

WORD ON THE STREET

a paper for the people



WOTS UP?



Interfaith Sanctuary's Shakespeare In Jeans Gala

Interfaith Sanctuary's Homeless Art Collective has been hard at work designing its first collection of 501(c)(3) Jeans. These works of art and more will be available at the shelter's Shakespeare in Jeans gala on October 2nd!



Ode to The Spider

By Gypsy Wind

In the fall as the leaves begin to fall,
The spiders near the river spin their
eggs into a ball.

They become aggressive to one and
all, to protect their eggs from great
and small.

They bite anyone who dare come
near their eggs at all, with venom that
rots the flesh, causing horrible sores
from which the skin does fall.

Be careful when through the bushes
you crawl – for the spiders will bite
any and all.



Memory And Loss

By Karen Folk

Memory and Loss Did I hear about
lilacs from far away? The little red
house where we live with its huge
stand of purple scented trees in our
garden, my mother grilling lamb chops
and asparagus over a hibachi - the
coolness of a Denver evening. I know
it was not a dream - I learned to love
in our little red brick house - slumber
brought on winter snows and summers.
We were a family there. And now it
has all gone but the scent of lilacs will
always remain - and my mother's love
of all living things.





By Jodi Peterson-Stigers

We met her through a broken window. She was busy vacuuming her motel room where she and her family of four had been living for months. The fire department had been by earlier in the week to do their yearly inspection and what they saw resulted in 40 motel rooms being deemed inhabitable. Staff from Interfaith Sanctuary, Terry Reilly Health Services, and CATCH went together to the Travelers Motel to offer outreach and support. What we saw was heartbreaking. What we learned was devastating. This motel had fallen into such disrepair and it happened in front of an entire community. Hundreds of cars drive down this stretch of Fairview every day yet none of us noticed. We were able to speak to a few of the guests that were still remaining on the property and what we learned from them gave all of us pause.

The mother said she and her family had found a temporary place to go until they could move back here to Travelers Motel. She loves the property manager and says they take really good care of them. The motel had promised to get

the windows replaced and then hopefully she could come back home. Somehow, in this squalor, a group of people had found a community that took care of each other. Sadly, it was our system that had failed them. We learned that day that the price to stay in those motel rooms covered in mold with boarded up windows, broken toilets, no shower heads, no bathroom floors, was costing this family \$1600 per month. Why would these people pay that much money to live in these conditions?

Because they had nowhere else to go. Based on their credit and past evictions, all efforts to find suitable housing were met with a “no.” These guests who made this motel their home all had funding streams to help pay for housing but they could not find access to that housing. They accepted these conditions because they had no other choice and they were grateful to have a roof over their head. Now, we are left with the question of how do we protect our most vulnerable from living in these unhealthy conditions at such a high price? How do we ensure they have access to housing that is clean and safe and affordable? Who is in charge of making sure there are no others who are living in similar conditions in our City of Trees, the “most livable city in America”?

<https://boisedev.com/news/2023/08/02/nothing-less-than-deplorable-travelers-motel-shut-down-after-city-inspection/>

MILLION DOLLAR MATCH SUCCESS: Over \$2 Million Raised for Interfaith Sanctuary’s New Reimagined Shelter of Hopes and Dreams!

Nearly 215 supporters donated more than \$1 million toward a Million Dollar Match campaign

Interfaith Sanctuary is thrilled to announce the successful conclusion of its Million Dollar Match campaign, which raised an astounding \$2,101,894 to support their new shelter on State Street. The campaign, which ran from April 15 to August 31, 2023, is in support of Interfaith Sanctuary’s Capital Campaign raising funds to build this new shelter full of hopes and dreams.

“Our Board of Directors and staff of the Interfaith Sanctuary are incredibly humbled and grateful for the incredible support that we have received in fully matching the million dollar matching grant that was activated this summer,” said Board President Andy Scoggin. “Though we still have a ways to go in our fundraising, the generosity and compassion of our community, our local family and corporate foundations and support from outside the city of Boise has been overwhelming. This is a project whose time has come, and it is a project that we know is crucial to the welfare of our city and of our city’s most vulnerable citizens. Words can’t express our appreciation to all those who have supported and continue to support this noble work.”

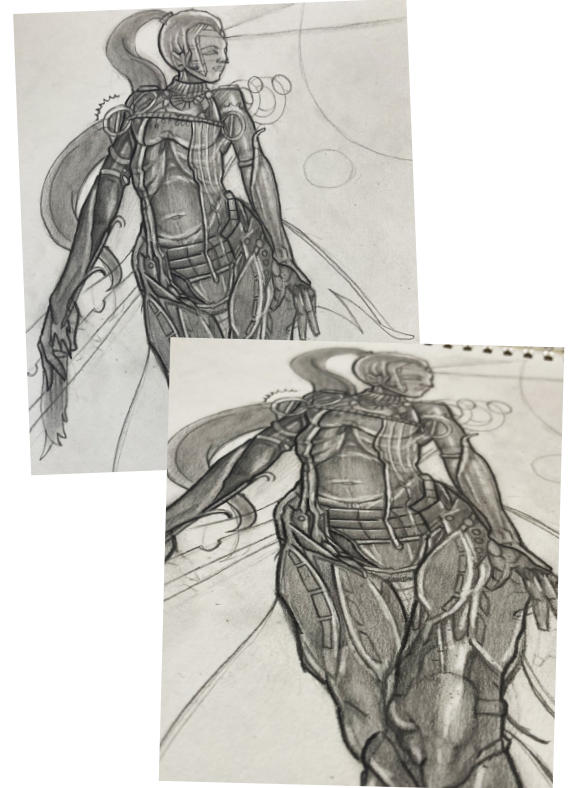
Including the over \$2 million raised through the million dollar match campaign, Interfaith Sanctuary’s capital campaign has raised \$9,255,788 toward the \$13.6 million budget for the new shelter.

This reimagined shelter will allow Interfaith Sanctuary to continue to keep hundreds of people off the streets each year, addressing a systemic housing issue that is putting more and more people out of their housing. It also will allow Interfaith to continue doing the important work of building a community, where programming like the Homeless Art Collective, pickleball, recovery programming, mental health programming, and job training, empowers guests to find their value and self-worth, discovering a stronger and better self to get back all they have lost.

To learn more about Interfaith Sanctuary’s capital campaign and to stay informed about the progress of the new shelter, please visit our website at interfaithsanctuary.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for regular updates.



ART COLLECTIVE SPOTLIGHT



Cameail is an illustrator who joined Interfaith Sanctuary’s Homeless Art Collective this month. He is working on a variety of drawings and has been illustrating for years. Debra, who also recently joined the art collective, started making jewelry by wrapping stones and glass in wire. See their work at the Homeless Art Collective’s permanent retail space at the St. Vincent de Paul State Street Thrift Store.

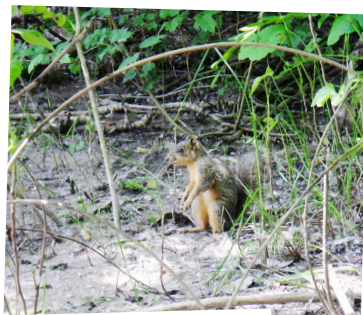
HOMELESS ART COLLECTIVE



Debra is a new member of Interfaith Sanctuary’s Homeless Art Collective. Her jewelry is a collection of wire-wrapped stones, glass and beads. Find her work at the Homeless Art Collective’s retail space at the St. Vincent de Paul State Street Thrift Shop in Boise.

Photos By Gypsy Wind

Gypsy Wind is a photographer experiencing homelessness in Boise. He took these wildlife photos along the Boise River.



Shakespeare In Jeans

By Critter

Shakespeare in Jeans,
Eat with your hands,
In times like these.
Poetry and Prose,
to curl your toes.

Like chasing your dreams,
And achieving great things.

From lower to middle class
From middle to upper class
We all wear jeans,
We all eat and drink,
And like William we think,
"What's the best way to do what we love?"

Thus, go to class,
Forget your past,
And don't trade everything for just one glove.

The Curse Of The Bed

By Karen Folk

I laid down to sleep in a dorm somewhere in Idaho. Deep in the night with crème pies floating around my head - and an alien was crushing Cheetos over my face - it was terrifying!
So I stumbled to the bathroom hoping to wash everything off my face - out of my head with fear. I mean Cheetos?
Well, there was a long line for the bathroom, winding around the building. So back to bed I scurried - like a little rat.
When I was rudely awakened by my neighbor's snoring - it was 110 degrees in the room.
The alien was sitting at the foot of my bed laughing his slimy green skin into deep, ancient grooves. His yellow fangs exposed. Yucky.
As I watched this horror show I realized there was no way to escape this nightmare except to eat.
I began eating, often, cramming my face with doughnuts and finally, one wonderful night, I exploded and blew the slimy green Cheeto snapping bozo right out the door.
The end!

The articles 'One' and 'Genocide Pie' were inspired by global and nationwide events. I didn't feel the need to name the events one by one, as I'm sure we're all aware of them. It is not my intention to call out any organization or religion, but to call out the individuals that use them to manipulate and perpetuate violence and oppression against another. - Gerri Graves

One

By Gerri Graves

If you take God/Goddess out of the equation, no matter what image or hierarchy he exists within - in any, none, or all religions - all you are left with are words. Words, created by, about, and for human kind.

We are God/Goddess and God is us. We are his/her mouthpiece. The spirit moves within us and all around us. We express it, recreating this bottled emotion, through words, giving them life.



(Talk of uncomfortable things.)

Animating the inanimate.

On every continent, in every religion (or none at all), spoken in every language.

WE are the miracle we search for. WE are the inspiration we seek. WE have the answers to most of the questions we yearn for.

Thing is.....we don't talk to each other. We're so set in our absolutes, that we do not listen to hypotheticals.

What's worse..... we're indoctrinated from an early age into believing that our way is the only way. Stray from the path at our own peril. Deviate, and it may cost not only your eternal peace, but everyone you love as well.

Can you imagine a world where we celebrated life, the living and all those who have lived before, instead of finding ways to hate and destroy one another? All in the name of religion. Or power. Or wealth. Or popularity. Or control. Or. Or. Or.....times infinity.

We have no shortage of reasons and/or causes to justify harm.

I often feel religion is used as a means of control or manipulation. Tell someone what to do and they'll fight you. Tell someone that God said to do it, at risk of your immortal soul, well then.....you might have cooperation.

We need to remember that many doctrines of faith were written thousands of years ago. Back when women were cattle. People were enslaved or slave owners. Superstition was rife. War and death were a common occurrence. The Earth was flat. Eclipses were bad omens. Life was fleeting and short.

We've come so far as a people, as a planet, and yet still we are browbeaten into fearing hell or a facsimile thereof. We're made to feel less than, because we're different, and live a different lifestyle or believe in different things, none of which have anything to do with the finger pointers' way of

life. I'm gonna reconfirm that last sentence - someone's sexuality, bodily choices, manner of dress, status, or learning they want incorporated into their children's rearing.....has NO BEARING on your life whatsoever. NONE. (I'm looking at you, Florida, Arkansas, Missouri, Texas.....and yes, Idaho)

I, in absolute truth, believe that everyone has the intelligence and self-awareness to choose their own path of faith. It's a very personal realization. I wouldn't fathom telling any person what their faith should be. Like I said, it's a very personal journey.

What I will say, however, is this: If we are all God's miracles, if a God or Goddess lives within us and speaks through us, because we are all their creation, how can we

possibly justify harm in his or her name? How can we extinguish a life that has a purpose.....a purpose that only God knows?

There is no justification.

My head and heart explode in pain over the unnecessary death and destruction. I feel it intimately. I never want to become numb to it.

I constantly remind myself that every person on this planet is a miracle.

When you think of all the crazy moments of serendipity that had to transpire in one person's familial history for that one individual to be standing there in front of you, it's nothing short of miraculous.

Believe in whatever spiritual journey you are intimately drawn to.....but always remember, life is sacred. EVERY life is sacred. EVERY child is God's creation.....in every corner and crevice of this planet.

We cannot move forward as a species until we honor the sanctity that is life. Until we stop finding reasons to divide and kill each other and start looking for the spark of the divine that we all possess, in each other.....we are doomed to keep repeating the lessons that history has already solved.

YOUR SOUL IS
THE BATTERY TO
YOUR BODY AND
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NOTHING BUT
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By Viola Crowley

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<http://bit.ly/44bySIP>

Genocide Pie

By Gerri Graves

We are but mere cockroaches. Set to assert our authority like some minor god in a field of human pinatas. It's in our nature to use violence against anyone we deem less-than.

We view life as some sort of competition. Cars, possessions, spouses, money, employment, religion, skin color, beauty, size, intelligence.....even our children. Everything revolves around bettering our neighbor. We can't just let life roll, no.....we gotta be king of the trash heap.

It's history repeating. Technology grows, human evolution stays stagnant.

Even if we caught a rapidly growing disease of an empathetic nature, we'd compete with that as well.

It's deplorable what we do to each other. What we've always done to each other.

It's maddening. We can clearly point it out, suss out the root cause, but there will always be someone countering with an argument that seems justifiable in the eyes of the weakest among us.

Or those with an agenda – .an agenda that works with the narrative of plausible deniability. Unreasonable reasons. Genocide with a side of 'they needed to die' pie.

I've mulled over it my whole life, but the fact remains that there will always be a ruling class, funded by infinite

resources, willing to harm anyone who gets in the way of their next paycheck.

Why ARE some born with a whip in hand, while others are born to be whipped?

I've thought of it in a theological context. That maybe God put us in these bodies, inserted us in lives (roles) that we needed to play in this great stage performance called life.

But it didn't make sense to me. Why are the worst of us born into privilege and the best of us die young, or are doomed to a life of strife?

Wouldn't God reward the best of us? I mean, how much humility and poverty can one person swallow?

Maybe money and privilege aren't really a reward in God's eyes? Maybe the humility is?

Makes more sense from a 'woo woo' perspective that we live several lifetimes, and in each life we are given a set of circumstances that our soul needs to learn.

We all have feelings of deja vu, whether we admit to them or not. We all are drawn to places, people and points in history that defy explanation. Some are born with exceptional brilliance. Toddlers playing Mozart? Solving heavy equations? Understanding avenues of science that most adults can't wrap our heads around?

Could it be leftover knowledge from a previous life?

If so.....what's the end goal? Nirvana?

The great mystery that ecclesiastical theory has no definitive answers for.....

I recently came across this quote from a 16th century Spanish poet, Gongora. "There is no street with mute stones and no house without echoes."

I'm unsure of the poet's direction with this one, but what I got out of it is this: all living beings animate our surroundings. We leave a sort of residue in every step we take, everything we touch.

The street is silent until we walk upon it, giving it life. A teapot serves no purpose until we place our hands on it. The roar of the ocean is silent until we hear it. A book has no meaning until we write on the page.....or read the words.

Perhaps that's our whole purpose – that we are an absolute miracle. Without us, the whole world is void.

We leave some mark in everything we see, do, touch, and feel. A residue that future generations mistake for non-corporeal spirit.

Wherever we go, there we are.....and some part of us remains. People's memories are short, but the Earth remembers we were here.

Wherever there is wiggle room, or a platform created giving carte blanche to those

"There is no street with mute stones and no house without echoes."

predisposed to violence to launch off of.....there will always be needless death.

The earth will remain, when we are just a memory. Memorialized as sentient beings who couldn't stop killing one another.



My Homeless Journey: Month One

By Ashley Parks

After one week as a guest at City Light, I really wanted somewhere else to stay. I could not do the Jesus or God thing every night and every morning. At this time in my young life, I was a practiced Wiccan, if that's what you'd want to call my faith (or lack thereof).

I was angry with God, a being who let so much pain, hurt, sadness, and abuse happen to me. If God was such a "loving father," why would he not stop what was happening to me? I refused to stay somewhere that shoved God down my throat.

I started asking my new friends where other homeless folks slept at night. Some of them told me about the big building in the same alley as Corpus Christi House, then Interfaith Sanctuary. They didn't preach about God. That alone sold me on moving out of City Light. Other friends said they camp out and this news spiked my ever-growing curiosity. A few others told me they slept in their cars. As I didn't have a car and wasn't going to get one any time soon, that was not an option for me.

Since it was March and still quite cold outside with snow on the ground, camping started to seem like a less good idea. I decided to check into Interfaith Sanctuary for the winter. Interfaith Sanctuary was more tolerable than City Light. Some of my new friends who stayed at the shelter were already there and that helped calm me down. I never spent much time inside because it would get so crowded in the main day room. I don't do well with lots of people. Instead, I'd end up relaxing in a chair against the shelter building.

When it was time for lights out at 9:00 p.m., I'd finally make my way inside. On the left side was the men's dorm, and the back half of the shelter was where the families resided. I would lie awake for hours listening to all the noises and sounds that go on in a shelter. An infant from the family side would start wailing every night like clockwork. I learned quickly that ear plugs were going to be my best friend living in a communal environment.

When the lights came back on at 6:00 a.m., all guests would



have to clean their bunk area, do a chore, and get ready to be kicked out for the day by 7:00 a.m. That gave me exactly one hour to make my bed, fight for a turn in the bathroom, get dressed, pack my few belongings back into my allotted storage tote, and stand in line waiting for staff to open the gate. Corpus Christi House doesn't open until 8:00 a.m.

One day, I was given the opportunity to visit one of my friend's campsites. I was not what I expected at all. You see, my only experience camping was how "normal" people camped: at a campground where you pay for a spot per night, with bathrooms and showers, etc. Little did I know, this version of camping was not going to be lollipops, sunshine, and rainbows. There's not many choice areas that aren't already known by police, fishermen, or other homeless folks.

Another new, yet pretty obvious experience was learning that there's no campfires allowed. I learned that if the police show up to your camp (and they will eventually), you can earn a misdemeanor ticket for pretty much anything they can find reason for. It's against Idaho law for police to hand out camping tickets anymore, however, if they can get you for something, they will. Littering is a big one, just like having a campfire.

Early on, I was taught how to keep warm without a campfire. I learned how to use hand sanitizer and a metal

can of some sort and light the sanitizer on fire to create heat inside your tent. I was also taught as lesson number one to never tell anyone where your camp is. Even if you think you can trust someone.

After that one person invited me to their camp, I had a handful of people inviting me to their camps. A door was opening for me not only to learn the rules, but also find fellowship. A lot of my learning came from trial and error. I've been camping on and off now for the last 15 years and I'm still learning. Always trying to evolve and make each camp better than the last, finding ways to make things easier and safer.

My first test of everything I had learned over the years finally arrived eight years later when I became part of Tent City. Ironically, in the very same alley I started my young adult life in. The exact same alley that Corpus Christi and Interfaith share. You may have heard about this alley – it's called Cooper Court. Until Tent City showed up, there was no help or resources for camping gear. Tent City became a small community. I had many neighbors and I got to pick out my own spot. Tent City in Cooper Court was my first community – the experience boosted my courage and self-esteem.

Here we go again, seven years after Tent City was bulldozed in the winter. I tried out Interfaith Sanctuary once more. This time for seven months while I was in the programs that they offer. Though that's the longest I've ever stayed in a shelter, I decided to camp once more. This time around, the camping experience has been way different. Boise has actually started reaching out to help the non-sheltered and shelter-resistant. Every Monday night, there are people serving dinner at Rhodes Skate Park with totes of clothes and a harm reduction clinic.

I started camping again. I did ask one of my male friends to come camp there with me for protection. It's always a possibility that you'll be taken advantage of, attacked, or sexually assaulted. I will only take two of my closest female friends to my new spot, for safety. That way, at least someone will know what spot I'm in at all times, just in case something happens.

Volunteer Spotlight: Frank

By WOTS Staff

Frank is a shining star for a variety of reasons, the first of which is his hair. Frank has great hair.

We also love Frank because he works really hard as a case manager at Interfaith

Sanctuary helping people get access to the resources they need.

People at the shelter appreciate his friendly presence and willingness to go above and beyond.

Rumor has it that one time, he helped three

different people sign up for housing in 15 minutes.

Even better, he is always there to open the door.

People like Frank help make the world a better place.

