To our amazing community of supporters, THANK YOU!

I’m so grateful for the chance to share an update from Sponsors. I also want to extend my heartfelt wish for your health and wellbeing during these challenging times. Despite the difficulties we face, I want you to know, we have been working diligently to keep our programs up and running. We have made many changes to operationalize “shelter in place” guidelines. With your support, we continue to adapt to meet the needs of the individuals returning home to our community, such as Kelly, who arrived at Sponsors a little over a year ago.

At the time, Kelly was homeless, jobless and struggling with addiction. The first time she moved into Sponsors, she stayed only a few nights before returning to the streets. She wasn’t ready to make the necessary changes in her life. As difficult as it can be to see program participants struggle – we’re guided by the belief that people can and do change, given opportunities, when they are ready. For some people like Kelly, it takes more than just a second chance.

In early 2020, after completing a residential drug treatment program, we welcomed Kelly back into Sponsors. She was motivated and ready. She found a full-time job and even began volunteering at Sponsors. Kelly was incredibly grateful for the opportunities she had been given and was eager to give back – to help others. Before the COVID–19 pandemic, Kelly had begun looking for a permanent home. Unfortunately, her dream of a new home is now on hold.

Now more than ever, we must continue supporting individuals like Kelly, and to do so, we’ve had to evolve. This evolution has included purchasing and upgrading technology and establishing new approaches to programs and services to continue meeting the immense need here in Lane County.

I hope you will continue to partner with Sponsors with an emergency, one-time or monthly gift to support individuals like Kelly and the many others working towards transformation.

With much gratitude,

Paul Solomon, Executive Director

P.S. I am eager to share with you our newly updated Transformation Happens Here Newsletter, and I hope you take comfort and are inspired by successes you helped foster.
We were positively thrilled to welcome our wonderful community out for the Jeffrey Commons Dedication on January 31st! With the sun shining, guests, staff and program participants had the chance to see first-hand the unique design features and quality construction of our beautiful new tiny homes. This community was designed to meet the long-term housing needs of one of Lane County’s most vulnerable populations, individuals with conviction histories returning to our community homeless and indigent.

The 10 brand new, duplex-style tiny homes are for low-income men and women experiencing homelessness after being released from the Lane County Jail or state prison. The construction couldn’t have come at a better time, considering that 50 percent of people with conviction histories are homeless upon release from custody. After completing Sponsors transitional housing programs, participants will have the opportunity to apply for residence at the Jeffrey Commons.

Sponsors chose to name the new housing community: Jeffrey Commons—as a memorial to Jeffrey Shervey, a beloved Sponsors employee who passed away unexpectedly in 2018. The new homes don’t just provide a roof over one’s head; residents are provided a host of integrated services designed to address long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency. Through hard work residents are able to begin building a more hopeful future as contributing, law-abiding members of our community.
Ten sustainably designed & affordable tiny homes, made possible by you.

The tiny homes community includes five duplexes with 10 individual units and a beautiful community building for residents and their family and friends to gather. Each modern, fully-furnished, single occupancy home features:

- A fully-stocked kitchen and dining table
- A full bathroom with shower
- Sleeping quarter with a bed, dresser and extra shelving units
- A storage loft

Residents of the Jeffrey Commons will pay affordable rents. Additionally, a portion of their rent will be set aside in an equity account that can be used for future housing costs when residents are ready to move out.

“If we provide a modest investment in their success early on, it goes a long way toward stabilizing folks, getting them to a place of self-sufficiency and ultimately out of the criminal justice system,” said Executive Director Paul Solomon.

Sponsors’ hope with this new housing opportunity is to continue to reduce recidivism and homelessness in Lane County and to serve as an innovative model to other communities addressing the unique needs of homeless individuals reentering the community in the midst of a national housing crisis. To support our work at Jeffrey Commons, please visit www.sponsorsinc.org/donate.
Dave Kayfes | Mentorship Champion

A 1963 journalism graduate of the University of California in Berkeley, Dave served three and a half years in the Army as an information specialist. He was stationed for a year and a half in Italy where he met his wife, Anneke. In 1974, Dave took a sportswriter position at The Register-Guard in Eugene until he retired in 1999. In retirement, Dave became active with various programs related to restorative justice, including Sponsors, where he has been a mentor since 2012. In that time, he has been matched with 13 mentees, including Brett Bray, who now works in Sponsors Mentoring Program and case manages Dave and his mentees. It is inspirational stories like Brett’s that have motivated Dave to continue mentoring. “To see the world through the eyes of a man who had been in prison for more than 20 years was a privilege,” he said of his most recent mentee. “He schooled me in pool and surprised me with his choice of chamber music as one of his favorite activities. Our mentor/mentee relationship officially concluded last month, but we remain friends.” Thank you, Dave, for your commitment and dedication to mentoring!

Susan Sowards | Public Safety Champion

Susan began working for Lane County in 1987 as a part-time Aide to County Commissioner John Ball. In 1989 she was hired full time to provide professional and technical staff support to the Lane County Youth Development Commission, then later the Commission on Children and Families. She has staffed the Lane County Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC) from its inception in 1996 and transferred to Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) as a Criminal Justice Planner when administration of PSCC moved to LCOG. During her time at LCOG, Susan has worked with an array of partner agency teams to develop and submit over $73 million of successful, competitive grant applications to bring state, federal, and foundation funds to Lane County agencies for the prevention and community safety system. Of those funds, over $4.7 million supported Sponsors’ programs, starting in 2010 with a grant that provided the foundation for the development of Sponsors Mentorship Program. She will be fully retiring this year after over 40 years of working for state and local government. Her impactful work will be felt by Sponsors participants for years to come. We are incredibly grateful for the many ways she has worked to help develop and fund some of our most successful programs.

Bruns’ Apple Market | Second Chance Employer Champion

Bruns’ Apple Market has been a family-owned grocery store in the Eugene Whitaker neighborhood since 1992. Bruns’ is an important hub for the community they serve. Owners Tom and Tad Bruns employ around 40 individuals, some of whom are individuals working to find financial stability through the Second-Chance employment services at Sponsors Reentry Resource Center. Bruns’ owners feel passionate about people’s ability to transform their lives and make major changes towards stability. Bruns’ Apple Market recognizes the value of second chance employment. Research has shown that second-chance employees are extremely loyal and have lower turnover rates than the general population. They currently have five Sponsors participants working at the store. Thank you for all you are doing to make a difference in the lives of our participants!
My name is Brian. I went through the Turning Point program offered by the Department of Corrections before releasing to Sponsors. There, I learned how to ask for help, let go of the pride that was holding me back, and build healthy relationships. These things also helped me be successful in reentry at Sponsors. Sponsors helped keep me honest and accountable. I think it is what we all need, until we can learn to do it on our own. Sponsors eliminated 95% of the barriers I faced when released. This place was truly a blessing. It gave me everything I needed to get back on my feet.

Transitional housing and mentorship helped me rebuild my life. My mentor and I spent time weekly in restaurants and at church. We attended some mentorship programs, like the Holiday potluck. I asked my mentor for advice, and he gave it. We became a great match and made our time work for each other. I still call him.

I currently work for a local construction company doing what I love to do. This was my first job, and I am still there because I proved I was reliable and willing to learn. The company helped me achieve one of my biggest goals and largest obstacles: my driver’s license! I am now a leader and live a truly debt-free life. I am studying for my contractor’s license and have a three-year, long-term goal of starting my own business. My wife and I have plans to buy a home in the next year and a half.

I wouldn’t be as far as I am today if it weren’t for Sponsors programming, mentorship, and my desire to want to change!

Sincerely,
Brian
Former Sponsors participant
We couldn't be more excited to announce Sponsors brand new monthly giving program. Every dollar given by our Partners in Transformation goes directly to support the individuals coming out of prison. Lives are changed, every single month.

We hope you'll join us as a partner.

Please visit www.sponsorsinc.org/partners-in-transformation/, or call Development Director Megan Falkenstein at 541-735-6401 to set up your reoccurring gift.

Please accept my gift to provide life-changing services for individuals with conviction histories.

Name(s)* ________________________________

☐ $500 ☐ $250 ☐ $100 ☐ $25 ☐ Other ________

☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

☐ I want to become a Partner in Transformation! Make it a recurring gift and charge my card monthly.

Card Number ________________________________

Exp. _______ Sec. code _______ Signature ____________

Address* ______________________________________

Phone* _______________________________________

Email* _______________________________________

Please mail this card with an enclosed check to:

Sponsors, Inc.
338 Highway 99 N
Eugene, OR 97402

Thank you for your support!

For more information, contact
Megan Falkenstein, Development Director
Phone: 541-735-6401

All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent provided by law.