Wait...Wait, We Had So Much Fun!

We’re truly astounded. On Friday October 10th, over 350 people joined REACH and ACE as we hosted NPR’s Peter Sagal and raised money to support our programs at the “Life Within REACH” dinner. With the help of our generous donors and sponsors, we raised over $190,000!

To those who were able to join us, we hope you had a wonderful time. A few highlights:

- We launched the premier of our latest video, A Dream Within REACH, featuring the inspirational story of the Hoang family’s journey from Vietnam to America and the role REACH has played in their lives. We

   “With the help of our generous donors and sponsors, we raised over $190,000! Thank You.”

   also heard from Tom Hoang, a first year student attending Reed College whose family has lived in REACH housing for the past several years (see companion story on page 4).

- Peter had the room in stitches as he told stories of the current political landscape and how he and the cast of “Wait Wait…” decide which stories of the week to cover on their weekly radio show. It was insightful and funny.

- We received the largest individual gift in our history, a $100,000 donation from Rick and Erika Miller. “The positive impact of the REACH communities and services are immeasurable, not only for those served by REACH programs, but equally for those who have the opportunity to serve,” said Erika. “We are pleased to be a part of the REACH community and to support the mission to provide quality affordable housing and opportunities for individuals, families and communities to thrive.”

   Thank you – to our donors, volunteers and sponsors for a memorable evening. We’re proud to count you among our friends. We couldn’t do it without you.

   Our sincerest thanks to our sponsors for their support. These included Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Bank of the West; Holland

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Last month there was a heartwarming story on the local news. Cathy Mayes found an envelope containing $700 on the sidewalk and through some detective work reunited the lost cash with the owner of Koi Fusion food carts. The food cart owner was amazed Ms. Mayes simply said “I was always taught to do the right thing.”

This story first caught my eye because Cathy Mayes is a resident at Allen Fremont Plaza, a 15-year-old affordable apartment building in NE Portland that REACH is acquiring from the original developers. I reflected on what made Ms. Mayes’ actions so noteworthy and concluded that it was her extraordinary sense of stewardship which is defined as “the responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.” Though the envelope was entrusted to her accidentally, Ms. Mayes instinct was to be its steward and to track down the rightful owner.

This brings me back to Allen Fremont Plaza and REACH. Preserving affordable housing like Allen Fremont Plaza is a critical need in our community and an exciting opportunity for REACH. And we can learn a lot from Ms. Mayes by recognizing that as the new owner of Allen Fremont Plaza, we also become its steward.

The network of churches that built Allen Fremont Plaza created an affordable retirement community for long-time residents of the historically African-American neighborhoods in N/NE Portland. They kept rents very low to achieve this vision. And they are selling the building at less than full value to allow REACH to do the same. REACH will be the steward of their original vision, maintaining rents affordable to long-term community residents, even in the face of rapidly escalating rents in the surrounding neighborhood. We are also grateful for City of Portland funding that helps make this possible.

Without a sense of stewardship, Allen Fremont Plaza could become less affordable over time. Every year, Portland is losing more affordable rental units than it gains. In core neighborhoods, the market allows building owners to increase rents rapidly, making units unaffordable to lower income residents. In other cases, owners defer maintenance on affordable units until the poor conditions lead to demolition or re-development into higher income properties. Many of these properties are small, so that the loss of affordable housing has mounted quietly. But we have reached a crisis level in many communities.

Two things are needed to address this crisis; new funding resources and a commitment to stewardship....

Two things are needed to address this crisis; first, new funding resources to develop new and preserve existing affordable housing, and second a commitment to stewardship, reflecting that affordable housing is one of Portland’s most important community assets. REACH’s growth has been remarkable and it is continuing with over 200 new/renovated housing units in planning. As we grow, we also stay focused on long-term maintenance of our nearly 2,000 units of housing in our portfolio. It’s challenging work driven by the same values that Cathy Mayes demonstrated in returning the bank envelope, taking good care of the things entrusted to you.
Willamette Week has hand-selected 136 great Portland nonprofits that need your help this holiday season. Every year, the Give!Guide makes it easy for you to make a donation — and a connection — to groups in your community. What you give will help make Portland a better place all year long.

This is a very special opportunity for REACH. If you’re considering a gift to REACH before December 31st, please donate to us through the Give!Guide at:

http://giveguide.org/#reachcommunitydevelopment

The Give!Guide makes giving fun for donors by offering incentives no matter how much you give, from $10 to $3,000 or anything in between. This year, the incentives are way cool (believe us!), including a Timbers package, bike giveaway from the Bike Gallery, and a shopping spree at Powell’s Books — just in time for the holidays! You can also get free cups of coffee, pastries and tacos.

The Guide went live on Wednesday, November 5th. The first big incentive day was November 13th with a Blazers ticket package. There are lots to watch for (see sidebar).

“We’re especially grateful to be chosen for the Give!Guide as the season of giving falls during #GIVINGTUESDAY, on Tuesday, December 2nd, a global day dedicated to giving back. Charities, families, businesses and students from around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give. It’s a simple idea. Just find a way for your family, your community, or your company to come together and give. And then tell everyone how you’re giving.

Regardless of how you give, thank you! We’re grateful for your support. We hope you’ll have fun with the Give!Guide and all of the incentives!

http://giveguide.org/#reachcommunitydevelopment
Checking In

At REACH, we enjoy getting to work with a number of wonderful residents who live in our housing. We often wonder what happens to them when they move on. We heard recently from one such young man who’s attending his first year at Reed College, though his family still lives in REACH housing. Tom was one of the guest speakers at our recent fundraising dinner.

“I often heard my parent say, ‘It’s beyond our wildest imagination to live in such a wonderful, convenient, and affordable REACH unit for four and a half years.’ From this house I can walk to Central Catholic while a lot of my schoolmates have to cover a remarkable distance in the traffic jams; my sister can easily and quickly reach her dental school (close to the REACH office). Her REACH IDA account relieves her student loan a great deal; my mom can walk or take a bus to her [work]; and my dad can drive to his [work] in ten minutes. We can never thank you enough. We really hope other people, especially those new to America, are so lucky.

I have survived the first eight weeks of college and am wholeheartedly enjoying a short one-week break. Classes are going well. With the camera I got through REACH Youth$ave, I have taken a lot of photos of Reed. My REACH IDA also helps me a lot too. My classroom experiences so far have been phenomenal. Due to the small class sizes and availability of the professors, I am able to develop a close relationship with all of them. In fact, all my school professors insist to be addressed by first names. I am also working ten hours a week, seven in the school’s library, three prepping and teaching a science class at a local elementary school in Reed Science Outreach program.

The greatest blessing in college is the opportunities meeting with new people. I have made acquaintance with many. Ultimately, I am very fortunate to be the first Central Catholic High School student to attend Reed College in 75 years. My family and I are thankful for the opportunity to be involved in the recent fundraising for REACH Community Development which really helps us reach our American dream. We wish we could do more.”
We’re Under Construction

There are so many projects under construction right now at REACH, we thought we’d share a few highlights and pictures to give you a sense of how busy things are around here! Walk down nearly any major street in Portland and there are several projects under construction. We’re a city that’s growing. REACH is proud to be contributing to the local economy and providing more new – and rehabilitated – safe, decent affordable housing.

■ Orchards at Orenco-Phase I: Construction is approximately 50% complete and the roof has been installed. We’re preparing for our initial blower door test which will help us track progress towards meeting the Passive House energy standard. This test determines the airtightness of the building. The project, containing 57 units of workforce housing, is located at the Orenco MAX station in Hillsboro, OR.

■ Glisan Commons-Phase II: Construction is approximately 50% complete. The roof is nearly done with window installation and siding beginning shortly. Crews will begin working from the sixth floor down to install sheetrock and other interior finishes. The building, containing 60 units of senior housing, is located in the Gateway District in Portland, and is part of a two phase project. Phase I is up and running, owned by another nonprofit Human Solutions. It contains 67 units of workforce housing.

■ Towne Square Apartments: In September, REACH announced the acquisition of the Towne Square Apartments located in Washougal, WA. We’ve purchased the building to preserve it as affordable housing for low-income families. Currently, Towne Square is home to 71 people living on very low incomes. Renovations have begun and will include ADA accessibility upgrades; improvements to the siding, windows, and energy efficiency enhancements to the heating and ventilation systems; addition of community space, gardens, and play area; and upgrades to individual units. Construction is expected to be completed by May 2015.

■ Allen Fremont Plaza Apartments: Also in September, REACH announced an award of $1.7 million from the City of Portland’s Bureau of Housing to acquire and preserve the 64 unit Allen-Fremont Plaza, located in the heart of NE Portland’s Boise neighborhood, a building serving primarily very-low income African American senior citizens.

Originally built in 1997 by GBC Inc. GBC, an affiliate of the General Baptist Convention of the Northwest, an association of historically African-American churches located throughout the Pacific Northwest, Allen-Fremont Plaza was developed to provide affordable housing options for seniors in N/NE Portland. With the City’s support, REACH will purchase the building in early 2015 while honoring GBC’s original commitment to an affordable rent structure. We will perform approximately $500,000 of renovations, consisting primarily of energy efficiency upgrades; new roofing; interior unit upgrades; and exterior paint. Renovations are expected to take approximately six months.
On July 19th, REACH took the Community Builders Program to Washougal for the Washougal Community Work Day. Over 70 volunteers came together to paint a house, clean-up a yard, build garden boxes, install a walkway and driveway for accessibility, and rebuild a deck for three Washougal senior homeowners – wow! It was great to have so many long-time REACH volunteers working alongside new local volunteers from the Washougal community.

Our sincerest thanks to our volunteers, staff and board members. Also, several companies stepped up to provide donations to support our workday including Al Stern Photography; JP Morgan Chase Foundation; LMC, Inc.; Lutz Hardware; Macy’s Inc. Community Giving; Marley Brown Lumber Service; Miller Paint Co.; OnPoint Community Credit Union; OurBar; and Walsh Construction Co. We couldn’t do this work without your support – thank you!

More Than a Structure cont.

- Being housed brings opportunities for social interactions that help people's growth.
- Housing is more than a physical structure – it’s a home.
- Safety and Security – behave as if you are at grandma's house.
- Residents want to be respected – by staff, by their neighbors, and by the community.
- Residents are the Phoenix rising from the ashes – experiencing grief loss and also incredible hope.

As we examined the data, it may be difficult to conclude that the activities REACH provides on site help with resident’s positive tenancy. But the interviews were powerful, showing that people are learning and growing from the activities, they view their buildings as a home, and are dependent on the support and acceptance of both the staff and other residents. We also know our services contribute to building a sense of community and provide social interactions for the tenants they may not otherwise have access to. While we focused our research in these two buildings, we will continue to explore how on-site activities help residents make connections that reduce social isolation – particularly important for seniors - and provide opportunities for growth.

REACH was proud to have been chosen to participate in Project Impact PDX. We’re using this data, and our experience as a launching pad to better our understanding of how we can best provide services. As we learn more, we’ll keep you posted.
AWARDS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Rated for the sixth consecutive year as one of Oregon’s 100 Best Nonprofits to Work For by OregonBusiness magazine.

A few notable grants we’d like to call out. Enterprise Community Partners gave REACH $50,000 to support our work on the Health With Services Collaborative, focused in several of our buildings downtown helping older and disabled adults find and access healthcare. The Firstenburg Foundation gave REACH $15,000 to support our Resident Services Programs. The Windermere Foundation granted us $1,500 to support our Youth$ave Program; and the Boeing Foundation gave us $5,000 to purchase new refrigerators for several of our food closets, allowing residents greater access to fresh, healthy food.

RESIDENT SERVICES

The Ritzdorf Court Apartments held their second annual summer concert and BBQ, featuring the band Nekked Bonz. The summer event was Luau themed and included homemade Hawaiian food and decorations. Residents had a great time socializing, eating, and dancing.

We also wrapped up the Washougal Summer Kid’s Club in Washington. Each week was themed and included science, art, music, math and community building.

The Orchards properties partnered with SHARE and Church of Christ volunteers to offer a Summer Lunch Program serving residents and community members.

Our summer kids program in Portland was another success this year, with weekly activities and field trips to OMSI, Oaks Park, and Art ala Carte. The kids also had a photography workshop and explored three different neighborhoods with their cameras.

Finally our Start School Right school supply giveaway program was held across multiple properties and provided approximately 150 kids with needed supplies to start school with the supplies they needed.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS PROGRAM (CBP)

Team CBP continued work in Washington, completing repair projects at ten homes in Washougal. By the end of 2014, we’ll have completed repairs on 25 homes. Our staff has done an amazing job of reaching out to under-served communities by attending various festivals and making presentations within the Hispanic, Native American, and Asian communities. Our goal is to increase the presence of our program in communities of color.

Portland is known as being kind of a quirky city – tall bikes, dog parades, our love of goats. In that tradition, REACH is proud to be a contributor. One of our recent Community Builders workdays included - you guessed it – goats! These animals are incredibly efficient and inquisitive, cleaning an overgrown yard in less than four days. We couldn’t resist sharing with you a few shots of these friendly creatures doing what they do best, eating blackberries. Our thanks to Casey at West Side Goat Girl for bringing out the herd.

MICHELLE MOVES ON

In December, we say goodbye to long-time Director of Housing Development, Michelle Haynes. Michelle joined REACH in 2005 and has been responsible for the dramatic growth or our housing portfolio. She’s overseen the development of 16 projects, adding over 1,000 units of safe and affordable housing to the Portland metropolitan landscape. Beyond the bricks and mortar, Michelle has brought robust leadership to our housing team and steered REACH’s development through some of the most tumultuous times in our history. Her sense of humor, guidance, and knowledge will be deeply missed. Michelle has never been one to back away from a challenge. We expect retirement to bring a new set of adventures her way.

STAFF UPDATES

Welcome to Endever Corbin, Building Monitor; Jennifer Henderline, Building Monitor; Tessie McQueen, Assistant Community Manager; Marshall Raupé, Maintenance Technician; Ashlie McMurtry, Junior Maintenance Technician; Jeanine Nicosia, Building Monitor, Mark Slaughter, Maintenance Technician; Ross Tracy, IT Desktop Technician.
REACH Mission: A healthy community begins at home. REACH provides quality affordable housing and opportunities for individuals, families, and communities to thrive.

Chief Executive Officer: Dan Valliere

Board Members: Brett Sheehan, President, CASA of Oregon; Nancy Bond, Vice President, Portland Public Schools; Larry Conrad, Treasurer, Clackamas County; Kevin Wingate-Pearse, Secretary, Sperry Van Ness I Bluestone & Hockley

Betsy Ferguson, OHSU; Edward Knightly, Self-employed, Resident; Rebecca Maese, Providence Health & Services; David Sacamano, Berger ABAM; Marc Tedesco, CASTELNUOVO Design; Ruth Ann Tsukuda, Veterans Administration Medical Center (Past President); Marshawna Williams, Black United Fund

Committee Members: Ron Alexander, Gretchen Ansorge, Bennett Barnwell, Kurt Bruun, Carol Hayes, Scott Hubbard, Juagutter Jones, Jim Lodwick, Amanda Saul, Whit Spencer

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