

Piloting Change

Permanent Housing Provides A Safe Haven

Lynne is a Northwest Pilot Project client who has lived through profound adversity in her lifetime, yet chooses to focus on a future full of hope. She is an inspiring example as she now spends her life focusing on the good and the happiness that nature and her community bring into her life. She tells her story of triumph hoping to inspire those who are still in the midst of crisis and to offer some positivity. We recently spent a day with Lynne in her home and community. Her story is unique to her, yet many of her struggles are similar to those experienced by other NWPP clients as they work to overcome obstacles and trauma in their own lives.

Born in Southern California, Lynne fell in love with the Pacific Northwest when on vacation in 1988 with a friend. They visited the Redwood Forest, Crater Lake, Mount St. Helens, and the beautiful coastlines of Washington and Oregon. This eye-opening journey and her love for the environment led Lynne to say goodbye to California and open herself up to a new life in Oregon.

A few years after making Oregon her permanent home, she married and had a child. Unfortunately, this family life lasted only a few years when Lynne became a single parent and sole provider to her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Chance. Lynne worked hard though most of her jobs were only temporary positions. In 2010, after a job lay-off, Lynne and Chance moved in with Joanne, Lynne's older sister and best friend, who had recently lost her husband. Lynne enrolled at PCC to enhance her work prospects. She attended classes, worked at the Women's Resource Center and graduated with honors.

In 2015, Joanne became ill with cancer and died within only a month of her diagnosis. Soon after Joanne's passing, her mortgaged home was sold, and Lynne found herself heartbroken, and she and Chance facing homelessness. Lynne sent Chance to live with friends and tried a roommate situation for herself. But she quickly



Lynne now has affordable housing made possible by a permanent rent subsidy from the Regional Long-Term Rent Assistance Program (RLRA).

found herself in a toxic and scary situation. So, at 61 years old, without enough income to afford an apartment, Lynne began living in her car.

She had to learn where to find the best places to shower, what stores would allow her to use the restroom, and where she could safely park her car to rest. Lynne recalls telling herself "I am going to be okay and I'm going to make this work. Every transition that has happened in my life, I've always found a way." She never thought it would take nearly three years to find a permanent safe home again.

After working with several agencies who added her name to long waiting lists for affordable housing, Lynne was referred to Northwest Pilot Project. "I'll never forget when I called them and explained my situation, you know at 61 now and living in my car,

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From the
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 Laura Golino de Lovato

Dear Friends

As we move forward into 2023, we are approaching a milestone in our community and county: the third anniversary of the COVID pandemic's shutdown of our institutions, workplaces, public spaces, schools, travel and so much more. Looking back on the past three challenging years, I can am so grateful that we made it through the hardest parts, and I feel a great deal of satisfaction in what NWPP has been able to continue doing for clients. Their resilience keep us going!

We'll reach another milestone this year: **May 7th** will mark the **44th Annual Walk-A-Thon!** From its humble beginnings in 1979 with a small group of dedicated NWPP supporters and volunteers, the Walk-A-Thon – NWPP's sole fundraising



What's a Walk-A-Thon without balloons?

event for all these years – has engaged thousands of community members, and raised over \$3 million for NWPP services. What a remarkable history of support and engagement!

But it's **only with your participation**



Let's make this Walk-A-Thon one of our best! Join us May 7th.

that we can reach our goal of securing **\$175,000** to support the low-income seniors we serve with what *they* need: housing, rent assistance, support services, transportation, and more. There are so many ways that you can provide support through the Walk -A-Thon. Check out all the details on page 4 of this newsletter.

And don't forget to **JOIN US AT THE EVENT!** We will be **LIVE** and **IN-PERSON** to gather, connect and reconnect and, of course, to walk the South Park Blocks. It's family, kid, and pet friendly, and as usual, we'll have pizza and lots of great prizes for the hardworking fundraisers among you.

Walk-A-Thon is about our shared commitment to the belief that all seniors deserve a life of dignity and hope. **Lynne is one of those seniors.** She shares her story in her own words in this very touching video that really highlights why NWPP is so important to our community. Just scan the QR code below: simply open the camera on your cell phone, point it at the QR code, and click the link.



Or visit our website at: nwpilotproject.org/what-we-do

I look forward to seeing **YOU** on **May 7th** for the best Walk-A-Thon *ever!*

Laura

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“This safe haven allows me to survive and thrive.”

never thinking this would happen to me.” She was connected to Marilee, a Housing Case Manager who made Lynne feel welcomed. “Marilee was so friendly and so nice. It was like talking to someone who really had your back. I felt like she was going to do her best to try and help me.” Lynne, along with Chance, now an adult, was able to move into transitional housing, thanks to Marilee’s assistance, while waiting for a permanent housing subsidy.

But sadly in 2017, just 10 days before graduating from PCC, tragedy struck and Chance was killed in an accident. In the span of just two years, Lynne suddenly and unexpectedly lost her sister, her home, and her beloved only child. With the help of a mental health professional, and the enduring memory and spirit of Chance, Lynne found the strength to keep going.

Eventually, Lynne received a permanent rent subsidy through the Regional Long-Term Rent Assistance Program (RLRA), a locally funded and managed rent subsidy program that is making thousands of rental units affordable for those with the lowest incomes. Funded through the Supportive Housing Services Measure, the RLRA Program was built on Bobby Weinstock’s vision that rent subsidies – similar to federal programs – could be funded and managed locally, giving more control to program administrators, and eliminating multiple barriers for renters. Thanks to this program, Lynne has a home she loves, where she pays 30% of her income from

Social Security retirement benefits towards her rent.

While visiting her at home, we saw many pictures of Lynne’s beloved Chance and heard stories about the walks and bike rides Lynne enjoys in her Northwest Portland neighborhood and the friends she has cultivated there. She tells us about her neighbors, Scott and Stephanie, whose kitty she occasionally sits for, and how they help her out with needed transportation at times. We also heard about Nicole, Nate, and their family, who sponsor an annual summer block party & BBQ, and whose young daughter sells Girl Scout cookies. Lynne also enjoys meeting and speaking with many of the employees at the local shops.

Some days are still hard for Lynne to get through as she grieves the losses in her life, but day by day she is feeling stronger, and her new community is a big part of her healing process. Most importantly she has a home again, a permanent home. As she told us, “This safe haven allows me to survive and thrive.”

Thank you, Lynne, for letting us into your life and inspiring us with your story of perseverance and triumph.

NWPP has been working with a local team of award-winning filmmakers at ZP Productions to capture Lynne’s story.

We invite you to hear Lynne’s story in her own words on our website: <https://www.nwpilot-project.org/what-we-do/> or click the QR code on page 2.

NWPP Advocacy Update



From left: Laura Golino de Lovato, Multnomah County Chair Vega Pederson, and Katie Warden at NWPP to discuss senior homelessness.

This year’s long legislative session of the Oregon State Legislature is full of bills related to housing, tenant protections, and NWPP’s key advocacy issue: rent assistance.

We’re thrilled with Governor Tina Kotek’s prioritization of and immediate action on housing and homelessness, and were pleased to see her present an early funding package allocating \$130M toward homeless services and housing, in addition to her commitment to dramatically increase housing construction to 36,000 units annually.

But what does all this mean for NWPP and for our clients? Plenty!! It is very good news because Governor Kotek isn’t just prioritizing a key issue that affects many older adults and all our communities, she’s putting real dollars into effective and proven solutions. The additional resources she’s proposing will get us closer to having adequate resources to meet the surging need. The older adults we serve need more rent assistance, more housing options, and more eviction

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44th Annual Walk-A-Thon

Join us to make our Walk-A-Thon a success!

Live & In-Person **Sunday May 7**, PSU South Park Blocks

Help us reach our goal this year to raise **\$175,000!**

All fundraisers need to register on our event platform, even if you registered last year. It's simple and free and should take less than five minutes.

Register Online Now! <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/nwppwalk2023>



You can scan this code to register

How to register in 5 easy Steps:

1. Go to <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/nwppwalk2023> or click the QR code
2. Click register as a fundraising participant
3. Register as an individual or join/start a team
4. Set a fundraising goal
5. Enter your personal details

That's it! You are ready to start fundraising! You can now click on your fundraising dashboard, personalize your page and share it with friends.

If you need further help registering or setting up your fundraiser page, contact Courtney McKinnon at 503-486-6518 or by email: courtneym@nwppilotproject.org





Check Out This Year's Prizes!

Here's how it works:

When you raise

- ▶ **\$100** you receive a **Hot Lips gift card** (value \$10)
- ▶ **\$500** you receive the above prize PLUS a **Powell's gift card** (value \$25) PLUS a raffle ticket to win a \$500 Airbnb gift card *
- ▶ **\$1,500** you receive the above prizes PLUS a **Madehere PDX gift card** (value \$50)
- ▶ **\$3,000** you receive the above prizes PLUS a **REI gift card** (value \$100)
- ▶ **\$5,000** you receive all the prizes above PLUS a **Pendleton Woolen Mills gift card** (value \$200)
- ▶ **\$10,000** you receive all the prizes above PLUS your choice of a gift card to **Portland Nursery** or **Airbnb** (value \$500)

The structure and levels are the same whether you register as an individual or as a member of a team.

At each level you reach, you will receive the prize for that level PLUS the prizes from the levels below it! **The more you raise, the more prizes you earn.** Top Individual and Team Fundraisers receive prizes above, a 44th annual Walk-A-Thon trophy and your picture in the Summer 2023 newsletter.

Note: All participants (individuals and team members whether participating solely online or in person) must register and create a fundraising page to be considered for prizes.

* One ticket per fundraiser who raises \$500 and over.



Fundraiser Raffle!!

Raise \$500 or more and earn a raffle ticket* for a chance to win a **\$500 Airbnb gift card**. Gift cards can be used for any stay, Experience, or Online Experience on Airbnb.



Special Match Days

There will be special days throughout the month of April when your donations will be matched. You will receive email notifications of these special days in April once you are registered. Don't wait, register now!

Be a Sponsor!

For event sponsorship opportunities and benefits contact Laura Golino de Lovato, Executive Director at 503-478-6868 or laurag@nwpilotproject.org

What Is Eviction Prevention and How Does It Work?

In our half-century plus of working with seniors who are homeless we know that the best way to reduce homelessness is to prevent it in the first place.

NWPP receives thousands of calls each year from seniors looking for ways to stay in their homes. Some have received a rent increase they cannot afford, others have gotten the dreaded eviction notice from their landlord. All are at risk of becoming homeless. NWPP works to prevent homelessness through multiple eviction prevention strategies that are upstream solutions to homelessness. Eviction prevention – also called homelessness prevention – works via various programs and strategies designed to avoid an eviction filing by the landlord and stabilize households, thereby reducing the risk of eviction.

Rent Assistance

One of the best eviction prevention strategies is rent assistance. A combination of both short and long-term rent assistance options can greatly reduce the number of people evicted because they have not been able to pay rent.

Supportive Services

Supportive services, such as case management, legal assistance, and even regular housekeeping, are also effective eviction prevention tools.

As service providers, the NWPP team is constantly responding to a rapidly growing number of low-income older adults who are just one paycheck, one health crisis, one rent increase, or one emergency away from homelessness. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly intensified this risk for seniors. Thankfully, strengthened eviction

protections implemented during the pandemic were able to effectively address the alarming rate of households at risk of displacement.

Extended Notification Period

A pivotal protection in keeping countless NWPP clients stably housed during the pandemic was the extension period of time they had to pay rent after receiving a nonpayment termination notice from 72 hours to 10 days. This extended notice period provided the time it actually takes for NWPP staff to address the clients' immediate needs to avoid eviction – accessing legal aid, translation services, and(or) rental assistance – and develop a long-term housing plan. It is critical for all of our low-income community members, especially seniors, that this extended notification period be made permanent.

Billy's experience demonstrates the impact of the pandemic-era eviction protections. Billy, age 59, is a NWPP client who was on the verge of eviction in summer 2022.

As a welder and warehouse worker, Billy managed to keep working through several years of the pandemic, relying daily on public transportation to get to his job. Unfortunately, due to a bus driver shortage, TriMet cut service to Billy's bus line. Unable to commute to work, Billy lost his job and income.

At the time of his job loss, he was already

several months behind on his rent, and with no income to address back-owed and future rent, an eviction was on the horizon.

In addition to facing severe economic hardships, Billy was dealing with significant medical issues. He began experiencing diminishing eyesight due to glaucoma and diabetes, and he recalls that his "whole world came crashing down" when he eventually learned that his worsening vision loss was permanent. Overwhelmed with health and housing struggles, Billy turned to NWPP for help.

NWPP was able to assist Billy with accessing COVID relief rental assistance funds to bring him current on his rent, and pay a few months of future rent. However, he needed a longer term plan to prevent him from becoming homeless once his short-term rent assistance ended.

NWPP Housing Case Manager Tyra Washington began working with Billy to develop a long-term affordable housing plan. When Billy received his 10-day nonpayment notice in



Housing Case Manager Tyra Washington worked with Billy to develop a long-term affordable housing plan.

late summer, Tyra had ample time to secure additional rent assistance funds to keep Billy stably housed while he waited for subsidized housing. Thanks to critical resources made available by the Supportive Housing Services measure funds, Billy was able to avoid relocation altogether by securing a Regional Long Term Rent Assistance voucher, which will permanently subsidize his current housing.

Reflecting on his housing journey this past year, Billy shares that “receiving the voucher was a game changer.”

Push for Permanent Protections

The expiration of the strengthened eviction protections – including the extended notification period – implemented during the pandemic has resulted in a steady rise in nonpayment evictions across the state. As of December 2022, rates were up approximately 43 percent from pre-pandemic numbers. This alarming statistic has prompted housing advocates, service providers, and policy makers to put forward eviction reform legislation during the 2023 legislative session. One of the most notable reforms included in a proposed bill is the reinstatement of the 10-day nonpayment notice period before being taken to court.

As Billy’s story illustrates, this pandemic-era protection was critical to maintaining his housing stability. It also works for many other NWPP clients, a high number of whom would have otherwise lost their housing. With eviction reform at the forefront of the 2023 legislative session, we are hopeful that Oregon’s eviction process will no longer be a fast-track towards displacement and homelessness.



Colorful and Climate-Friendly Cars

We are really JUICED about our second electric car!! Thanks to the PGE Drive Change Fund and DEQ’s Oregon Clean Fuels Program, NWPP received a grant to purchase a second electric car. We now have **two** EVs that are in use almost every hour of every weekday, either transporting clients to medical appointments, getting IDs, or being used by case managers to visit clients, make deliveries of hygiene and basic needs supplies, and – most exciting - help clients move into their new apartments. Wayne McIlhenny, NWPP Program Support Specialist says “having these two EVs has given our staff the flexibility they need to help our clients get and maintain their housing at an affordable rate. These cars have been shown to be more efficient than our old gasoline powered van. And our clients are happy that NWPP can play its role in addressing climate change.” Thank you PGE and DEQ!

NWPP Advocacy Update continued

prevention strategies (*see the facing page to learn why eviction prevention is the best way to address homelessness*).

We’re also hopeful that the state legislature will consider a bill to create a statewide long-term rent assistance program. This was the dream of our late colleague, Bobby Weinstock, who knew that long-term rent assistance is the best way to quickly stabilize a low-income renter’s housing while also providing steady rental income for housing providers. In his honor and memory, internally we call these rental vouchers “Bobby vouchers.”

NWPP is also gratified that the new county chair, Jessica Vega Pederson, has made her own commitment to addressing housing and homelessness by introducing her “Housing Multnomah Now” plan that is modeled after best practices that social and human service agencies – including NWPP – have been using for many years: prioritizing moving people into permanent housing.

To help leverage the resources, we’re pleased to introduce Katie Warden as our new Public Policy Coordinator who will help us manage all these relationships and navigate the multiple plans, bills, and other advocacy activities. Katie joins Marisa Espinoza, Advocacy Consultant, and will work to ensure we raise the issues that are preventing the most vulnerable seniors in our community to get the safe, decent housing they can afford and that they deserve.



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS 44TH ANNUAL WALK-A-THON

**Sunday, May 7, 2023 at 1:00 pm
PSU South Park Blocks**

Help end homelessness for Portland's
seniors. Join the walk!

Find all the details for the 2023 WALK-A-THON
on pages 4 and 5

