

Businesses come together to help fund and open new winter shelter

For immediate release: Wednesday, Nov. 23, 3016

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PORTLAND - At least 12 Portland businesses have joined with Multnomah County and the City of Portland to open a winter shelter downtown today for men who are age 55 and older, veterans or have a disability.

Project^ donated the first floor of the Bushong & Co. Building, a former all-age club and creative studio space for the Peace II shelter. Developer Tom Cody, inspired in part by a similar donation last year by the Menashe family, offered the space as a shelter for the next six months before further development.

"It is the others involved in this who make us a small, but proud part of something big and meaningful," said Cody of Project^.

Kaiser Permanente donated critical paint and labor to paint the space. Providence Health & Services purchased and paid to install heaters to keep the shelter warm. Clean & Safe and the Portland Business Alliance helped mobilize their members and build support in the community. General contractor Yorke and Curtis waived their fees; PARR Lumber provided discounted wood; Chown Hardware donated a portion of the plumbing materials; Atlas Electrical donated lighting fixtures and City Center Parking provided permits for volunteers. Consolidated Supply and CenturyLink also contributed.

"Portland businesses stepped forward with their time, talent and property to make this possible," said Chair Deborah Kafoury. "Government can't solve the housing crisis alone. Nonprofits can't do it alone. But together, we've created a safe, warm place for another 60 people to sleep during the worst months of year."

The project came together in just a month with the City of Portland, Multnomah County, the building owner, contractors, service providers, neighbors and donors all working together.

"We know the solution for people who are homeless is permanent affordable housing, but we have a crisis tonight, and tomorrow night, and the next night," said Mayor Charlie Hales. "In response to that crisis, our community has rapidly opened hundreds of new temporary shelter beds through new partnerships.

Tom Cody is the embodiment of that spirit that makes Portland special," the mayor said. "I thank him for his commitment to the community, and to helping those in need."

The 60 beds are in addition to 35 additional beds for women, 10 for youth, five for veterans, and more than 40 beds for families that are being added for the winter months. Another 550 publicly funded beds have opened in the year-round shelters over the past year.

Transition Projects will manage the shelter, with operations funded by the Portland-Multnomah County Joint Office on Homeless Services.

"This shelter will go a long way towards helping those living on the street make it through the winter," said George Devendorf, executive director of Transition Projects. Warm clothing - especially coats, socks, gloves, and hats - can also make a real difference. Please visit www.tprojects.org to learn more about how community members can help."

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