

Happenings at the Women's Guesthouse

By Meta Hogan, Volunteer Host

There have been a lot of changes at the Guesthouse in the last few months. When Phil and I moved back to Bread & Roses in August, the house was full: six single women and two families. Since then, one family and one woman have successfully transitioned into more permanent housing. Our remaining family added a fourth member with the birth of a new baby, and are at the top of a waiting list for an apartment. After their move, we will return to serving single women only, filling a vital role in the bigger picture of housing in our community.

With the loss of the Advocacy Center this spring, case management and resource referral services for Guesthouse residents were temporarily dropped. These services have recently been picked up by the Family Support Center. Guests now visit their case managers weekly

Out of these meetings, the guests organized a deep cleaning of the house, and designed a chore rotation for themselves.

The Guesthouse residents have wholeheartedly embraced our efforts to fix up the houses and yards. We have removed two abandoned vehicles, and

truck-loads of blackberry vines, morning glory, dead limbs, and poison hemlock later, we have begun sheet mulching and planning gardens. We hope to have our vegetables in full swing next summer to add to our current annual harvest of plums, grapes, apples and the ubiquitous blackberries. This year, we did get out a

Bread & Roses

Love in action.

exchanged our ugly old dumpster for new garbage and recycling bins. Not only do they look prettier, but we've reduced our trash output by half!

With the help of a few seriously dedicated guests

few batches of homemade grape juice and dried plums!

We are continuing our tradition of sharing weekday breakfasts and Friday night dinners with guests. Phil's waffles have gotten rave reviews, and my coffee has quite a reputation, too. The Friday dinners are open to the wider community as well as guests, and have served as an opportunity to initiate many new friendships and strengthen old ones. It is difficult to describe the deep satisfaction of sharing a potluck meal with friends, community members, current guests, and former guests – some of whom moved out years ago but keep coming back for the food and fellowship.

We are truly grateful to be back home at Bread & Roses!

Join us for community meals at Bread & Roses.

Breakfast: every weekday at 8 AM

Dinner: every Friday at 7 PM

At the House of Hospitality, 1320 8th Ave NE, Olympia

Everyone in the Bread & Roses community is welcome. *This means you!*

to work toward housing and other goals. We also meet weekly at the house to discuss the issues that arise in any shared living situation: dishes, interpersonal conflict, the thermostat settings, etc.

and volunteers (who have the pick-sore hands and blackberry-thorn scars to prove it), we've cleared most of the overgrown weeds, brush and stumps from our yards. Ten pickup-

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1320 8th Ave NE
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breadandrosesolympia.org



Bruce: His Legacy

By Selena Kilmoyer,
Boardmember

Bruce Smith. A man remembered by his family as a dad whose mental illness prevented him from responding as “normal” dads do; as a granddad whose behaviors could be embarrassing; as someone who had abandoned his family. Bruce is also remembered as someone who taught us to see past his mental illness to his humanity.

Bruce Smith moved to Olympia from the Chicago area after a marriage failed, and when his elderly mom, with whom he found sanctuary, passed on. His adult son and family shared their Lacey home with Bruce. However, his progressing mental deterioration and an ‘inner call’, sent him forth out onto the streets, into the culture and community of the homelessness.

Bruce became, most affectionately, “Old Bruce” – or benignly and more lovingly, “Crazy Bruce”. This identifier lent to Bruce the freedom to exhibit demonstrations of overt behaviors and actions, outside the jurisdiction of our judgment. It was his right and the communities practice to affirm his human dignity in spite of (or may be even because of) his behavior.

Bruce was, as my Irish mother would have affectionately called him, ‘an odd duck’. Bruce found love and acceptance. And, in myriad actions, gave

love and encouragement to so many, in his beautiful unique ways.

A group of his street community friends, aware of Bruce’s difficulty in retaining housing, after successive and frustrating attempts made by BHR caseworkers, found the solution: Bruce was moved into a small cottage, where he was able to live freely as Bruce, for the last five remaining years of his life.

From this home base, where the walls provided renewable canvas space for art, which gave him a place to reflect and journal his experiences in all the various realities of his world, and from which he was able to drive his bike throughout the area, Bruce was able to be Bruce.

This is the icon I hold as I remember Bruce Smith. A group of his friends together dared to think outside the box and, in partnership with the mental health establishment organization, found a simple solution for housing that met Bruce’s unique needs while allowing him to continue being part of our community.

This is Bruce’s legacy; this is the spirit of Bread & Roses – radical love; genuine, authentic personalism; respect for each and all of us. Together, we the Bread and Roses community thank Bruce as we continue to grow and perpetuate this legacy.

Finance Update

Bread & Roses’ finances are recovering from our earlier difficulties, thanks to your generous donations and to our improved bookkeeping system and increased financial transparency. The steadiest and largest source of revenue remains donations to us from Washington State government workers through State Combined Fund Drive. Also, a large recent donation from the Tides Foundation really helped us with the restoration of the houses.

Our greatest asset in repairing and rationalizing our financial records has been the new bookkeeper, Gerda Wynkoop, who is working through the problems with our Quickbooks accounting program (and those caused by the multiple untrained bookkeepers we’ve had up until now). We should be ready for a full financial audit before the beginning of our new fiscal year in January.



Current Needs and Wants

Some of you have been through Bread & Roses’ changes and transformations since 1982, including changes in the core community’s composition, the decision to stop performing non-violent direct civil disobedience, expanding hospitality beds, moving the soup kitchen, beginning active advocacy to single men through the Drop-in center and then BRAC, and more.

What has not changed is the vision of creating a just response to economic and social inequality. None of the transitions were possible without the direct response and involvement of each and every person who cared enough to serve lending their time, monies, hearts, and faith.

Bread & Roses humbly asks for your continued support, trusting that each will give as they can.

Things we need:

- People with electrical and carpentry skills to assist with the guesthouse
- People with a green thumb and passion for gardening, to join the guesthouse work team and help bring the front gardens at the Guesthouse and Hospitality House back to life
- Financial donations in any amount

Things we want:

- A reasonably new Apple computer and software

Holiday Gifts for Bread & Roses Guests

Can you 'adopt' a guest for the holidays? We are hoping for a group of people or families who can give our guests a holiday to remember. Please remember that the space our guests are living in is very limited. This year instead of things we are hoping people would donate gift items that will strengthen self esteem or commit to assisting guests when they are ready to move into their permanent housing.

Ideas for gifts include:

- Committing to pay for a rental application fee (usually such fees are \$35 to \$40 per application)
- A certificate for a haircut
- A certificate for a manicure or pedicure
- A gift certificate for clothing
- A gift certificate for a makeover



New Board Members

Nanci Lamusga, Emily Lardner, and Shannon Ford have graciously accepted invitations to join Bread & Roses' board of directors.

Nanci was a founding member of the Bread & Roses community in the early 1980s (she traveled here from the Des Moines Catholic Worker) and has strong nonprofit management experience.

Emily co-directs the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education – a public service center at The Evergreen State College – and is returning to Bread & Roses' board after a couple years off.

Shannon Ford is a program manager at the Capital Clubhouse and got her start in human services as an intern at the Bread & Roses Advocacy Center.

Welcome back to the B&R community, folks!

President's Notes

By Matthew Green, Board President

Everyone knows there have been many changes at Bread & Roses lately (though our mission and values have not changed). To keep you informed, we've restarted this newsletter. I hope you enjoy it.

Also, you can find out what is happening at Bread & Roses any time by visiting our web site: www.breadandrosesolympia.org

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter electronically instead of on paper, or if you would prefer not to receive it at all, please let us know. You can contact us at:
1320 8th Ave NE
Olympia, WA 98501
(360)754-4085
info@breadandrosesolympia.org

Big Thank You's

Many people help Bread & Roses. I'd like to highlight two groups that came to our aid as we faced the daunting task of fixing up the Women's Guest House and the House of Hospitality:

In May, over 70 members of the Thurston County Realtors Association swarmed Bread & Roses to clean, paint, weed, and mend. Among other accomplishments, they filled (actually, they stuffed to overflowing) an 18-foot-long garbage dumpster. Thanks, realtors! And thanks to the City of Olympia Public Works for donating use of the dumpster.

In June, six volunteers from Olympia Action Network spent a Saturday morning scrubbing and priming walls for painting. Inspired by President Obama's call for change, OAN is a service organization that provides our community with opportunities to 'be the change'. If you are interested in joining OAN, email olyactionnetwork@hotmail.com or visit their Facebook page. Thanks to OAN!

Progress Report and Annual Budget

Bread & Roses' Annual Operating Budget has been approved by the board and is now available for viewing and comment on our web site: www.breadandrosesolympia.org. A report on our current progress is also available.

This is part of our efforts to make all our organizational plans, finances, and decisions more transparent to the community. Please read it and let us know what you think!

Open House, Saturday, December 12

Please join us at our open house. We hope to show off the fixed-up House of Hospitality and meet as many members of the larger Bread & Roses community as possible in person. See the back page for details.

Bread & Roses
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Join us for an Open House!

Please visit us for our open house.
Come see the progress we've made
fixing up the House of Hospitality,
meet and chat with guests and other
Bread & Roses supporters, and
enjoy yummy snacks.

Saturday, December 12
4 to 6 PM
1320 8th Ave SE, Olympia