

Welcoming, Empowering,  
Safe Habitation Initiative with  
Neighborhood Engagement



WeShine

WeShinePDX.org

## **WeShine *Connections***

### **A Newsletter for our friends, Supporters and Volunteers**

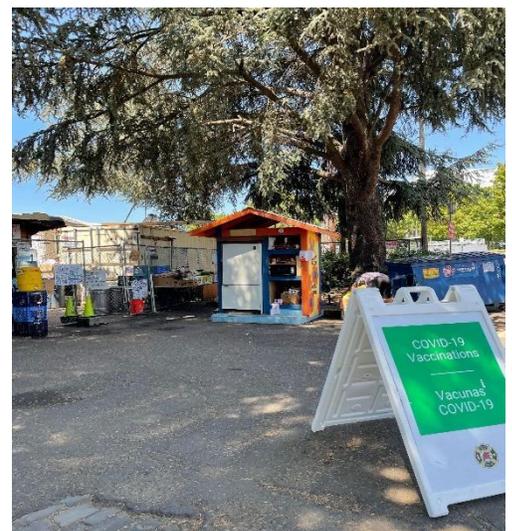
#### **Volume 1: Issue 2: August 10, 2021**

We want to start this issue by thanking all the friends, volunteers, and supporters who have helped us make such extraordinary progress in such a short period of time. A special thanks to all of you who were able to attend our Summer Garden Party, to the many who made generous contributions, even if you couldn't attend, and to the many volunteers who helped pull it off. We raised over \$10,000 in pledges and donations that will underwrite WeShine's administrative costs for the remainder of 2021. Pledges included one for our shower unit at our first site! Donations are still and forever possible at [WeShinePdx.org/support](https://www.weshinepdx.org/support)

THANK YOU ALL!

#### **Volunteers are already making a difference!**

- We collaborated with Jenn Louis, a Sullivan's Gulch neighbor who has built a network of volunteers and resources to serve approximately 40 campers whom she has been visiting twice a week for more than a year. Some of our volunteers have continued to work with Jenn over the last few months, delivering food, clothing and water. When the heat wave hit, several WeShiners were out helping Jenn deliver water, ice, and information about cooling shelters to campers on both outreach routes. We also worked together to get the information out about accessing stimulus checks and vaccinations. Formed a small new team of volunteers interested in doing outreach to our unhoused neighbors. In June, we began regularly visiting several encampments off both Sandy Blvd. and Halsey St. between 21st and 43rd avenues. We distributed food, personal hygiene, and first aid items as well as water. We also were able to distribute information about



help available to get stimulus checks through CASH Oregon. Starting in July, we connected with the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management and Portland Fire Bureau and began offering COVID vaccinations to interested campers on Jenn's and our WeShine's outreach routes. Altogether, we were able to vaccinate 16 individuals so far.

- In July, we hosted a volunteer training on the use of Naloxone to prevent opioid overdoses.
- In August we will convene our Neighborhood Engagement & Outreach Committee. Members of this Committee will include both board members and volunteers interested in helping WeShine engage, manage, and support our neighbors and faith-based communities, matching them to roles that meet their many interests and use their diverse skills.
- Upcoming volunteer opportunities:
  - Outreach volunteers: preparing kits or sandwiches and/or taking food, water, snacks, hygiene and first aid kits, etc. to visit encampments
  - People with construction skills: as soon as we have the lease signed for our first site, we will begin acquisition of construction materials, and the build-out of the units.
  - Check out our volunteer site at <https://weshinepdx.org/join-us/> to learn of new opportunities and to fill out a volunteer application.

## **WeShine welcomes Jenn Coon and Randolph Carter to the Board of Directors**

- We welcomed two new Board members to WeShine:
  - Jenn Coon is a Peer Recovery Mentor who works for the Mental Health and Addiction Association of Oregon and is stationed at Blanchet House. She has a special interest in volunteer management and in helping WeShine get connected with Catholic parishes that may be interested in hosting a WeShine micro-village.
  - Randolph Carter is a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion professional who specializes in serving colleges and other educational institutions. He has worked all over the country and internationally as well.

We feel so fortunate to have such multi-talented professionals serving on our board!

## **In pursuit of funding . . .**

- Submitted a funding proposal to the Joint Office of Homeless Services to build and evaluate--in partnership with the Portland State University Regional Research Institute-- 2 micro-villages before the end of 2021.
- Submitted a capacity building grant to the Oregon Community Foundation. We will learn about this funding request later this fall.
- Submitted a funding proposal to the City of Portland to build and operate 5 micro-villages over a 3-year period.

**...And village sites in sight!**

- We began discussions and are now in process of drafting a lease for our first micro-village site at 33rd and NE Broadway! This is the parking lot east of the former Gordon’s Fireplace shop. The site will hold 8

Conestoga huts, 2 slightly larger sleeping pods for use by couples or a person with accessibility needs, a community building, a shower unit, a porta-potty and trash and recycling services There will be privacy fencing all around the site. The community building will include a heating source, a field kitchen, plus tables and seating for the whole little community.



- We have chosen a sleeping pod design that has been used in Eugene and other places for the last seven years. Here is a photo of the Conestoga Huts we will build on this site.

- We have also reviewed the list of public lands that may be available for shelters and have indicated our interest in one of these sites for a WeShine village.
- We have formed a Siting and Infrastructure Committee that has prioritized a list of properties that we will be approaching.

Reaching out to our Elected Officials and neighborhoods

We have met with several other organizations who are either advocating for or working on building alternative shelters. We are hoping to partner with other organizations in mutually beneficial ways.

- We have set up meetings with each of the County Commissioners to discuss our proposal to the Joint Office of Homeless Services.
- We have met with City Commissioner Joanne Hardesty, and more recently Commissioner Dan Ryan's staff person in charge of implementing Safe Rest villages to discuss our proposal. We are also pursuing meetings with other City Council members or their staff.
- We are scheduling presentations about WeShine to various neighborhood associations and business associations. Please let us know if there is a group with which you are connected (faith community, business, neighbors) that would like to schedule a presentation.

Please contact Jan at 503-970-2984 if you have any questions or want to find out more about any of the activities or information listed in this update.