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1. David Trainer
2. Shoreline
3. (o) Hillwood
4. detrainer@frontier.com
5. 10/05/2020
6. Enhanced homeless shelter

7. My name is David Trainer and I am a 26 year resident of Shoreline in the Hillwood neighborhood. These written comments are a follow-up to my public testimony at the September 28 meeting. I spoke in support of the enhanced homeless shelter being proposed for Shoreline.

I started with a short true story. Last week as I was exiting the parking lot at Fred Meyer's I saw a man sitting by the side of the road with a sign that said "homeless need help". When he lifted his head I recognized Rich and stopped to speak with him. The driver behind me was annoyed and honked his horn and yelled out his window "why are you stopping to talk to that bum".

Although he sounded angry I also understood there was some fear behind his comment. That could've been me a couple of years ago. I too looked at the homeless on the streets and parking lots as dangerous drug addicted "bums" to be avoided at all costs. I certainly didn't want any hanging around near my house.

This all changed in February 2019 as a result of two separate encounters people who are homeless

The first occurred on February 10th at the beginning of Governor Inslee's declared State of Emergency due to a powerful snow storm. Pastor Kelly, minister at Ronald United Methodist Church, had invited me to volunteer overnight with him and 10 homeless individuals who he was sheltering in the church out of harms way. That night the YMCA paid for five pizzas at Pizza Hut for dinner which Pizza Hut refused to deliver due to the snow. Having grown up in Buffalo, New York, I enjoy driving in the snow so I picked up the pizzas. We put two large tables together and after Pastor Kelly said grace we broke bread. That first night I got to know these 10 people by name and began to hear some of their personal histories.

The second event occurred four days later on Valentine's Day at Calvin Presbyterian Church which is near my home. Located adjacent to the church were 30 individuals who were homeless living in a tent encampment known as Camp United We Stand. This camp has been located in Shoreline for several years and spends three to six months at one of several churches (Calvin Presbyterian, Saint Dunstan's Episcopal and Shoreline Free Methodist). It was there I met several campers including Ivan and his dog Tippy. In light of the sub freezing temperatures I brought some handwarmers and some Coleman gas canisters for them to heat the inside of their tents. Over the course of the next several months I continued to visit the camp and spend time with Ivan and his dog inside of his large tent.

Eventually I invited Ivan to come to my home to take a shower and enjoy a home cooked meal. It was his first shower in several months and when he emerged from the bathroom he looked like a new man. We ended up talking and I invited him to come live with me on June 1st. With secure shelter Ivan enrolled in several accounting classes at Shoreline Community College. Initially he commuted from my house. The college had just built a new five story dormitory. They set aside 5 of the 125 brand new dorm rooms for formerly homeless students. Ivan was fortunate to be selected to be admitted to the dorm rent free. Ivan was excelling in being a student on campus. He re-connected with some estranged family members in Ohio during his college stay. When the college closed due to the pandemic he relocated to Ohio to live with his family.

Meanwhile I continued to volunteer one night a week at the homeless shelter at Ronald United Methodist Church. There I met Tim who in spite of being employed full-time in the hospitality sector was homeless primarily due to his substance abuse disorder and the high rents in Shoreline. Tim is a Shoreline native and all his family lives here in Shoreline. Unfortunately he was estranged from all his family primarily due to his being homeless.

After Ivan moved out in October I invited Tim to move in a few days before Thanksgiving. He has continued to live with me for the past 10 months. As a result of stable housing he has reconnected with his family. I've gotten to meet Tim's daughter and his grandson, plus his brother and mom. Tim said this is all thanks to having stable housing. Although he is currently laid off and collecting unemployment he is anxious to get back to work.

I would encourage anyone interested in moving beyond the stereotypes of the dangerous homeless and pay a visit to Camp United We Stand currently at Calvin Presbyterian Church. Feel free to bring something to share with the camp but more importantly would be to share your presence.

The bottom line is that an enhance homeless shelter is a win-win for Shoreline. It's a win for those who are currently homeless to be sheltered and provided with supportive services. It's a win for Shoreline residence in that those who are currently on the streets will be safely housed and supported to become contributing members of society.

David Trainer

8. (c) Support

Thank you,
City of Shoreline

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