



At the October 12 City Council meeting, the Salvation Army presented an update on Hope Village, highlighting some testimonies and success stories. It was an uplifting and encouraging presentation with worthwhile dialogue answering some of the questions and dispelling rumors about Hope Village.

As of the end of September, Hope Village has helped 41 people transition to permanent housing. They are connected with mental health services, substance use services and employment help, are assisted with medical and medication needs, and obtain an ID. Hope Village is not only providing housing placements, it is seeing hope in other areas of life, trying to give people the hope to get back on their feet.

“For more than 100 years, the Salvation Army has operated rehabilitation facilities across the country that provide help and hope to individuals with a variety of problems, including issues relating to substance abuse.” Hope Village has a direct pipeline to the Salvation Army’s large network of adult rehabilitation programs for residents interested in any of the treatment facilities in the western territory. This is an incredible opportunity. Local treatment options are limited and short term, once someone leaves treatment, they are back to being homeless. Additionally, there are no inpatient treatment facilities available in Washington State for women. The Salvation Army’s Adult Rehabilitation Centers are 180-day residential work-therapy programs. Participants are not only given treatment options, but they are put in programs to prepare them for the workforce. After the 180-day program, they then have the opportunity to stay in that area in two-year transitional housing.

Q & A:

- **How are you tracking those transitioned to permanent housing?**

Residents are always connected with outside case management once they leave Hope Village. Core Health, Lower Columbia CAP, Love Overwhelming all help with outside case management to support residents.

- **Is the permanent housing subsidized?**

Some housing is subsidized, some is not. The State does have some funds available, but a lot of funding has been cut for our county. Additionally, housing through Housing Opportunities of SW Washington is not available currently.

- **Does Hope Village allow drug use?**

NO. If a resident is caught with drugs on Hope Village property, they are exited immediately. There is zero tolerance. Bags are checked at the gate, warrant checks are performed upon acceptance, random room searches are done. There are many safety protocols for weapons, drugs, and alcohol. Additionally, when residents are connected with mental health, substance abuse, and probations services, all require drug testing. There have been 112 exits from Hope Village. Not all were drug related, and that number is not unique individuals. Some remedy their situation and return to Hope Village.

- **Hope Village has a Good Neighbor Agreement. Have there been any complaints from neighbors?**

There have been no neighborhood complaints to Hope Village staff. Neighbors are welcome to come to the Hope Village gate, 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. to address any issues. Hope Village strives to help residents learn habits to be good neighbors when they are in their own housing. Feedback is always welcomed.

- **How are the numbers for calls of service to Hope Village?**

There has been a significant decline. Calls have been about 1/5 of the calls for the previous year to Camp Alabama. The Longview Police Department Behavioral Health Unit has been so successful.

- **What about numbers of emergency room visits for Hope Village residents?**

The Core Health Street Med Team visits Hope Village every Monday and has significantly mitigated unnecessary emergency room visits. They connect people with their primary care physician for routine medication needs and appointments. Recent numbers from the hospital indicate that of the eight patients that visited the emergency room since December 2022 with an Alabama Street address, none were seen for a primary diagnosis of overdose or other substance abuse issues.

- **You've reported that the City received some grant funding. Of the grants received, were all funds applied to Hope Village or used for other needs in the community?**

\$860,000 was received through two grants from the State Department of Commerce. Those funds were exclusive and restricted to Hope Village and could not be used for other needs. Of that \$860,000 received, about \$800,000 has been spent as of September 30, 2023.

The three years of Camp Alabama was expensive. The portable toilets and handwashing stations, the cleanup and the calls for service, etc. Hope Village is not only saving money but is truly helping people.

- **Are those grant funds just for 2023 operating expenses? Where will future funds come from?**

The Department of Commerce grants were for 2023. One grant is renewable.

When we started on this path, we were under the impression that the County would help through document recording fees, which are dedicated funds for homelessness. When the County Commissioners voted not to provide that funding, the City Manager called the State Department of Commerce inquiring what funding was available for Hope Village. They responded with the grants.

Going forward, the City plans to request funding from our legislators through our legislative priorities for 2024 operating expenses. The City of Longview does receive its own document recording fees now and has created a Homeless Housing Program.

- **But what about the people who do not qualify for Hope Village?**

The issues are not unique to just Longview and there is not one solution or remedy. The City is funding six Behavioral Health officers and a Community Outreach Coordinator who have been instrumental in helping bridge unhoused residents with services.

One of the requirements of Hope Village is that residents must be from Cowlitz County. The waiting list is currently around 100. The Community House on Broadway (CHOB) and Community House Extended Support Services (CHESS) are now asking Hope Village to accept individuals. The housing crisis is real for all local services.

Outreach is being planned to gather feedback from businesses and community members. The City and the Salvation Army are devoted to knowing what is working and what could be better. Hope Village staff and residents are even giving back and helping with the community by performing neighborhood cleanups at least once a week!

Any new venture takes time... and resources. As we are nearing one year of Hope Village operations, we celebrate the resounding successes. Hope Village is not only providing housing, but they are also connecting residents to important services, helping with specific needs, and encouraging employment. These residents now have HOPE.