



# Plymouth NEWS

## After years of living in temporary shelters, Vivian finally has a safe, new apartment to call her own

*Living without a permanent home takes its toll on disabled women like Vivian who rely on a fixed income to get by*

Vivian Nelson is smiling, optimistic, and as cheerful as the brightly colored clothing she loves to knit and crochet. Her sentences often start on one topic and end on another as she enthusiastically chats about her interests. Just about the only time her face clouds over is when she talks about her housing history—moving from apartment to apartment, and spending time in shelters and on the street. Under the strain of those memories, her words just trail off...

*"Here, I've really gotten to know my neighbors."  
--Vivian Nelson*

For most of Vivian's adult life, housing has been a problem. Unable to hold a job, she relies on disability payments to get by. Before coming to Plymouth, Vivian was in a transitional housing program in Seattle that provided dinner and overnight shelter but required that clients leave each morning and return in the evening. Vivian passed her days at a nearby day center for women or at the public library.

She was nearing the end of her allotted time in transitional housing when her case manager connected Vivian with Plymouth. In April 2008, at the age of 62, Vivian got a chance to break her cycle of homelessness. She moved into a sunny third-floor studio apartment with private bath and kitchen, paying 30 percent of her income for rent.

A bookcase in one corner is filled with her mystery novels, Harry Potter DVDs, and do-it-yourself crafts books for her many projects. And a handsome Himalayan cat, Apollo, provides company and entertainment.

"I love it here," Vivian says. "I have lived

in buildings where I got to know only a few people. Here, I've really gotten to know my neighbors."

Sitting at her kitchen table, she describes social activities that include the building's fun Thursday potlucks, building meetings, a knitting group, and weekly shopping trips for groceries. Now that she has a new kitchen—something that she missed—Vivian does her own cooking, planning to make a lasagna for a potluck event soon.

"I'll stay here at Plymouth as long as they'll let me," she says with a smile.



DOUG PLUMMER

Vivian Nelson and her cat Apollo enjoy living in her sunny apartment at Plymouth's Langdon and Anne Simons Senior Apartments.

### ONE-NIGHT COUNT OF HOMELESS PEOPLE FINDS OVER 2,826 PEOPLE LIVING OUTSIDE IN KING COUNTY

On January 19, almost 869 volunteers combed King County in the wee hours of the morning for the annual One-Night Count of Homeless People. Organized by the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, 23 teams of counters discovered 2,826 people living outside in parks, under bridges and in camps.

In the city of Seattle, the numbers remained close to last year, but in suburban areas like Kent, the numbers rose dramatically. Coupled with an estimated 6,000 people living in temporary shelters, the total number of homeless people in King County is approximately 8,800 on any given night. Plymouth staff, including Executive Director Paul Lambros, participated by leading several Count teams in downtown Seattle.

"It's really powerful seeing the encampments—it's a stark reminder of the difficulties these people are facing," commented Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation CEO, Jeff Raikes, one of Count's participants.

**LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

# Seattle's upcoming housing levy is vital to increasing the supply of supportive housing for homeless people

This fall Seattle voters will face an important issue on the ballot—the renewal of the very successful housing levy we passed in 2002. The proceeds of Seattle's past housing levies have been instrumental in



Paul Lambros

creating affordable rental housing for low-income citizens. In all, the city has created over 10,000 units of low-income housing with levy proceeds since 1981.

While all of us at Plymouth recog-

nize that times are tough, they are even tougher for those on the bottom rung of the ladder. Adding new units to our city's portfolio of housing for homeless people as well as for low-income families is crucial to ensure that our city remains a vibrant, healthy community for everyone.

All of us at Plymouth have been very grateful to the citizens of Seattle who made the decision seven years ago to support low-income housing. Plymouth's recent expansion, where we added over 300 apartment units to our portfolio, was funded in part by the housing levy.

Our community has made great progress over the years in increasing available housing for our low-income neighbors—

it would be a great shame to halt the progress we've made especially when we now need it the most. You will hear more about this issue as we get close to the fall 2009 elections, but if you would like to know more now, please visit the City of Seattle's website at: [www.seattle.gov/housing/levy/levy\\_TAC.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/housing/levy/levy_TAC.htm).

Our local housing levy costs each of us just a few dollars each year, but makes an incredible difference in so many lives.

Best Regards,

Paul Lambros, Executive Director

## "Evening of Hope" Gala raises over \$528,000 to support Plymouth residents

The Seattle Hotel Association's 12th annual "Evening of Hope" Gala to benefit Plymouth Housing Group was held on Saturday, February 7. It was a resounding success, raising over \$528,000. Designed as a "Pillow Fight Against Homelessness," almost 350 guests at the Fairmont Olympic Hotel dressed in their best PJs and robes and enjoyed an elegant evening of delicious food and wine as



Above: Evening of Hope guests Maiko Winkler-Chin, Jonathan Clarke, Laura Hewitt-Walker, Steve Walker, and Emily Chen.

Right: Gala Honorees Kate Janeway and Howard S. Wright.

they raised money to fight homelessness.

The live auction featured items such as a week stay at a villa in Tuscany, a new Vespa motorbike, and a king-sized Hästens bed. Generous guests contributed \$178,000 during the Raise the Paddle portion of the program.



Evening honorees, **Howard S. Wright and Kate Janeway**, commented that at a time when the country is struggling with financial challenges, it was wonderful to be part of an organization like the

Seattle Hotel Association that helps those most in need.

Gala proceeds will go to fund support services for Plymouth residents. A big thank you to all the members of the Seattle Hotel Association for their outstanding generosity!

## Construction begins on new Plymouth apartment building at 1st and Cedar

Starting in early May, we will break ground on our newest residence at 1st and Cedar in Belltown. This 84-unit building will provide homes for formerly homeless people suffering from mental illness and chemical dependency issues. Built to local green standards, the building will feature energy-efficient light and electric systems, regionally-manufactured building materials, water conserving plumbing, and Energy Star™ appliances. Also, residents will be actively encouraged to recycle and conserve energy. The building will open in the fall of 2010.



SNR ARCHITECTS



2113 Third Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98121 > 206-374-9409 > 206-374-0602 FAX > [email@plymouthhousing.org](mailto:email@plymouthhousing.org) > [www.plymouthhousing.org](http://www.plymouthhousing.org)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Paul Lambros

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
Leslie Christian, PRESIDENT  
Lynn Beck, VICE PRESIDENT  
Angus Cunningham, SECRETARY

Craig Neyman, TREASURER  
Ken Carter, IMMEDIATE PAST PRES.  
David Beitel  
Stuart C. Campbell

Barbara Congleton  
Tyrone Edwards  
Carol Ann Hiller  
Tim Kerr

Lyn Krizanich  
John McHale  
Donald Mitchell

Erin Page  
David Poston  
Charles Rosenberry

Mary Stevens  
Tracey Wickersham  
Jill Zaremba

# Taking homeless people out of the criminal justice system is reducing crime and changing lives

*Plymouth's innovative jail diversion program is providing homes for people charged with "crimes of homelessness" and giving them a chance to address the issues that landed them in jail in the first place*

In 2006, Stephanie Bush was living on the Seattle streets, shoplifting to support a 20-year drug habit that consumed her life. She spent the nights at shelters—or in jail.

When Stephanie was offered a place in an innovative jail diversion program with a "housing-first" philosophy. She was ready to give it a try. "I hated being

diversion programs offer defendants a chance to break out of the street-to-jail cycle that many have been trapped in for years. Jail diversion saves the court system time and money—and gives homeless defendants a chance to address the problems that contributed to their arrests.

The court jail diversion programs are not intended for people who have a history of serious crimes such as arson and sex offenses. They're designed for those who are charged with what are often called "crimes of homelessness." These include sleeping or urinating in a public place, blocking

get people into housing, they're able to stabilize, stay in that housing, and decrease new-offense rates."

## Housing is the first step

While it is often difficult for these residents to adjust to permanent housing, over time Plymouth staff work with them to address their needs and help them rebuild their lives.

"These are people who have not had consistent housing for more than a week in much of their adult lives," says Plymouth Program Manager Michael Quinn. "More than half of them have, at some point, threatened to take off. And most of them had outstanding warrants they've had to deal with."

Stephanie was no exception. She arrived at Plymouth with several court cases pending; one of those led to a 45-day sentence. To her surprise, her Plymouth Housing caseworker came to visit her in jail. "She said not to worry, my apartment was still here," Stephanie recalls. "I got out and I came back to Plymouth."

While the Superior Court requires defendants to participate in jail diversion as a condition of their sentences, the Community Court's CO-STARS does not enforce program participation after the first 30 days. For those clients, the major motivator to stay in the program is their successful experience at Plymouth.

"The Plymouth program is phenomenal in its ability to engage with jail diversion clients and keep them in the program," says Cox. "We can't speak highly enough of Plymouth."



**"We've found that if we can get people into housing, they're able to stabilize, stay in that housing, and decrease new-offense rates."**

**—Lorri Cox, Program Director, CO-STARS**

the sidewalk or access to a building, drinking in public, or petty shoplifting.

"These individuals are multiply-addicted, with mental health problems—people who have been known to the courts for years," says

Lorri Cox, the Program Director for CO-STARS. "We've found that if we can

homeless," she recalls. "I was ready to work on my life."

Getting an apartment at Plymouth Housing's St. Charles building paved the way for more changes. Today, Stephanie is off drugs and looking for employment.

## Who gets jail diversion?

Plymouth plays a key role as the provider of permanent housing for the Seattle Municipal Court's CO-STARS program and the King County Superior Court's Criminal Justice Initiative. Both jail

## PLYMOUTH PROVIDES HOMES FOR 42 JAIL DIVERSION RESIDENTS

Since January 2007, Plymouth Housing has provided permanent homes, on-site case management, and substance-abuse counseling to 44 jail diversion clients. All 44 clients referred to Plymouth have remained stable in housing, 42 of them with Plymouth, and two now with other housing agencies.

A study of cost-savings from the Seattle Municipal Court's CO-STARS program is underway, with statistics expected in late 2009.

## OUR MISSION

Plymouth Housing Group works to eliminate homelessness and stabilize homeless and very low-income people in housing by preserving, developing and operating safe, decent affordable housing and by providing opportunities for homeless and very low-income people to improve their lives.

## WE CARE

Newsletter printed on a 10% total recovered fiber and all post-consumer fiber paper.



DWIGHT CARTER

## Dr. Maya Angelou will be Plymouth's "Key to Hope" luncheon speaker in October

We are proud to announce that our 2009 Key to Hope Luncheon speaker this coming October will be celebrated poet, author and playwright, Dr. Maya Angelou. The fundraising luncheon will be held on **Wednesday, October 14** at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center in downtown Seattle.

Dr. Angelou is the author of twelve best-selling books, including her acclaimed memoir, "I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings." For more information on how to become an Event Sponsor, a Table Captain, or to reserve your seat for this inspiring annual event, please email: [mlambert@plymouthhousing.org](mailto:mlambert@plymouthhousing.org) or call Resource Development staff member Mary Ann Lambert at 206-374-9409, ext. 144.

We expect this to be a sold-out event, so don't delay signing up now!



2113 Third Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98121  
[www.plymouthhousing.org](http://www.plymouthhousing.org)

NON-PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SEATTLE, WA  
PERMIT #22

## How you can help Plymouth

### DONATE AN ITEM TO OUR WISH LIST

Each of Plymouth's buildings has a residential lounge where residents enjoy group meals or social activities. Many of our communal rooms lack adequate kitchen equipment and entertaining activities. You can help by contributing one or more items on our **Building Wish List**.

- Gas barbecue grill
- Large pots and pans for group meals
- Kitchen supplies such as cooking utensils, dish towels, dishes and soap
- Serving platters and utensils
- Popcorn poppers
- Microwaves
- Coffee pots (such as Mr. Coffee)
- Board games (especially chess)
- Jigsaw puzzles
- DVDs of popular movies
- Boom box and karaoke machine

Please contact our Volunteer Manger at [volunteer@plymouthhousing.org](mailto:volunteer@plymouthhousing.org) or call 206-374-9409, ext. 135 to donate.



PLYMOUTH HOUSING GROUP

Alex and Rory Shanks, two young members of Mercer Island Presbyterian Church, serve residents Thanksgiving dinner at Plymouth on Stewart.

### MAKE A MONETARY GIFT TO SUPPORT PLYMOUTH'S ANNUAL FUND

Plymouth relies upon our generous supporters to fill our annual funding gap. If you are thinking about making a charitable gift this year, please consider Plymouth. Your support will help transform a life. Donate online at: [www.plymouthhousing.org](http://www.plymouthhousing.org) or call 206-374-9409, ext. 144.

## Volunteers greatly enhanced quality of life for Plymouth residents in 2008

Last year, Plymouth was gratified to have been supported by so many local businesses and volunteer groups.

**Thank you to all our volunteers for their generous, committed support!**

**Apex Facility Resources:** During the holidays, employees of Apex collected winter clothing for our residents.

**The Compleat Company** generously helped support our annual luncheon.

**Hotel 1000:** We were pleased to have been chosen as one of three local

charities to benefit from the hotel's festive holiday promotion, *12 Days of Comfort, Joy and Cheer*.

**Mercer Island Presbyterian Church:** Church members make life better at Plymouth on Stewart and the Langdon and Anne Simons Senior Apartments with regular activities and meals.

**The Mount Baker Boys:** This amazing group of local volunteers donated, cooked and served all the food for both our summer resident/staff picnic and our

resident holiday party.

**Plymouth Congregational Church:** Each year the church makes generous donations from their Sunday offerings.

**Seattle Hotel Association:** Plymouth was the recipient of the proceeds from the "Evening of Hope" Gala, and members also donated a delicious Sunday meal at one of our buildings.

**Woodland Park Presbyterian Church:** Church members have adopted the St. Charles, sponsoring monthly meals.