

WORD ON THE STREET

a paper for the people

**BUILDING
HOPE**
ONE BRICK AT A TIME

**WOTS
HAPPENING?**

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

**INTERFAITH SANCTUARY
CLEARS LAST HURDLE TO
BEGIN CONSTRUCTION AT
THEIR NEW SHELTER
LOCATION!**



Building Hope One Brick at a Time:

Interfaith Sanctuary to Break Ground on State Street



By Interfaith Sanctuary Executive Director Jodi Peterson-Stigers

After over two years of hard work and many lessons learned, we are excited to announce that our shelter will begin the process of remodeling the Salvation Army building on State Street to create a new home for Interfaith Sanctuary Homeless Shelter. The groundbreaking ceremony will be held on Tuesday, April 18 at 10 a.m. at our building on 4306 W State Street in Boise.

This new shelter will support families with children, senior citizens, our most medically fragile, and all of our neighbors who currently are without a home of their own. The building has been so thoughtfully designed to create a space that brings community together to offer support, access, opportunity, and comfort to those that need it most.

A 42,500 SQ. FT. BUILDING TO BRING ALL OUR HOPES AND DREAMS UNDER ONE ROOF!

We're limited in space in our current 10,000 sq ft building on River Street. We are constantly setting up and tearing down spaces in order to provide programming by day and spaces to sleep by night. We utilize a portable trailer parked on the back of our shelter property to host our recovery programming. Our food service training program lives in a food trailer

that gives us a makeshift commercial kitchen, allowing us to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner to our population. In 2020 when the pandemic hit, we moved our families with children and our most medically fragile guests to a hotel made possible by COVID emergency funds, enabling us to serve an additional 100 guests per night.

But what happens once this COVID funding runs out? Our emergency shelter on River Street does not have enough space to house an additional 100 guests. Unhousing families with children, seniors and our most medically fragile is not an option for us. So in 2020, we began the process of locating a new building that would be bigger, safer, and have better access to services and transportation. We wanted a place to reimagine what shelter could be for our community – a campus full of hope and second chances.

We found that home in a wonderful building on State Street. The former Salvation Army Thrift Shop, Warehouse, Food Pantry and Family Service Provider would give us approximately 30,000 sq ft (42,500 sq feet after the remodel) on just under two acres of land. This new shelter location allows us to keep our seniors safely housed, provides a safer setting for our families with children, and creates meaningful space for all of our guests.

This new building will allow our

organization to grow while improving the way we serve our guests by bringing community, case management, medical support and learning spaces all under one roof.

The main building will house our single men and women includes:

- Medical Dorm with 18 beds and 2 hospice rooms
- Exam room and nursing station supported through a partnership with Terry Reilly Health Services and Full Circle Health
- Mens and women's sleeping pods with single beds, storage and nightstands
- Emergency shelter beds for urgent night-by-night needs
- Classrooms dedicated to recovery, mental health, art therapy, food service training, and Micron workforce training
- Full-service commercial kitchen with a sit-down dining area to house our Food Service Training Program
- Day shelter with a computer library, lounge area, and access to a private outdoor park and recreation area
- 24/7 access to shelter and campus
- Laundry facilities
- Mail Room
- Deescalation Room

The adjacent two-story building will house our family housing program. The family rooms include:

- Beds for up to 100 family members plus cribs for babies
- Family privacy suites to accommodate whole family units
- A full time preschool classroom & indoor play and activity area
- Family dining area/lounge
- Teen computer and activity room & lounge
- Laundry facilities
- Case Management Offices
- Storage for donated items

The third building will be home to our single adult guests who are ready to move out on their own. These guests are financially

self-sufficient with savings and are actively working on finding housing:

- 20 private rooms that offer doors with locks so guests are able to have a sense of independence and are able to keep their possession safely stored while they are at work.

Men's and women's outdoor offerings:

- Bike Storage (100+ bikes)
- Lockers for guest possessions
- Landscaped park with benches, trees and a zen garden
- A community garden to be shared with our community
- Outdoor dining space
- Safe, secure and private space for our guests

Family Side Outdoor Offerings (this area is separated from adult population with a fence to provide privacy for families):

- Children's playground
- Outdoor dining area
- Green space for outdoor activities
- Family community garden
- Dedicated play area
- Stroller and bike storage

BUILD HOPE ONE BRICK AT A TIME

You are invited to be a part of this new shelter by helping us Build HOPE one brick at a time. Your brick will pave the way to create a space where families can stay together. Your brick will pave the way to creating a temporary home for our unhoused neighbors. Your brick will help create a space where people can find recovery, well being, music, art community and hope. Your brick will pave the way for job training and employment opportunities. Your brick will build more than just a building; it will build hope and help get our neighbors off the street and into safe shelter until we can move them into housing of their own!

You can order your engraved brick at interfaithsanctuary.org.

Furnishing Hope: Helping Families Feel at Home

By Erin Sheridan

Faith communities in Boise are on track to help at least three families experiencing homelessness furnish their new apartments this winter since the Boise Faith Group launched the Furnishing Hope program in collaboration with Interfaith Sanctuary.

Members of the Boise Faith Group, a coalition of nearly 40 faith organizations that helped found the shelter in 2005, are adopting families in need of furnishings to make their new housing comfortable and welcoming as they transition out of the shelter system.

Jessica Martin, a member of Boise First Congregational United Church of Christ, is one of the volunteers who helped furnish an apartment for a family who fell out of housing after being resettled in Idaho as refugees. Aston said she and other volunteers were truly moved by the process. "All people deserve to have a warm and

inviting home where they can find comfort and safety. We appreciate that Interfaith and the Boise Faith Group came together to develop this important program to support families and individuals transitioning to permanent housing," she said.

"I would like to extend a special thanks to Selena Carsiotis (a family case manager at Interfaith Sanctuary), who is so dedicated to the people she serves and who introduced the idea for Furnishing Hope. She provided invaluable help before and during move-in day."

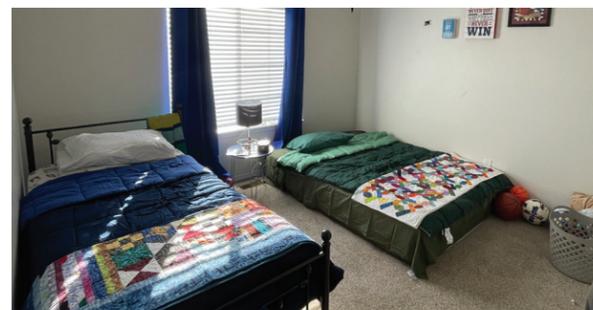
Carsiotis said of the program, "From November through February eight families have moved into permanent housing—and we're on track to continue averaging two per month. Moving out of the shelter is an achievement, but when you are still pulling clothes out of a garbage bag it feels like another battle has yet to be fought—buying furniture, which is expensive and requires transportation. Furnishing Hope was created to respond to these specific needs, and fill the gaps. A collaborative partnership between case managers at Interfaith and congregations from Boise Faith Group, Furnishing Hope

works directly with each household and has seen overwhelming success in maximizing available resources and redistributing them to meet needs, transforming a barren space into a welcoming home.

A seven person family was first to be served and they were elated to have their house fully decorated, Carsiotis said. "Furnishing a four bedroom house is a major undertaking—used dressers for everyone would probably cost around \$700 and they didn't have a way to transport large items. This family had a beautiful house, but it was basically empty. Furnishing Hope created a living room where the entire family could sit together comfortably on couches and chairs, and laid down a rug that instantly warmed up the space."

Below are photos of the first move-in facilitated by volunteers with Boise First Congregational United Church of Christ.

Many more communities of faith in the Boise area have come together to make this happen for other families. If you or your community are interested in getting involved, please email jodi@interfaithsanctuary.org.



The Importance of Growing Your Own Garden

By dAni



Given our recent past few years, most of us have been affected by, in some way shape or form, and are all learning from the pandemic, a crisis so enormous almost nobody was prepared for it.

There were goods shortages. Shelves sat empty for months and normal items that the general public took for granted were scarce.

Home gardening has become a new norm that continues to grow and blossom. Gardening and learning to grow food gives multiple benefits.

One benefit of gardening is the food factor. You can literally grow your own food! With the price of EVERYTHING continuing to skyrocket, growing even a portion of some of your fresh fruits and vegetables could not only provide food, but it could also make a huge financial difference, which in turn would put some more money in your pocket to use for other needs or wants.

The second, but no less important

benefit for growing your own, garden is the fulfilled sense of accomplishment and a big boost of self esteem. For centuries, gardening has been used for therapeutic application. As a recovering addict, I have leaned into gardening 100% and it is part of my therapeutic recovery. I testify that gardening has a certain magical, healing quality to it.

The third benefit I will touch on today is the infinite amount of potential connections you can make and build with like-minded souls. Gardening is a common ground ideal. Besides the literal grounding connection with the earth, gardens are a conversation piece with your neighbor, or a passerby. Who knows, maybe that passerby becomes a great future friend...etc.

Thank you Boise!

A Callout to the Local Farmers

By dAni

Dear Ada County Residents,

Do you know that in a time not so long ago, an acceptable social practice was to take migrant workers and houseless people in, to bunk in exchange for labor around the farm/ranch.

Given our current financial and socioeconomic situation, this would be an option worth visiting as a solution of many solutions that can be helpful in the long term plan, to take pressure off of the not-so-stable parts of our society.

Opening up bunkhouse, work for a bed style arrangement could provide an option for the go-getter types of individuals, and maybe a foot into a more stable and sustained long term situation for person's who have found themselves houseless, and displaced.



If You Want to See the World

By Gypsy Wind

I had the night before found a pair of Bluetooth headphones under the picnic tables here at the Sanctuary. I was charging them along with my power bank that I've had for a few months. As I sat in the hall next to the office watching over them to prevent theft while they charged, a young man came up and said, "That belongs to me." I responded, "Oh yeah, I found them under the picnic tables last night, you can have them no problem." He responded that it was honorable for me to return them. I responded that they belonged to him so why wouldn't I return them to him?

Then, as I handed him the headphones, he shook his head and pointed at the power bank. He said that it was stolen from him a few days ago and he wanted it back. I responded that the power bank belongs to me; I bought it months ago. He called me a liar and a thief. I responded that it was mine and that I bought it new at Walgreens and so it could not be his.

He said a few choice words and walked off in anger. Later that night I was sitting on the picnic table next to the guard shack charging my tablet with my power bank and he came and sat across from me and started to tell me how I was a thief and a liar, then said, "I should just take it now." I said, "No, why don't you let me find some witnesses that can tell you I've had this power bank for a long time?"

I went into the shelter and saw Flick, who had borrowed my power bank a week prior. When Flick walked outside to tell the young man that I had this power bank since way before his got stolen, the young man did not let Flick say anything. He accused Flick of being a liar and a thief. Soon, the two were in each other's faces exchanging insults. But before they came to blows, a staff member got right in between them and stopped a fight before it started. When I saw her run over and jump in between two men that were twice her size and back them both off simultaneously, I was amazed by her fearless courage.

She doesn't demand our respect with words. She owns our respect with her actions. I went into the office to talk to Terrence and explained the situation. He knew it was my power bank as he had charged it for me many times. Terrence told me to go relax and after a while a friend came into the bunk room and told me that the young man finally understands that I didn't steal his power bank. To me that was a miracle, because in the past I was never able to get anyone to see past their own ego and self righteous indignation to see the world through other people's eyes. Nobody wants to humble themselves to see the world through the eyes of those they see as the enemy.

I was thinking about this when I realized that the young man needs to understand that whoever stole his stuff probably sold or traded it away. It is very conceivable that he could see someone with his property and accuse them of stealing it when in reality, they would have more than likely paid for the property. If he were to take it, he would be the thief. If he

were to accuse them of stealing it, it would be a false accusation. I was thinking, "How can I help this young man see the world through the eyes of other people?" My only thought was to teach him in parables and stories. I figure he will read this sooner or later so this is for you, kid.

My wife and I were listening to a song in Spanish. I did not understand all the words but the song was sad. You could hear heartbreak in the singer's voice. I asked my wife what the words meant and this is what she told me:

A man and his fiancé traveled to her hometown to get married. During the wedding celebration, the newly wed wife was dancing and laughing and kissed another man. The husband saw them and became very jealous. In a fit of rage, he rushed over and pulled out a gun and shot his rival through the heart. As the man lay dying in his newly wed wife's arms she looked up to him and said, "Why did you kill my brother?"



Dear Gabby

Life can be challenging, funny, frustrating, enlightening, ridiculous, lovely, and everything in between! Would you like advice from Gabby, our Word on the Street advice columnist? Ask and you shall receive! Send your questions to erin@interfaithsanctuary.org and our WOTS staff will convene with Gabby to provide the answers you need most.

Homeless Art Collective Retail Space Open for Business at St. Vincent de Paul

By Erin Sheridan



Interfaith Sanctuary's Homeless Art Collective held a grand opening for its permanent retail space at the St. Vincent de Paul State Street Thrift Store on February 11. The artists interacted with community members, networked, and sold out of many of their items. The space will restock weekly on Fridays and funds go directly to the artists to support their creative work as they await opportunities for housing. The opening was the very first time some of the artists sold their work and is already leading to new creative opportunities. Be on the lookout for the upcoming Homeless Art Collective Clothing Line, featuring printed work by artists who are part of the collective!



Items on sale include hand-woven plant hangers, dream catchers, and macrame, prints, paintings, hand-knitted dish towels and bags, candles, drawings, and jewelry.

"I like to put words and messages in my work to be positive and maybe be an inspiration to other artists out there trying to find their niche," said dAni Drake, whose colorful prints can

brighten any space.

April Kuper, an author and artist whose family is getting ready to move into housing of their own, said she was in awe of the

work on display. "I just love it. I'm in a sea of art. It's enjoyable. And now, I get to be with all of these creative people," she said.

Audra Wakly, who attended the opening with her 8-month-old baby, created a series of hand-knit dish towels, snack bags, and market bags. "I've been crocheting for 11 years, almost 12," she said.

The collective is supervised by former Interfaith Sanctuary guest Chris Alvarez, who works as a tattoo artist at Lifestyle Tattoo in Garden City. He helped organize the show and oversees the retail space with the



help of St. Vincent de Paul staff, as well as Interfaith Sanctuary's Project Well-Being Supervisor Nicki Vogel.

Vogel, who helped found the art collective in 2019, said the

program allows people experiencing homelessness to begin to find a voice again. "The artists, when they become homeless, they lose everything. And with that, they're just in survival mode. They're just trying to go day by day and get their basic needs met," she said. "This allows the space, and it's healing. It's therapy for all of them."

Ralph May, Executive Director of St. Vincent de Paul Southwest Idaho, said the art collective serves as a way to connect people to those in the community who are stigmatized for their circumstances while also helping people experiencing homelessness showcase their talent. "The homeless art collective is a way to humanize these great people that happen to be unhoused right now," May said.

Donate to the art collective here: interfaithsanctuary.networkforgood.com/projects/137523-interfaith-sanctuary-s-homeless-art-collective

Finding Recovery

By Mike Subach

I guess you could say it was divine intervention that brought me to Interfaith Sanctuary. I am over the hill age wise, and I have been dealing with alcohol and drug dependence since I was 7 years old. I can remember my parents' dinner parties where I would drink. Needless to say, I have been suffering from the disease of addiction and doing the same thing since high school. Now it's time to quit, 41 years later, no more money, and there I was – still that kid who became addicted.

I grew up in Delaware and had just come into some money and was staying at a homeless shelter. I was working again and decided that I would be better off living in a hotel. I was sadly mistaken. While I was at this hotel, I struck up a conversation with an old friend of mine. She was living in Colorado at the time. During this time I was drinking like a fish and smoking all the cocaine as I could get my hands on! As we talked she and I made plans to move in together. It is here that my story takes a turn for some unseen reasons that I would know later in my life.

In our drunken binge while at a hotel in Delaware, I came up with a crazy idea! Let's go on a road trip! I took a rental car I had rented for a week and headed west. I loved the mountains because I had lived in Vail, Colorado. To make the adventure a little more exciting, I chose the

Pacific Northwest mountains. I was drinking and driving the whole way out here, not to mention my DUIs. I made it to Sun Valley and realized it was very expensive to live there. She and I made it to Boise with no money. After our first week here, little did I know I was to come out west and find the best sobriety I have ever encountered! It was Project Recovery at Interfaith Sanctuary!

The way the counselors taught it all made sense to me. The miracle did happen! Just when I thought I was ready, I failed, and then failed again at staying sober. However, the third time was the charm! I can't thank the people here at Interfaith Sanctuary and Project Recovery enough. They have all helped me in one way or another. They helped me be comfortable in my own skin. Without this program I would have probably ended up dead.

Trans People Need Compassion: You Are Welcome Here

By Rowan Olah

In the Idaho legislature, many legislators are targeting trans and queer people, with bills targeting things such as drag shows, pride events, public bathroom usage and even making it a felony punishable up to 10 years to provide gender affirming care for minors.

These efforts are supposedly an effort to "protect children," even though it seems that legislators do not actually understand trans and queer identities, and the impacts that these bills can have in a devastating way to an already marginalized population.

Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Not all trans people choose to receive gender affirming medical care for a variety of reasons. One common reason is not having reliable, consistent access to care.

Trans People: Continued on page 4

Shining Star of the Month: Joel Gilmer

Joel spent his time as a guest at the shelter volunteering with recovery groups, helping other guests with transport, hosting ice cream socials, and even piloting a program to help fellow guests reinstate their drivers' licenses. He did this all while working full-time and waiting patiently to get back into housing of his own. Joel is always working on projects that might help better the lives of others and we love him for that! Fun fact: Joel worked for years as a trucker and is also a musician.

Currently, he's a staff member and helps oversee the day

shelter and warming tent. He runs recovery groups and serves as a mentor to anyone in need of a listening ear. He recently became certified as a Recovery Support Group Facilitator with the National Alliance on Mental Illness. "He's always there to step up and lift up his fellow coworkers and help out in any way that he can. He gives 100% and shows kindness and compassion to our guests while keeping our operations running smoothly," said Interfaith Sanctuary's Shelter Director Maranda Jay.



Chinese Philosophy, Dune and Chai

By Gerri Graves

As moms, we tend to think our children can do no wrong. I can't say that I am one of them, as I hold a belief that we only become better human beings, if we own our faults. Grow from them.

Mistakes are not the end all. We are not our worst mistake.

That being said, so you'll understand this next part. My son and I love to banter about subject matter that we both find interesting, challenging and philanthropic. We agree on most things, but there are times when banter becomes more of an argument. He's smart. I'm smart. Both stubborn as can be. He's sure in his point of view, I'm sure in mine.

I'm making light, but I know my stubborn nature is not an asset. My eyes automatically roll to the back of my head at my own cavewoman nature. I know, I know....I'm working on it. Lol.

Yeah. He's smart. He doesn't ask questions, he answers them. Lol If he doesn't have the answers, he does the research to find that answer. So....imagine my surprise when during one of these 'banter events', he asks me a question, "Mom. What's the difference between educated and intelligence?"

After removing the flies from mouth left agape, I simply replied, "Give me a sec." Okay. Here we go. Smart kid asking 'mom unit' the score. We got to really nail this one. Blank. Blank. Blank. Nooooo! Blank. Sigh. GOT IT!, "Education is when someone else controls the narrative. Intelligence is when you do."

Mom unit for the WIN!

(Those two sentences sent me down the rabbit hole of Rockefellers, Public Education, work

force indoctrination (Sit down. Shut up. Do only as you're told.) and the lack of anything diverse and meaningful in our students curriculum. I'll save that for another time, as I'm trying to refrain from hogging too much of the wee 4 pages Sanctuary are allotted.....guilty smirk.)



Over two mugs of Chai, we discussed our own current 'narrative'. What we were reading, working on.....or currently enamored of. Moi? Chinese art, poetry (Qu Juan), philosophy, history, martial arts, Hanfu, sword fighting and dramas!! Him? Dune 1-6 and other books that have an uncanny insight into our historical patterns of control and destruction.....and the past mistakes we insist on repeating. He calls them 'leftist reading'.

I thought it would be a keen idea, to do a 'different, but the same' meeting in the middle. I had read the original Dune at 15, but probably have forgotten more than I remember. I was truly interested in his take on it.

Soo....I gave us both an assignment. Find some quotes/lines from our current avenues of interest that still ring true, today. The first book of Dune was written 57 years ago, and Chinese proverbs (yanyu) date back thousands of years. They have over 5000 years of written history, actually!

I chose mine from in and

around the warring states period. Their world was in turmoil, much like ours. My son chose his primarily from the 4th Dune novel, 'God Emperor of Dune'.

I've included the modern day parallel. Granted, these are merely my perceptions, not absolutes.

War -

"Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life." -Sun Tzu

Tyrannical leaders -

"Only he who has no use for the empire is fit to be entrusted with it." -Zhuangzi (4th c. BCE) I wrote something similar years ago- "Those we need in power, do not covet it and therefore will not seek it." Wow!

Prison reform -

"Rewards and punishment is the lowest form of education." - Zhuangzi (4th c. BCE.)

Demeaning Human rights advocates -

"For the world is impure and envious of the able, And eager to hide men's good and make much of their ill" - Qu Juan (4th c. BCE)

Our inability to own our faults/assign blame -

"If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken all of yourself, if you want to eliminate the suffering in the world, then eliminate all that

is negative in yourself. Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self-transformation." - Lao Tzu (5th c. BCE)

Dune (Frank Herbert) quotes -

Politics -

"The truth always carries the ambiguity of the words used to express it"

Greed -

"The wise man observed that wealth is a tool of freedom. But the pursuit of wealth is the way to slavery."

Police reform -

"Police are inevitably corrupted.....Police always observe that criminals prosper. It takes a pretty dull policeman to miss the fact that the position of authority is the most prosperous criminal position available"

Social media agendas -

"No matter how much we ask after the truth, self-awareness is often unpleasant. We do not feel kindly toward the truth sayer."

History on repeat -

"Most believe that a satisfactory future requires a return to an idealized past, a past that never existed."

Political divide -

"Dangers lurk in all systems. Systems incorporate the unexamined beliefs of their creators. Adopt a system, accept it's beliefs, and you help strengthen the resistance to change."

What these passages mean to me? You can always find a message, a parallel or instruction from someone else's point of view, no matter how long ago it was written, history keeps repeating.....AND, you're never too old to learn from today's youth.

Just have to be humble enough to know it's worth, no matter the age of the mouth it exits. (Mom unit for the win!)



Trans People: Continued from page 3

It's also worth noting that this medical care doesn't consist of surgeries for minors, most often it involves "puberty blockers," which can be stopped at any time if chosen and are reversible. There is also "HRT" or hormone replacement therapy, usually as a step after hormone blockers. This care for trans minors, actually ends up with the person having to do far less invasive surgical procedures later on. Gender affirming care can also include things like affirmative therapy with a LGBTQ+ focused therapist.

Not everyone identifies as 'male' or 'female'. Sometimes, people assume that being trans is about feeling you are the 'opposite' gender. This is true for some trans people, but not for others. This assumption makes things difficult for those who identify outside of 'male' or 'female', for example non-binary people. A non-binary person may need some different things to feel comfortable to, for example, a trans person who identifies as 'male'. For instance, I myself identify as non-binary and do not feel the need to have any medical gender affirming care. However, many others require this care to feel comfortable with their identities and body.

One in five transgender people in the United States has been discriminated against when seeking a home, and more than one in ten have been evicted from their homes, because of their gender identity. A general lack of awareness has contributed to continued discrimination, eviction and homelessness of transgender people in the United States. Strong and explicit legal protections from gender identity discrimination, including at the state and local levels, is still needed.

Homelessness is also a critical issue for transgender people; one in five transgender individuals have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. Family rejection and discrimination and violence have contributed to a large number of transgender and other LGBTQ-identified youth who are homeless in the United States - an estimated 20-40% of the more than 1.6 million homeless youth.

Most social service and homeless shelters that work with this population often fail to appropriately serve transgender homeless people, including denying them shelter based on their gender identity; inappropriately housing them in a gendered space they do not identify with; and failing to address co-occurring issues facing transgender homeless adults and youth.

Our legislators should not be seeking ways to punish trans people or the people who care for them, but instead should be finding solutions with discriminatory practices, broadening healthcare access and should not be getting involved with the medical care of children.

I know it seems like "why should I care about a tiny part of our society?"; however Trans people are prevalent in our communities and often extremely impacted by issues that tend to lead to being unhoused. Trans issues are our issues, as a community.

We should stand up for our LGBTQ+ siblings at every point, and let our legislators in Idaho know that we have compassion and understanding for all Idahoans, not just the ones that fit a neat and tidy box.

How do we do that? Always show respect and compassion, even if you don't completely understand. There are many resources out there, including organizations that serve trans people, that have lots of information to further your understanding. Use your power as a constituent, and write your Idaho legislators and let them know you do not support these bills that seek to harm and further marginalize LGBTQ+ people.

As a non-binary person, I am proud that Interfaith Sanctuary Shelter is home for all genders, races, religions, and sexual orientation. We should strive to always have compassion and understanding for those who may be misunderstood or marginalized. We should always strive to stand up for the "other" and realize that everyone deserves respect and understanding, especially when trying to live authentically.

Citations: National Center for Transgender Equality <https://transequality.org/issues/housing-homelessness>

What Sobriety Means to Me

By Viola Crowley

Sobriety is not just about refraining from drugs and/or alcohol, it's a way of life. It's all about balance.

Sobriety is working a program. Any program that works for you, work it.

Sobriety is about service work. Give back wherever and whenever you can without depleting yourself.

Sobriety is staying away from people who use unless it's part of your service work. Then tread carefully.

Sobriety isn't about glorifying your past use. It's about remembering why you don't use anymore.

Sobriety is self-care. Take care of yourself first and foremost. You can't help anyone else if you're not healthy.

Sobriety is about feeling. No more masking your feelings but feel them

and process them.

Sobriety is about triggers and how we deal with those triggers.

Sobriety is about thoughts of using and dealing with those thoughts.

Sobriety is about using dreams and how to deal with those dreams.

Sobriety is about a tribe. Find yours and pull strength from them. Laugh with them. Cry with them. Socialize with them. They are your tribe.

DONATE TO WORD ON THE STREET!

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Our writers, poets, artists, activists, and creatives appreciate your support! Readers can also visit this link to donate:

<https://interfaithsanctuary.networkforgood.com/projects/183936-word-on-the-street>

