



community working group

Thresholds

Developing Opportunities for Affordable Homes

Dear Friends

During these turbulent times for our nation, I am acutely grateful for our local community's wealth — not only its financial resources, but its compassion, creativity, kindness, teamwork, and diversity. Today, “act locally” is more than just sound advice for effecting change; it is a prescription for keeping hope alive.

That is just one of the reasons I am honored to be the chairperson of Community Working Group's new Peninsula Committee. The Peninsula Committee is focusing on ways we can expand CWG's reach to create new affordable home communities, especially permanent supportive housing like the Opportunity Center, here in the Mid-Peninsula. In our first few meetings, we began building a structure and plans to leverage the resources we now have at our disposal as a result of our strategic alliance with Abode Services. As we go forward I am confident that, together with our caring and generous supporters, we are prepared to tackle

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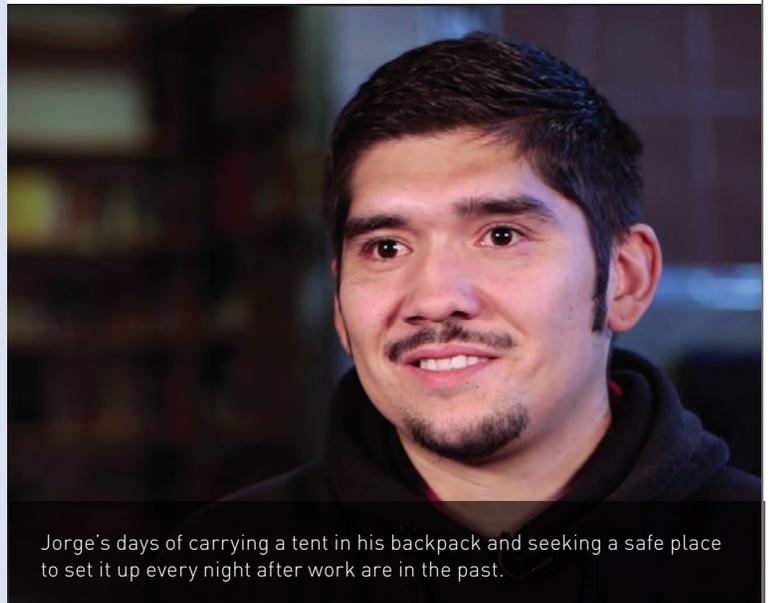


OPPORTUNITY CENTER PROVIDES HELP

Safe In An Affordable Home

Jorge lost his apartment when his landlord gave him two week's notice that his rent was going up by 33 percent. After living without a home for months, he came to the Opportunity Center, where he started working on goals with his case manager. “It's hard starting from the bottom, but she helped me right away,” Jorge said.

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Jorge's days of carrying a tent in his backpack and seeking a safe place to set it up every night after work are in the past.

Inside...

Strategic alliance
hits its stride

Thank you,
Don Barr!

Lightening loads,
delivering smiles

Strategic Alliance Hits Its Stride

It's been six months, and CWG is settling into its relationship with Abode Services nicely.

CWG Board President John Barton has become president of the unified board, the Peninsula Committee is up and running, and CWG has lots of activity in the works — including prospective new projects and long-planned operational tasks.

For nearly 20 years, CWG ran as an all-volunteer organization. With strong community support, the agency logged some impressive accomplishments, including creating the Opportunity Center, the first permanent supportive housing complex in Santa Clara County. Now CWG is becoming even more efficient, thanks in large part to having access to an experienced, knowledgeable staff that is not only focused full-time on developing and maintaining affordable housing, but also speaks the same language as housing officers and government funders. “We’ve always been nimble, but things are happening much more quickly now,” Barton said.

With a team of professionals at the ready, the board can now focus on being advocates and let staff handle the details — a welcome development for Barton and the other pre-alliance CWG board members. “We’re doing exactly what we’re supposed to be doing,” said Barton.

As the new president of a board that oversees CWG, Abode Services, and two other nonprofit

agencies, Barton, who directs Stanford University’s Architectural Design Program and is a resident fellow at the school, has even begun to sleep better at night. “Now I can take a deep breath and know the organization will keep moving forward,” he said.

For more on CWG’s strategic alliance with Abode Services, see the “Who We Are” page and the summer 2017 issue of “Thresholds” on our website, www.communityworkinggroup.org.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mounting challenges to building affordable housing, such as complicated funding, public misperception, and land scarcity.

On a larger scale, I also believe deeply that we each have a role and responsibility that extends beyond our individual needs, to address these issues that are part of the human condition. I believe that we need to find new ways to frame the issue of homelessness, to illustrate the experience of people who are unimaginably denied the safety, security and dignity — and the opportunity to take care of their families — that come with having a home. Together, we can promote understanding and inspire others to compassionate action!

Please contact me at PenComm@communityworkinggroup.org if you have an idea or comment for us. I look forward to our work together.

Sincerely,



Gail Price
CWG Board Member,
Peninsula Committee Chair

42 Happy Homecomings!

CWG’s service partner, LifeMoves, helped **42 Opportunity Center clients move into homes of their own** during the first half of 2017. CWG and its partners are dedicated to the “housing first” model — getting people experiencing homelessness into permanent, affordable homes first, and then providing them necessary supportive services.

Thank You, Don Barr!

Almost 20 years after convening the group of volunteers who devised and created the Opportunity Center (OC), Don Barr still vividly recalls the resources that were available to unhoused people back then: “Have you ever seen a snack shack at a Little League game? The old drop-in center was kind of like that — just a wooden awning where they served coffee and snacks and sometimes gave away clothes or blankets.”

A champion for housing solutions

Dr. Barr is proud of the OC, which has helped thousands of people experiencing homelessness to stabilize their lives since its opening 11 years ago. On a recent Friday afternoon, he took a break from preparing for the new session of his Stanford course on U.S. health policy to drop off a clothing donation at the center and appreciate the resource he was so instrumental in building. “People were inside getting food, taking showers, using the computers for their email,” he said.

With a mature OC and a much-enhanced infrastructure for helping people suffering from chronic homelessness in place, Dr. Barr recently retired from the Community Working Group (CWG) board. He is now pondering getting involved in another aspect of the region’s housing crisis: the displacement of low-income families from the area. “I am fully confident the OC is going to persist and thrive,” he said. “I want to shift my focus to low-income working families; I think that’s the core issue in our housing problem now.”

“Don brought us together at the beginning and led our team of volunteers to remarkable success,” said John Barton, who took the reins when Dr. Barr stepped down as CWG board president after the OC opened in 2006. “Don has had a huge positive impact on the community, and his work will continue to transform lives for generations to come. We are so grateful to him, and fortunate to have him on our side in the fight against homelessness in our community.”



The OC’s health clinic is named after Dr. Don Barr.

Lightening Loads, Delivering Smiles

The school load may not be lighter, but it is a lot more manageable for more than 200 children who received brand-new backpacks and school supplies at the Opportunity Center’s recent backpack distribution event! The backpacks and their contents, donated by community members and given to prequalified low-income children, helped to ensure that all local children start their school year confident and ready to learn!



JORGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

With the Center’s support and his own initiative and perseverance, Jorge moved into his own affordable home nearly a year ago. “If you come to the Opportunity Center you get all the help you need. You just have to push yourself and talk to someone about it; they’ll help you out,” he said.

DELIVERED STRAIGHT TO YOUR HOME

Your Chance to Change the World!

Please watch your mailbox for Community Working Group's fall fundraising appeal letter. With your help, we will continue to transform lives and break the cycle of poverty for generations to come!



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 @CWGopportunity

We Have a New Address!

Community Working Group's mailing address has changed; please send postal mail to:

643 Bair Island Road, Suite 209
Redwood City, CA 94063

(Mail sent to our Alma Street address will still reach us, but it may take longer.)

Send us thoughts and questions by email cwg@communityworkinggroup.org or phone [650-299-8700](tel:650-299-8700) anytime!

We also invite you to visit our website www.communityworkinggroup.org and follow us on Twitter @CWGopportunity for more information about our work to fight homelessness.



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