

Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

30 December 2023

We served 369 people this weekend. Thanks to you all!

PORTLAND STREET MEDICINE

...for far too many Portlanders, these December nights are long and cold and wet.

Shelters are beyond capacity, food pantries and kitchens are doing double time. And still, too many of our neighbors face intractable food and shelter insecurity. Too many suffer from treatable conditions and barriers to adequate healthcare and wellness.

CAMPING

I (Kristen) am enthralled with the use of language. I'd like to share a contemplation I had on a particular word...'camping'. When I was young, I was an avid camper. I had all the gear, clothing, special food, maps and a privy for my journeys. When I moved here from Montana, I learned about rain and hypothermia, so I replaced my down with Gortex and wool. Camping, for me, was a wonderful experience, where I was one with nature and proud of my ability to weather the storm (so to speak!).

In Portland, there is quite a lot of talk about camping. We have decided that we don't want camping in our city, or on our doorsteps. There are 'No Camping' signs everywhere. Now as an avid camper, my first question is, 'Why I would want to camp in the city, much less on someone's doorstep?'

I have been watching city campers for two seasons now. And what have I found?

I have met frail, sick, hungry, wet and cold people, many who are elders and have a disability. I have witnessed people lose their legs from frostbite. In place of my \$300 tent, I sometimes see blue tarps (the ones that are woven and leak). Most times there is no cover from the weather. In place of my sleeping pad, I see a piece of wet cardboard. And I see a person in wet clothes, curled up on that cardboard, with no rain gear, no waterproof sleeping bag or any blanket for that matter, and the cement doorstep for a pillow. I never see a privy.

And it occurred to me. Our neighbors on our doorsteps aren't camping. They are struggling to survive. So, in the spirit of using words accurately, I'm thinking that maybe we should change our signs to say, 'No surviving'.

OREGON HAS HIGHEST RATE OF HOMELESS FAMILIES IN THE COUNTRY

Oregon has the second highest rate of homelessness in the nation, trailing only California, according to a new federal count of homeless individuals in 2023. And Oregon has the highest rate of families with children and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness of any state.

The lack of affordable housing is a significant factor.

"Where the homelessness crisis is most pervasive, California, Washington, Oregon and New York, the housing and rental costs are greatest in the country," Jones said. "Back East, those states have kind of adjusted to that with really good affordable housing developments. We have been trapped behind the curve there."

Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

30 December 2023

LET'S DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

The housing in our neighborhoods should be homes for families, not profit centers for Wall Street. Yet, in every corner of the country, **giant financial corporations are buying up housing and driving up both rents and home prices—hurting ordinary people just so investors can get rich.**

Not only do these hedge funds and private equity firms outbid ordinary Americans looking to buy homes, they are also horrible landlords. Hedge fund landlords raise rents faster and are more likely to skimp on repairs, because their top priority is squeezing out as much profit as they can, no matter how it affects our communities. Wall Street continues to pour fuel on the fire of the affordable housing crisis that so much of Oregon and America is facing, leaving working families behind.

It's time to put an end to it. I (Jeff Merkley) introduced the [End Hedge Fund Control of American Homes Act](#), a bill aimed at ending Wall Street ownership of single-family residential housing. Congress needs to put in place commonsense guardrails that ensure all families have a fair chance to buy or rent a decent home in their community at a price they can afford. This bill is an important step to bringing our housing market in balance and **ensuring American families can afford a decent roof over their heads** without being gouged by the wealthiest to further line their pockets.

THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Tuesday, January 16, 5:30pm Learn what to expect in the 2024 Legislative Session and how the legislative landscape affects our ability to address the root causes of hunger. Join us and take action! [REGISTER](#)

SIGN UP FOR SHIFTS

The January sign-up sheet is up! [WP Sign Up Sheet January](#)

THE WOODSTOCK PANTRY FUNDRAISER & FRIENDRAISER

We broke ground for our new pantry! And we are only \$42,500 short of our goal for this \$263,000 project.

We are in the last stage of this marathon. Our legs ache, we are tired of the messages I keep sending (!) and we just want to do our work...in our new space!

There is a light (pantry) at the end of the tunnel. And it has a beautiful mural on it painted by Portland's own [Pablo](#)...thanks to a grant from Regional Arts & Culture Council!

Help us finish the marathon! You can ask people to join us by:

1. contributing on our [gofundme.com](#) page, or with this QR code
2. and sharing this request with their colleagues, friends and family as well as community organizations and businesses (add to your social media, send emails, make calls).



THANK YOU!!!!

**Celebrate...
It Takes a Community, And We Are It!**