impact that RLAN has made on his own life and in the greater Eugene community. Jordan successfully went through the program when it first began in 2015 before being hired at Sponsors and now currently works as the Men’s Program Director and case manager for RLAN participants.

The work of each individual is seen throughout the Sponsors campus, whether it’s helping our organization run smoothly by lending a helping hand, keeping our buildings spotless, or maintaining the beautifully-kept landscapes that are inviting to every person who walks in. Their contribution and effort is deeply valuable. With skill-building programs like RLAN, Sponsors empowers and builds our community while creating life-changing opportunities that not only work to keep people out of jail and prison, but also to encourage participants as hard-working and motivated individuals who have the power to make a difference.

Did You Know That Our Women’s Program...

...has served approximately 150 women in the past year?
...targets risk factors that include parental stress, depression, unhealthy relationships, and isolation?
...provides Parenting Inside Out, a ten-week parenting skills training program developed for justice-involved parents?
...holds a specialized program called Moving On, which is a trauma-informed, strength-based cognitive program designed specifically for women?

From Women’s Program Director, Joan Quaempts:
“Moving On”’s primary focus is goal setting, strategizing on how to meet those goals, and role playing on issues such as communication and healthy relationships. It is a 10-week program open to both residents and community members who are referred by their Parole/Probation Officer.”

Jeffrey Shervey Spirit Award

Jeffrey Shervey was a long-time Sponsors employee who died unexpectedly last July. In honor of his memory, we developed an award that would recognize one special staff member each year who exhibits Jeffrey’s finer qualities of integrity, kindness, dedication, and service to the community. It is with great pleasure that we announce this year’s winners.

Congratulations to Jordan Rahier and Brett Yater for receiving this year’s Jeffrey Shervey Spirit Award! Both Jordan and Brett received numerous nominations from their peers. The selection committee was amazed to learn that they tied in the scoring criteria. As a result, we are pleased to recognize both Jordan and Brett for their accomplishments. Congratulations!!

Jeffrey Shervey Spirit Award recipients, Jordan Rahier and Brett Yater
FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Way Home, Six Months In

The other day I ran into a resident (who I will call John) at the Oaks at 14th. The Oaks is Sponsors’ 54-unit apartment complex that provides permanent supported housing. When John was released from prison homeless and indigent over a year ago at age 60 after having served six years in custody, his prospects were dim. Given his age, break in work history and lack of community supports, he was unsure of his ability to navigate the “free world.” The temptation of drugs and alcohol were strong, and the structure of prison was familiar. Despite his worst fears, John has persevered and is thriving.

After completing Sponsors’ transitional housing program, where he found a full-time job, successfully completed his cognitive behavioral therapy curriculum, and engaged in mental health counseling, John moved into the Oaks where he has flourished and is a part of a community. When I ran into him he wanted to show me his new (used) car. After many years without a license, he was able to pay off the fines and reinstatement fees to get his driving privileges restored. One of my greatest joys is hearing one of our participants excitedly share the news of a goal attained (e.g. a new job, a new place to call home, a new vehicle, school graduation, and/or reconciling with family).

Every year we provide reentry services to over 1,500 men and women, and over 500 are served in our transitional housing programs. Every one of those folks will need access to permanent housing. In recent years we have doubled down on our efforts to create more units of affordable housing that our program participants can access. The truth is we cannot build them fast enough.

The Way Home is a great example of our effort to develop innovative housing models that can be replicated widely. This project, through a partnership with Homes for Good, Lane County Parole and Probation, and Third Sector Capital Partners, will provide 100 units of Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) to 125 individuals with conviction histories in Lane County. Initial funding came from a highly competitive $1.3 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Justice (DOJ). The Way Home will serve as a model to counties and states utilizing outcomes-based contracts to address complex social problems. Such contracts are structured so that resources are aligned with results: “success payments” are only made when the service provider achieves specific measurable outcomes. Furthermore, the model provides for incentive payments that can be made when the provider exceeds the agreed upon outcomes.

Sponsors had a bill in the 2019 legislative session, SB 992, which would have provided two years of funding for the project. However, the bill died in the final days of the session like many other policy bills that were victims of circumstance when a group of Senators left the state denying a quorum and effectively halting business. We have secured enough grant funding to provide services through the end of this fiscal year and beyond. We look forward to advancing the bill in the short legislative session in February 2020. In the meantime, I look forward to sharing more about this exciting project.

This initiative is just one of the ways that Sponsors is developing innovative strategies and delivering much needed services to vulnerable populations. For Sponsors’ participants like John, these services make all the difference. Without Sponsors, the outcomes are predictable. Fortunately, for John and the thousands of individuals we serve, their future looks much brighter.

Paul Solomon
Executive Director

Board Update

Welcome, Judge Ilisa Rooke-Ley!

The Honorable Ilisa Rooke-Ley re-joined the Board of Directors at Sponsors in February 2019. Judge Rooke-Ley has served on the bench of the Lane County Circuit Court since 2010. Prior to joining the court, she spent 16 years working as a criminal defense lawyer. We are grateful for Judge Rooke-Ley’s dedication to her community and commitment to advocating for social justice and human rights. Her values and beliefs align with Sponsors’ mission, and we are thrilled to have her re-join the board where she brings an important voice and perspective to our work.
Legislative Committee Report- June 30, 2019

Sponsors staff and the board’s Development Committee actively tracked a number of public safety and housing bills this session. Below is an overview of bills that we were tracking and passed. To access the texts of these bills, visit https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws

**HB 3064 – Accountability and Equity Act** increases equity in allocating Justice Reinvestment Grant Program funds for historically underserved groups, such as rural and tribal communities, communities of color, women, and LGBTQ people.

**HB 2631** – Directs Department of Corrections to establish a pilot program which will provide legal services (to assist women in custody at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility).

**SB 1008 – Juvenile Sentencing Reform package** changes sections of Measure 11 mandatory sentencing law for juveniles, including eliminating mandatory adult sentencing and juvenile life without parole.

**SB 608 – Affordable Housing Act** provides protections from no-cause evictions and extreme rent increases.

**SB 5506 – Justice Reinvestment Act** provides for continued funding for programs designed to reduce prison utilization and recidivism.

**SB 973 – Behavioral Health Reinvestment Act** provides community supports and services to individuals with mental health or substance use disorders to reduce involvement in criminal justice system.

**SB 420 – Marijuana conviction expungement** will erase marijuana records with a simpler process.