

To the board of Mid-Willamette Valley Housing Alliance.

We write you for three reasons:

(1) To tell our direct experiences with people who needed a safe place to live.

> An 18-year-old mom and her toddler were sleeping in a friend's small RV at the Dallas Mobile Village. As that arrangement became unsafe, she asked if they could stay at our home. We said yes, and they lived with us for 3+ years. We went to the library, church, and appointments together. We assisted by driving her to/from counseling, to/from job training, then travel to/from her first job. She got her out-of-state birth certificate and her driver's license. Her child was in the Head Start program for two years. Later she moved in with her boyfriend; they have an apartment and steady jobs, and the child is now in middle-school in Independence.

> A woman in her 40s lived in her truck, taking it from place to place around Dallas whenever the police required her to move. She was raised as a boy and transitioned in her 30s, then lost her technology job, her house, and now had two small dogs as her family. We offered her a chance to keep her truck on our farm. She bought her food, cooked outside, used our electricity, water, and shower. Sometimes she drank, but stopped driving. The truck needed major repairs and was no longer licensed. We helped her make connections with Polk Co. Family & Community Outreach.

(2) To note our learning curve -- not as an organization, but as community members.

We went to community info. summits and webinars, toured the C@P sites in Salem, and got data from the pc-PATHS.com website. We studied the 5-year strategic plan and know that these steps can happen. We keep reading what other communities are doing to meet housing needs. We continue to talk with friends about the needs, the planning, and ways to help. When we're allowed to contact Dallas city council members, we are ready to do that.

(3) To describe a fear that some people have.

We listened to two people who support the idea of transition micro communities, but whose experiences with sexual violence* raised major concern about having families live alongside single adults. They will welcome having a new site for families, with a separate site for adults.

* One in five women has experienced completed or attempted rape during their lifetime. One in three female victims of completed or attempted rape experienced it for the first time between the ages of 11 and 17. One in four male victims of completed or attempted rape first experienced it between the ages of 11 and 17.

<https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics> National Sexual Violence Resource Center

To be safe, people need stable places to sleep and to keep their belongings. Our friends all took steps toward self-sufficiency; this was possible after they had safe and stable housing, with a variety of supports. More rural Polk County folks are beginning to understand and want to help.

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