



Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

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Safe Shelter Summit II: Taking Action

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SPEAKERS

Lynn Siedenstrang, Allyson Griffith, Mike Yoder, Greg Walker, Gerrit Nyland, Kevin Glackin-Coley, Carlos Castanon, Duke Paulson, Robb Huff, County Executive Bruce Dammeier, Representative Adam Smith, Representative Kim Schrier, Pam Duncan, Rosemary Powers, Maureen Howard, Paul LaKosky, Colin DeForest, Norman Brickhouse, Tom Pierson, Katie Condit, Al Ratcliffe, Representative Marilyn Strickland, Janet Runbeck, Kevin Bates, Mayor Victoria Woodards, Sharon Lee

Carlos Castanon

Wonderful. Good morning, everyone. My name is Carlos Castanon and I am the counselor at the beacon new shelter with Comprehensive Life Resources. I'll be moderating our summit today. If you attended our December summit, thank you for coming back to see the progress our community is making. And if you're just joining us today, welcome and thank you for being here. The purpose of today's Safe Shelter Summit II: Taking Action event is to highlight commitments that businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies are making to do more to serve people experiencing homelessness. Just a few quick housekeeping items: the summit is a tightly scripted one hour event, real time transcription is available - just follow the Otter AI link in the upper left corner of the screen. During the meeting everyone but the speaker is muted, please use the chat for all questions and comments, including commitments you want to make to support these efforts. You heard that right. If you get inspired during this event and want to make a commitment or just get more involved. Just toss that offer into the chat. If the summit is zoom-bombed, we will pause the meeting and resume once the disruption is handled. As you may know that Tacoma Pierce County coalition to end homelessness is a loose network of individuals, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and community businesses working together to serve people experiencing homelessness. Most of us are direct service providers. With the City of Tacoma is declaration of an emergency around homeless in 2017, the Coalition immediately stepped up its efforts, and we haven't taken our foot off the accelerator since. Our end goal is to help folks establish and keep housing. We also work to address many of the factors that drive homelessness. 50 to 60 of us meet every Friday morning at 9am, with some 650 recipients on our listserv. All are welcome. This summit is a joint project of the coalition and city of Tacoma Mayor



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Victoria Woodards. Mayor Woodards has a heart for her community and her willingness to serve are very much appreciated. Good morning, Mayor Woodards.

Mayor Victoria Woodards

Good morning Carlos, thank you so much for your opening remarks. It's an honor to be here with all of you this morning, after a tough weekend in our city. We will have time to talk about what happened this weekend later, but I do want to acknowledge it and we'll be talking about it this afternoon for those of you who are interested in hearing more. But I'm here this morning to talk about another very serious issue in our community, and that's homelessness. And I really do want to thank Maureen Howard and Gerrit Nyland for helping to pull this together, and everybody who worked on this team. This has been an amazing effort of people who are committed to ending homelessness in our community - but doing it together - committed to doing it together; we all play a role in this. And I am so grateful to the coalition to end homelessness for their leadership in pulling us all together and asking for these commitments and recognizing that there's a role that everyone can play. So thank you for that. Again, it's an honor to be with you today to follow up on our conversation and requests from the December meeting on the National Homeless Persons Memorial Day. I've said this but again I want to thank the passionate advocates who brought us together today, and all who are here with an interest to address a very important issue. I want to thank this hard working city of Tacoma staff who drive this work within our organization. And I also want to thank Deputy Mayor Blocker who's with us today, but who's really been the leading advocate on our council on policy related to homelessness, and to all of my council members who have joined us today for their continued interest in this important issue. Today is all about commitments and the power of what a community as a whole, might be able to accomplish, working in collaboration together. As we open today's event, I want to share with you at a very high level, the commitments that the city of Tacoma can present today. We've also shared those commitments with Gerrit who's compiled the list. That will be shared, or that either has been or will be shared with everyone. City staff are very knowledgeable on these efforts and are available as a resource for further questions as well. I will have to say after I make these comments we have staff here will be listening, and it's being recorded, I can catch up on that later but I will have to leave shortly after my remarks to take care of some issues that arose from last night's incidents in our city. But let me talk about the commitments that we're ready to make today very quickly. Number one - shelter expansion: many of you know that we are moving forward with the opening of the Warming Center at the Center at Norpoint, which will serve 25 individuals at a time. We are also working with the Salvation Army to open their building on 12th and Union to serve 35 individuals. And what I also want to commit to you is that we continue to be open, we are looking for opportunities and ways to provide shelter. And so again if you are knowledgeable of anyone who's interesting in helping us address this issue by helping provide their buildings, whether it's a church or nonprofit, please let our staff know. I want to let you know that we're committed to a community voice in the city strategy for addressing sheltering. Neighborhood and Community Service has been developing a five year homeless strategy that will provide guidance on the city's direction and how to respond to homelessness in Tacoma. City staff will be presenting out their work on February 5 at the meeting of the Coalition. And I want to be clear that



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this strategy will be community led effort, with a focus on getting participations from persons with lived experience. And our BIPOC communities. We are also committed to and have been advocating for prioritizing safety during COVID. Last week my office made a direct request to the Governor's office to prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as any employees who provide them with in person services in the distribution and administration of the COVID vaccines. We received confirmation that the individuals experiencing homelessness have been identified as being at higher risk and have been placed in the vaccine distribution of phase one B and we're still working to even increase that if we can. Hygiene stations: there's been a lot of call for us to put hygiene stations and porta potties out in the homeless encampments, and I want to say that we are open and ready to explore options for hygiene stations and are looking for a provider who's willing to step forward with a proposal to do manage locations. Again, if anyone knows if an organization is interested please reach out to our staff. Encampment removal: The city will continue to follow the CDC guidelines with regards to encampment removal and we continue to make every effort not to disperse individuals and encampments unless there is imminent life safety threat or public need for removal. There are certain times, as you all I hope will understand, where we have to offer alternate shelter solutions to meet their goals. And so for example, just want to be transparent that we will be posting a notice to begin removal of an encampment and provide them with alternate opportunities along R street this week. We're having to do this for safety risks for the individuals in the encampment, as well as any pedestrians trying to use the sidewalk. Washington State Department of Transportation must perform construction activity at this location to complete the I-5 HOV lane project. So, all individuals in the encampment will be offered an alternative shelter. Another thing we were requested to do is improve communications and how we report, and I want to let you know that we're going to be updating the way the city is sharing information, and we will be adjusting the city's current client outcomes report format and emphasizing access to housing so that the success of various approaches and programs is more easily apparent to the public. We continue to be prioritize prioritizing health as I said earlier, but in this goal with this commitment we are exploring the expansion of the needle exchange program at encampments and we are working that with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department. FEMA funding, there another conversation that's come up. We are continuing to find ways and explore ways to maximize our use of federal funds. We are using FEMA funds at this time, and also want to let you know that we did get some new information. We did find out with the inauguration of President Biden that there's going to be some changes in FEMA funding and the way it's distributed distributed right now. There's a new presidential directive that allows for jurisdictions instead of being able to seek 75% of the cost to return for reimbursement to to receive 100% of the cost of reimbursement activities. At this time I that's great i know that that's worth clapping for I see the hands clapping. At this time I told you that we're currently using FEMA funds on several projects in Tacoma, one being non congregate shelter expansion at the TEMS II site and 24/7 operations at existing shelter locations to comply with the stay home stay healthy order. And the city obviously with all of you is very pleased about this recent announcement. So those are the commitments we're making this morning. Like so many of you working on this pressing issue that faces our community there is no simple solution to solve for homelessness, it will require continued focus and diligence like we're doing right now. It will continue to require enduring compassion,



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innovation, collaboration and resolve. But when I look through all of these screens and I see everyone who's gathered here today from the nonprofit community to the business community, those experiencing homelessness to government to advocates to everyone who's on this call, I know that because we're all here today and we all have this focus, I'm encouraged that we will be able to solve this issue. I'm so proud to live in a place where we can set an example for the rest of the world of what it looks like to come together and focus on solving some of the most difficult issues in my community. I look forward to continuing this work for you. So, with all of you and so grateful for the work that you do every day. Carlos, I'll give it back to you. Those are the commitments from the city of Tacoma.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you so much Mayor Woodards. We really appreciate your words and also the commitments that you've resolved to do with the city. Thank you so much again. We'll introduce our next speaker. It may not strike you as a natural partner in combating homelessness, however, nothing could be farther from the truth. Our business community forms the backbone of most nonprofit boards, their generosity is the stuff of legends, but there is much more we can do together. Let's welcome the Tacoma Pierce County Chamber President and CEO, Tom Pearson.

Tom Pierson

Thank you, Carlos, and thank you to the Coalition. I appreciate your guys's steadfast work in terms of being laser focused on the homeless issues that surround this community as well as other communities but particularly our community. There's one person I never liked to speak after, and that's the Mayor. But we found out today I'm just glad I didn't have to speak after Amanda. So let me talk about a couple things: One - I think we need to also kind of reflect upon in Tacoma and Pierce County, the advantage that we have is that we come together in times of crisis and times of need. I appreciate being offered the opportunity to say a few words here. What I want to say is this is a time when we need to come together and leave, leave those things that separate us and come together on things where we have common goals and that's where we come together on this from the Tacoma Pierce County Chamber. I'm the President and CEP. This is a high priority for us, and when you think about the work that we do, we this year have changed our vision of the chamber. The chamber's vision is to make the South Sound the most equitable and inclusive place to do business in Washington State. And that is very strategic in terms of why we made those changes. We used to be to make this out sound the best place to do business in Washington State. But now we know it needs to be equitable and inclusive. The way that we break out our work is we get laser focused on our work. And so we have three imperative groups that we work on. And one of those imperative groups is homelessness. And so we are focused, maybe I mean it's in line with what we're doing what we're talking about here today and have been, but it's really about as people are sliding down the ladder into homelessness, we want to make sure that they get captured. And so if you think about that, where's the spot for us. And our spot is really with workforce, housing behavior health, and advocacy. And so we're down in Olympia, working side by side with you, whether it's Housing Tax Credits, or where there's other items that need to be addressed. Our commitment and Ben Ferguson and Sherri Jensen, you guys know, have been working with coalition,



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but we want to continue to expand and partner with this group, and partners in this group to make sure that we're working together unified. Because our voices together is better, right? So when you have the business community sitting next to nonprofits and other folks around our community - that's where we can find a path that's going to move us forward. I believe that we in Tacoma Pierce County can make changes, and be actually the example of how you attack and address the issues that we're talking about here today. So I just want to say thank you. We're committed - fully committed. Help us, navigate us, lead us to where we need to go. But we're definitely highly engaged and want to be involved and want to be part of the answer. Thank you Carlos.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you Mr. Pearson, I appreciate your words. At the last summit we presented 30 something requests of organizations and government agencies, and we've given Gerrit Nyland just one minute to summarize those requests. Godspeed Mr. Nyland.

Gerrit Nyland

Thank you, Carlos. at the last summit we presented 30 something requests lumped into three areas: health, shelter and services. To improve health, we need hygiene stations, showers, immediate access to substance use treatment, easier access to medical care and vaccines for both those experiencing homelessness and those serving them. And health doesn't happen in a vacuum - it really takes stable housing. So we've requested more funding for affordable housing; that should be easy. We need to take advantage of underutilized buildings and land. Really, if there is a vacant dormitory in Pierce County, and someone's sleeping on the streets outside of it, we're doing something wrong. But with winter upon us, we'll take any port in a storm. We need safe encampments, more tiny houses, safe parking, hotels as temporary shelter, and more. If you have a parking lot or a building sitting unused, let's talk about a temporary use that serves the community. There's a long list of services that are easy to take for granted, banking, for instance. It was easy to get a stimulus check if you had a bank account. Not so easy with no bank account and no permanent address. Lack of laundry service limits the longevity of clothing, filling up our sidewalks and parks with trash. And lack of trash pickup leads to, well, trash. And we need eviction supports and easier ways to know what resources are out there. This isn't a full list of needs. But we'll drop one in the chat in a minute. So there we are. Thank you, Carlos.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you. Those are the requests. Now let's jump into some commitments. Much of the funding for homeless programs comes from the federal government. And as we look to expand services and programs, we'll need the federal government to significantly increase funding, and our congressional delegation is ready to get involved.

Representative Adam Smith



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Hello, I'm Adam Smith. I'm the congressman who represents the ninth district, and I want to thank Mayor Woodards, Mayor of Tacoma, and the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness, for their work in this crucially important issue. In order to tackle homelessness and the housing crisis that we have in our region - in the country - I think we need a comprehensive approach and I applaud the Tacoma Pierce County effort to do just that. To begin with, there are a lot of programs in the federal, state and local level, section eight other housing subsidies. And the one thing they all have in common is that they're all over subscribed, as you know only too well. There are very long waiting lists for all of them. We need to expand those programs, particularly now with the economic crisis brought on by COVID-19 that we face that has made homelessness and housing insecurity all the more worse. We need to work to expand those programs, and I introduced a bill last year, and will again in this Congress, that would allow emergency funding for people to get housing. During crisis, sort of like your other aspects of the Federal Emergency Management Act, when a crisis hits when an emergency strikes, there will be extra funds available for housing. But I really think it's important we take a comprehensive approach, certainly funding existing housing programs is one piece of it, but there are several other pieces that I feel it's really important that we pay attention to. One of the biggest is - what what creates homelessness and housing insecurity in the first place? There are a number of things, but one of them is the unequal pay in this country, the concentration of wealth of the course of the last 50 years. We've created a situation where shareholders and executives are disproportionately rewarded for their work, and average workers are not. The people who drive trucks, cab drivers people who work at the airport like my father did, janitors - incredibly important work that has seen their buying power go down and down and down over the course of the last 50 years. In South King County now - as housing prices have gone through the ceiling -that's where I grew up, I grew up in SeaTac so I know the area well, you still have people getting by on \$15 or \$16 an hour. Given the price of housing, that doesn't work. We need to put pressure on corporations to stop rewarding shareholders so much, and to make sure they pay their workers what is a real living wage. You need \$25 or \$30 an hour in South King County to be able to raise a family and afford housing. So we really need to put pressure on our laws and our corporations to better compensate workers. I also think we need to address mental health and drug addiction issues. A lot of what puts people on the edge are mental health problems that are still under diagnosed and stigmatized in this country. It is particularly important to me. I actually had an anxiety problem for my much of my life and did not deal with it very well for quite. I did finally find a psychologist who helped me, but it made me all the more aware of how fragile, that can be. And to have the mental health support that is out there so people can deal with those issues. And of course drug treatment is just critical. We have the opioid crisis in this country that has only gotten worse. During the COVID experience, getting people treatment and help with drug addiction and mental health is crucial to helping deal with the homelessness crisis. This is one of the crises of our time. When you look around the Puget Sound region, the number of people who are either homeless or are insecure - the bouncing from place to place, never sure if they're going to have a roof over their head - has exploded in the last 20 years. We need a comprehensive approach. And again, I want to thank Mayor woodards, and the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness for their efforts to address this issue and I look forward to continuing to work with you.



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Representative Kim Schrier

Hey folks, Derek Kilmer here. I first want to thank the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness and Mayor Woods for convening this important summit to continue the urgent discussion about how we can make progress to end homelessness and keep people safe. We know that even before this pandemic began we had a massive housing and homelessness problem. And this pandemic has only exacerbated it. That's why I fought for foreclosure relief for homeowners and an eviction moratorium for renters. It's why I sponsored legislation to provide \$100 billion for emergency rental assistance. It's why I've pushed for the CARES Act to include funding to address the impact of COVID-19 among folks experiencing homelessness and very low income households who are at risk of homelessness. I am so glad that President Biden took immediate action to not only extend the eviction moratorium, but to allow FEMA to fully cover the cost to move folks experiencing homelessness and living in congregate shelters or encampments to safer living spaces in hotels and motels. It is a big win that could save lives, and it wouldn't have happened without support from folks like you all. Beyond that, we need more housing, we need more workforce housing, senior housing, more homeless housing, more affordable housing, and as you suggest we need more non-congregate sheltering options. We need 10 to 12 million more housing units nationwide. And when we talk about building more housing there's a number of things that we can do, but I want to pledge my support for the National Housing Trust Fund. In fact, last Congress, I sponsored the Fulfilling the Promise of the Housing Trust Fund Act, which would significantly increase funding for the National Housing Trust Fund, and provide states more resources to build and preserve rental homes that are affordable to the lowest income people in America. It's also why I fought to expand the low income housing tax credit and push for any infrastructure bill to include affordable housing as infrastructure. In fact, last year I backed legislation to create nearly 2 million new affordable housing units in our country. We also need to ensure housing affordability and embrace housing as a human right. There are some vital programs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development that provide access to affordable housing and support the work done by our housing authorities. Now unfortunately President Trump persistently proposed cuts to those vital programs, he proposed zeroing out the Housing Choice Voucher program; Congress shouldn't zero that out, it should fully fund it. And as a member of the Appropriations Committee I fought to ensure that the final appropriations package that was signed into law not only blocked those cuts, but actually increased funding for these programs. Luckily I think we have a better partner now in the White House today to make progress on these issues. Now, finally, I agree with you that housing should be made an entitlement program and moving to ensure that programs like section 8 - our federal entitlements - would be both cost effective and a powerful tool to set us on the right track to tackling housing issues like housing segregation, housing insecurity, and to meet the basic human right of housing security for all. My friends, we've got a lot of work to do. But I want you to know that you've got a partner in me back in the other Washington. So thanks for having me. I look forward to working with you all in the months ahead, Take care. Hi, I'm Kim Schrier, Representative from Washington's eighth congressional district, and I'm just delighted to be with you today to discuss housing and homelessness, and the needs, and how to solve problems, not just in



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Pierce County but everywhere in the state of Washington and in the country. Okay, I am a big believer that housing comes first, that once you put a roof over a person's, a family's head, now you have safety, you have security, you have a place to be. You have better nutrition, the ability to hold down a job, for students - for kids - to do better and get better nutrition. And it really all starts there. Think about the health care costs alone; investing in housing is a way to reduce so many of the other costs social costs and economic costs that we face in our county, and our state and country today. COVID has only exacerbated a pre-existing housing crisis; we couldn't have people in congregate settings. But look what happened, hotels were repurposed in order to give people just a space of their own to be safe from the disease. People got back a sense of safety and security and ability to relax and to hold down a job, and I think we should learn from that experience. I'm a big believer in low income housing tax credit to build more affordable housing because fundamentally that is one of the biggest problems. But I'm also a real believer in giving people the chance to figure it out themselves. There's a lot of evidence that just giving money to people who are in need is the most effective way to address poverty and homelessness; they will figure out how to stretch every dollar, how to join with other families for housing - something you can't do with low income housing vouchers alone. And I think we need to be creative about solutions and work together. And I so look forward to working with Pierce County, and having Pierce County and Washington be a model for the country. Thanks so much.

Representative Marilyn Strickland

This is US Representative Marilyn Strickland, of the 10th Congressional District of Washington State. I first want to thank the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness for all the work that you're doing. I also want to thank Mayor Victoria Woodards for her leadership. One of the things that I think it's very important to do is to recognize that this is a regional issue. And by gathering leadership from every city, every nonprofit organization, businesses, social services and property owners - there's an opportunity to address the homeless situation in a meaningful way. Alleviating human suffering must be at the top of the list. We also need to make sure that homelessness is a temporary circumstance, not a permanent situation. And this means all of us will have to do our part to address it. Whether that's job opportunities, building more housing, or being more creative in how we define what it means to be securely housed. Tiny Homes, dormitory style housing, and making sure that we have permanent supportive housing. The South sound is a growing region, and as more people move to the South Sound, we know that there is more pressure because the supply of housing simply does not meet the demand. But as a member of congress I stand ready to work with you, whether it's through the office of Housing and Urban Development, doing what we can to invest in social services, and mental health, please know that I'm a willing partner to help you address this issue. It won't be easy. And we know that it's fraught with emotion and expectations. At the end of the day, in the Pierce County region, we know how to work together. We've done big things. And I'm hopeful and confident that we can address this issue. Thank you so much for all of your work. And please make sure that you reach out to my office as a contact, both at home and here in Washington DC. Thank you so much.

Carlos Castanon



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We appreciate those offers to work together from our congressional delegation. I also want to acknowledge Christina was there Patty Murray's office and who is in attendance today, appreciate you being here Christine Nhan. And of course appreciation for so many other elected officials who were also present with us today. I would like now to give the floor to those individuals and organizations I mentioned earlier - who are going the extra mile to ensure the safety of our houseless neighbors and making commitments to do more. Would you like to make a commitment of your own, just type it in the chat, and we will certainly follow up with you. Our first commitment is from Pam Duncan, President and CEO of the Metropolitan Development Council, Pam.

Pam Duncan

Thank you very much. Good morning everyone. I consider it very much an honor to be here. Metropolitan Development Council is your community action agency. We were founded in 1964, and we work with, and advocate for, people experiencing poverty to ensure access to services, resources and tools needed to create a more equitable community. MDC commits to offering its property located at 2342 Tacoma Avenue as a temporary winter shelter through April. This would be under the assumptions that an outside operator will come in to provide those services; MDC will serve only as the landlord for the property. And number two, the facility costs to operate must be covered by the funding source. We are happy to offer up this property which is vacant and not being used at this time for this important service.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Pam. Next I'd like to welcome Dr Paul LaKosky doing the good work with the Dave Purchase Project.

Paul LaKosky

Morning everyone, I'm Paul LaKosky, Executive Director of Dave purchase project/Tacoma needle exchange, and we commit to providing opioid poisoning awareness training, Naloxone and wound care supply distribution and street medic training to houseless individuals in Tacoma, particularly those living encampments. In addition, we commit to working with two to three organizations in Tacoma to install and maintain syringe disposal kiosks that will provide publicly accessible safe syringe disposal for all, 24/seven. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Paul. Next it is my pleasure to welcome Gerald Daniels with the R.I.S.E Center, a relatively new organization with an inspiring mission.

Norman Brickhouse

Good morning all. First of all, thanks for having us. The R.I.S.E. center stands for Restoring, and Igniting Self-Empowerment in community. We're a holistic organization that focuses on Housing First.



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We commit to operate a winter shelter, provided that we can find a funding source. We do provide holistic resources such as job skills and also behavioral health skills. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon

Thanks Gerald. Next we have Janne Hutchins with LASA, an agency with a long history of serving our community. Good morning,

My name is Janne Hutchins, I'm executive director of LASA. Our mission is to prevent homelessness, and recurrent homelessness, and we are located in Lakewood, and have served greater Pierce County for over 30 years. We're committed to providing laundry services. And we commissioned an architect to provide architectural drawings to create that space. We are still in need of capital funds for the remodel and equipment. In closing, I'd like to say that access to laundry is necessary for personal dignity for remaining warm and healthy, and to reduce the waste associated with unsheltered homeless. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Janne. Next, let's welcome Rosemary Powers who is speaking on behalf of St Leo's parish and their ongoing efforts for social justice.

Rosemary Powers

Thank you I speak this morning in the name of Carolyn Reed from St Leo parish. St Leo's has for many decades reached out to those experiencing difficulties in life with housing, food work, and life in general. It is our vision that everyone has a safe place to sleep, and have other basic human needs met. The St Leo social justice commission leadership commits to continuing advocacy for an immediate and significant regional response to the shelter emergency, and urges the Pierce County Council to pass a one 10th of 1% tax for housing and related services. This tax could generate between \$18 and \$20 million annually and dedicating this funding to bonding construction and operations of permanent supportive housing over 10 years will help meet an expected need for 2300 housing units throughout the county for our most vulnerable residents. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Rosemary. If you're familiar with homeless services in East Pierce County, you definitely know about Kevin Bates and Helping Hand House, Mr Bates.

Kevin Bates

Helping Hand House has opened non-congregant emergency shelter and permit housing for decades. At no time since our founding in 1984, have we been more proud to partner with Pierce County Human Services and other providers to provide emergency shelter and other housing solutions for families in



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our community ending their crisis of homelessness. And that's the key currently helping Helping Hand House is preparing, not only for the anticipated increase in need for shelter options as the pandemic wanes, but also committing to increase our output of our most successful permanent housing program, which is our Rapid Rehousing program. Ending a shelter stay is the end goal for all of us - I think we would all agree with that - and nothing is as important in safe shelter, but an affordable attainable exit strategy, which is permanent permanent housing solution, secured through the signing of an attainable and sustainable housing lease. Help Hand House is beginning to leverage our experience by providing eviction rental assistance payments to over 500 landlords in 2020 to deepen those relationships to open up avenues to expand our Rapid Rehousing program which is easily the most successful engagement strategy in our 36 years of offering these services, providing immediate funding for clients to move in for all their moving costs and up to 12 months of rental assistance benefits - not only our clients, but also those landlords who have also severely been affected by COVID. Without willing landlords and housing providers, the number of permanent housing options in our county does not increase. So as funding for short term emergency shelter and rapid rehousing increases, Helping Hand House continues to meet our mission by not only increasing capacity to assist with those folks to find housing, but also to secure additional relationships with these landlords to provide additional attainable housing. And we're gonna do that by partnering with like minded landlords who also want to serve those needs. They are out there. We just need the funding to do it. So, thank you very much.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Kevin. Associated Ministries has been a tie that binds the faith community together and is a resource for many nonprofit organizations. Let's welcome their executive director Mike Yoder.

Mike Yoder

I am Mike Yoder, executive director of Associated Ministries. For over 50 years Associated Ministries has played a key role in assisting local faith communities to serve our vulnerable neighbors, and we commit to increasing those efforts. We also commit to strengthening our work leading Pierce County's Landlord Liaison Project by building strong relationships between private landlords and the service providers that are seeking creative options to establish housing for vulnerable clients. We commit to not just continue our creative homeless programs, such as coordinated entry and rapid rehousing, but to work to expand them by advocating for new funding and resources. We commit to effectively serve communities which are disproportionately impacted by homelessness by integrating racial equity and social justice principles and practices into our work culture and policies, as well as leading to work them into service delivery throughout our community. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon

Appreciate that. Employment is the main tool to increasing self sufficiency, and Workforce Central is helping people do that every day. Let's welcome Workforce Central CEO Katie Condit.



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Katie Condit

Good morning. I'm Katie Condit, CEO of workforce central. Our core aim is ultimately to connect job seekers across Pierce County to living wage employment, and we're especially focused on serving community members facing systemic barriers to employment, and that includes job seekers experiencing homelessness. Through the Pierce County Community Engagement Taskforce, we are committed to launching a Speaker's Bureau, which is a cross-agency initiative that's really designed to elevate and amplify the voices of individuals with lived experiences in homelessness, with incarceration, poverty, and many of the other drivers of homelessness, We so often design solutions for populations without a true understanding or input from individuals who are experiencing the barriers that we're working to eliminate. And so the Speaker's Bureau is a really compelling step towards honoring those perspectives and designing with, and not simply for, community members who are experiencing homelessness. It's a cross-agency effort to ensure that those of us who are in decision making roles and who are building systems are truly informed by community members about the challenging situations that many of them face. The goal is a better collective understanding of each other and of our unique lived experiences as well as to create professional development and growth opportunities for the speakers who engage in the Speaker's Bureau series. As I mentioned, this is really a cross-sector initiative that developed through the Pierce County Community Engagement Taskforce that our team facilitates and we see it as a first in many steps towards more meaningful community engagement in our workforce development efforts. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you so much, Katie. No nonprofit has a larger footprint in social services in Washington state than Catholic Community Services. Let's say hello to Alan brown, director of their family housing network.

Duke Paulson

Morning everyone. Alan Brown, housing services director with Catholic Community Service's family Housing network. Catholic Community Services has a long history of serving vulnerable adults and families in Pierce County. Over the decades, the Family Housing Network program has sheltered and assisted thousands of Pierce County families to move into permanent housing. Right now, CCS is sheltering over 100 single adults and veterans in hotels in Tacoma and Puyallup. Our program is committing to provide hotel shelter for up to 50 households experiencing homelessness on inclement weather nights when the temperature is freezing, with a primary focus on families with children, and also making sure that they are on a path toward permanent housing. Outside on a January night is no place for children to spend the night. This commitment will be contingent on the availability of funding for the project. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon

As a father myself, Alan, I appreciate your words and I hope that we can find some funding to make that happen so the kids don't have to sleep outside during the night. The Low Income Housing Institute



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has been a big player in homeless services over the decades. And we are glad for their expansion into Tacoma . I'm pleased to introduce Sharon Lee.

Sharon Lee

Good morning. I'm Sharon Lee and I'm the executive director of LIHI. And we are celebrating our 30th anniversary this year. And as primarily a nonprofit housing developer, we've been so frustrated with the number of homeless people who are sleeping outside. We are thrilled and want to thank the mayor and City staff of Tacoma Because of their dedication and the community support we've gotten from many of you, we were able to open up a tiny house village on McKinley, and we have 46 tiny houses at McKinley and then we also just opened 40 tiny houses at the village at Sixth and Orchard. And that village right now is still leasing up so to speak, and it includes families with children. We now have eight families with 13 children as well as singles and couples. So, we are also going to open up a new village with the Puyallup tribe very soon. Pretty much in a few months. So we will pretty much have 101 tiny houses in Tacoma very, very quickly. And our commitment to you is to try and open up more tiny house villages with FEMA funds, private donation funds - however we can get community support. We do own a building at 711 South 38th Street in the Lincoln district, and we are proposing that as a new site for a tiny house village. And as you know, each village has toilets, showers, laundry, kitchen, facilities. But every household has a heated insulated tiny house, and the material cost is only \$2,500. So we have been getting donations from people living by the village and people from Tacoma willing to support more tiny houses in Tacoma. Thank you so much.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Sharon for all the work that you do. Unaccompanied minors and young adults are a challenge to serve well, but The Coffee Oasis has made that their mission. Let's welcome Greg Walker, area director for Pierce County.

Greg Walker

Thank you. I want to say thanks to the Coalition, to our elected officials, and to all of you for your continued efforts in this space. And thank you for this opportunity to share what my team is trying to do to make a difference. The coffee Oasis serves vulnerable and homeless youth and young adults throughout Pierce County. On December 30, we moved our underage youth shelter to our new location at the corner of Tacoma Avenue, and South 15th Street, increasing from six to 12 beds for our capacity for 13 to 17 year old youth experiencing homelessness. We also provide street outreach and case management to youth and adults throughout the county. Our outreach team currently serves approximately 60 youth, on the street. And we're eager to commit to doubling this capacity by adding an additional full time street outreach specialist, and an additional full time street case manager contingent on the availability of funding for the project. Thank you.

Carlos Castanon



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Thank you so much, Greg. Next I'd like to introduce Norman Brickhouse, director of mission services with Valeo Vocation.

Norman Brickhouse

Hello, everyone. Thank you for having us. I'm Norman Brickhouse, Director of Admissions services at Valeo Vocation. Valeo Vocation is a nonprofit staffing agency dedicated not simply to employing people experiencing homelessness, but to help them to get housed as well. Valeo offers employment services to individuals experiencing homelessness and with barriers to employment. We will partner with local behavioral health partners to provide assessment and treatment, navigation, case management and housing navigation - partnering with local housing programs and advocating for significantly more housing programs. We will help participants move into permanent, full-time employment and housing. Thank you so much for having us here.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Norman, we've already heard from Mayor Woodards, but I'd also like Allyson Griffith to speak a little bit more. Allyson Griffith is the Assistant Director for Neighborhood and Community Services.

Allyson Griffith

Thank you, Carlos the mayor very eloquently covered our commitments at the top of the meeting, but just to remind everyone: the city remains committed to shelter expansion and we will be shortly opening both the Center at Norpoint and the Salvation Army location as warming centers. And I'm pleased to hear several of you make commitments to looking at opening your buildings throughout the city and in the county as well - so thank you for that. We will be coming to the Coalition to discuss our homelessness strategy on February 5, and really want that to be a community led strategy, particularly with voices from lived experience as well as our BIPOC community, so we'll be leaning heavily on the coalition to help us do that. The Mayor's office has been pushing to prioritize safety for our individuals experiencing homelessness within the COVID-19 pandemic, and did make a specific request to the Governor's office to look at reprioritization of vaccinations for that population, so I do want to stress that. And again, I know when Gerrit was commenting on the on the list, hygiene stations again came up. If there is a provider who is willing to look at managed locations for that we are more than open to that conversation, so we welcome that conversation. And then just want to again commit to you all that we are working on improving our communication with you all and we'll be adjusting our website in the way that we push data out to you so that it's more clear what kind of investments we're making and what success those investments have. So, I don't want to keep us, Carlos, so I'm gonna stop there, but I know the full list of commitments will be included in the list provided to the coalition Thank you all.

Carlos Castanon



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Thank you, Allyson, I appreciate that. Next I'd like to introduce Keith Helmka, with Virginia Mason Franciscan Health

Lynn Siedenstrang

Hello everyone, I am Lynn Siedenstrang. I am the Vice President for the care continuum, at Multicare. Also on the line is Dena Hannon, who is the Vice President for case management for Multicare. We are so excited and honored to have the opportunity to be here today to share with you the commitments that we are able to make towards this work for multicare. And they are the same ones that Virginia Mason Franciscan Health committed to as well. We've been having conversations together about this work. So our commitments are that we will commit to have an active membership of ongoing coalition meetings, we are committing to discussing and brainstorming challenges with the coalition and shelter partners. And we want to explore the process changes within our own discharge planning planning on really improving and expanding the communication and collaboration with our shelter providers. Thank you so much for this opportunity to share these commitments and for the great work that everyone is doing.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Lynn. I'd like to now give it over to Gerrit Nyland with the Coalition to End Homelessness.

Gerrit Nyland

As you may know, finding a shelter bed can be a challenge. The coalition commits to making that easier. We've developed and launched a tool that allows shelters to update and publish Bed Availability in real time, visit our webpage and you can see available shelter beds at shelters across the county. We have just started the rollout, with about a third of our shelters tracking current availability and we're hoping for full adoption in the coming weeks. And speaking of shelters, we have a last minute addition to the commitments, I would like to introduce Duke Paulson, the executive director of the Tacoma rescue mission.

Duke Paulson

Good morning, my name is Duke Paulson I'm the executive director of the Tacoma Rescue Mission. For 109 years we've been serving vulnerable members of our community, operating systems and facilities to assist men, women and families experiencing homelessness, and partnering with the community in this challenge. During the pandemic our commitment to doing more to serve the community has resulted in opening two additional temporary shelter sites. One operating every night at the Holy Rosary school, and an inclement weather site at the Bellarmine gym, allowing us to maintain our capacity while socially safe. I'm proud of the fact we've safely managed congregate shelter, with lower rates of infection than the whole county has has. It's actually been very safe - we haven't had a single positive case in any of our expanded shelters yet. TRM is willing to commit that we are continually looking for ways to create synergies and partnerships with other nonprofit private sector and



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government entities to find solutions to ending homelessness, and I'm excited to see where this continues. Thanks.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you, Duke. Appreciate that. So I want to acknowledge the effort and commitments that everyone's made so far, even those who just attended this morning just to get to know more about us and what we're doing. Change really starts with you. As you know, homelessness knows no boundaries - it stretches across our county. And thankfully our county is a huge part of our homeless response, coordinating our activities and bringing in state and federal funding for our programs. Let's welcome County Executive Bruce Dammeier.

County Executive Bruce Dammeier

Thank you very much Carlos. Thank you, Gerrit. Thank you, Maureen for bringing us all together. I don't know about you but this is very encouraging, when you see and hear how the community is coming together, and everybody is stepping up. It's powerful and I think it really goes to the fact that - I think about some of the things that I've heard, particularly from some of our congressional representatives, we all know that homelessness is multifaceted, it's complex, and it's regional, and it was exacerbated significantly by COVID. I appreciate you bringing us together to focus on this right now, particularly in the winter at this time. But when you listen to everybody, I can't help but be encouraged by kind of the creativity and the collaboration that's going on in this group and beyond. And when I look at Pierce County's role, it is primarily being a catalyst, and a source of funds to help these provider do this important work. So that is very exciting. You know some of the things that we have been working on pre-COVID right pre-COVID, you know we've been working hard to expand shelters. Excited to hear Duke Paulson from school Rescue Mission, and some of the work there we've been we've been involved in expanding shelters. We've been involved in expanding our coordinated entry system - thank you to Catholic Community Services and Associate Minister - thanks for being key partners on that. And then we've been pushing kind of creative new solutions that have been successful, like diversion and Rapid Rehousing which Kevin Bates talked, about the landlord liaison program which Mike Yoder talked about. We've also been increasingly focused on housing affordability, that is a huge crisis in our community and getting worse every day - when Spanaway is the hottest housing market in the nation, we've got a huge problem. And I'm glad that we were brought together again with Mayor Woodards, and I wish she was still on the call, I appreciate her opening remarks and the commitments that Tacoma has made, but we have been together, we've been bringing together the sound housing affordability partnership to try to bring a regional approach to housing affordability, because we need more and more types of housing available to everybody under 100% of ami - 80% of ami - 50%. I'm really also proud of the work that our Human Services team has done under Heather Moss and John Barbee's leadership in responding to using our CARES money, to specifically plus up the efforts to help are those people experiencing homelessness that have been exacerbated by this. You know, we've recently helped fund, among other things, \$16 million in 2020 in CARES Act allocations, including a bunch to housing and mortgage and rental assistance, which in my mind is all



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focused on keeping people housed who are currently housed. What we above all want is to not make the problem worse by having people evicted. And I'm really excited that we will get about \$21 million, right now, from the next round of federal funding that we can use in our rental assistance program. And we did that through about 17 different providers in our community, some of which are on the call here, some of which are not but that was an intentional outreach to make sure we're getting to people that are hard to reach - populations that have been disproportionately affected by it - so I really appreciate the partnerships that were effective in that. And speaking of partnerships I am also proud when we talk about regionality - this is an issue that where governance in Pierce County have not historically collaborated as well as we need to going forward. And that is why I was so proud of the \$4.7 million grant that Pierce County hosted that involved Tacoma, Puyallup, Lakewood and University Place that is funding 120 new beds around our community, including the ones in Tacoma that LIHI was talking about. And I think that's just the beginning. I look forward to building on that partnership, particularly with those key players because when you think about where homelessness is probably at its worst, it's in those jurisdictions - it's clearly beyond those jurisdictions, but those are the ones that we want to really develop good aggressive partnerships to move forward together on a kind of a regional basis. So I really look forward to that. On to some of the specific requests that were highlighted. At my direction, the county staff, following the CDC guidelines pretty much as the mayor indicated, we have suspended all encampment abatement unless it is an imminent health or safety related issue. Ultimately we know camps are not the solution, I would tell that I'm very concerned about the conditions out there that I don't think that is appropriate, but we also want to protect people from the kind of unnecessary spread of the virus, or make these people more vulnerable to the virus in that. So we're doing that - our public planning and Public Works staff has already. We've created a list of available properties of excess property surplus properties that can be potentially used for housing and shelters, and that is going through right now through our South Sound housing affordability partnership program. We have been using some of our CARES money specifically through some of the providers on this call and others to provide that hotel room shelters, you know that out in Puyallup and in other places right now, and we look to expand that as we get access to more money. And in addition to the rental assistance that we have been providing, we have also been funding kind of the eviction reduction program and variety of those programs specifically to protect people from eviction - we've got a huge challenge as we come out of COVID and get our economy stabilized together again, to make sure that people are not unnecessarily evicted - that they have every chance to stay in and work through that. So we're working both sides of that on the rental assistance side and on the counseling eviction protection side. And lastly, I would say that our Human Services Program is working very closely with the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department about getting vaccines to our communities that are experiencing homelessness - that's one of the things, one of the purposes of you may have heard about our kind of \$4 million effort to roll out part of our mass vaccination program. Part of that includes mobile sites that can go meet people where they are and administer the vaccine. That's something that's missing - had been missing in the current rollout. So we're gonna augment that by doing that and that's it. That also highlights one of the challenges and one of the things that we're trying to get resolved is, is we need to, when we go to an encampment - we need to vaccinate everybody in that encampment. We don't want



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to go there and say if you're over 65, raise your hand. We'll vaccinate you and we'll come back. Two weeks later to vaccinate those that are over 55, and that doesn't make sense - so we just need to get there effectively and efficiently and take care of everybody at that encampment, so we'll continue that. Also on the FEMA funding, I was encouraged to see the executive order from President Biden that expanded the kind of reimbursement rate. Our Human Services team, under Heather's leadership, is working closely with our Department of Emergency Management, with Jody Ferguson, looking at what we can do with that and how that flexibility is. It's still a reimbursement system, so you got to be able to up front the costs, but we're hopeful that we can find a way to really make that a more effective tool and getting out. And lastly, I would say, you know, I'm proud of the council and I was proud to sign the recently the 10th of a cent for mental health. I think that's going to be an important tool that is being focused significantly at kind of early intervention prevention and crisis response. That's be about \$12 million-ish, and we're excited about that, but there was also in that that ordinance is an effort by us to go look for a more effective way to kind of leverage more services - behavioral health services and more accessibility to those services throughout our county through the Medicaid program. That's an innovative program, it's building on things that have been done in other states but it hasn't been done in Washington State. We're looking at kind of a tweak from our current integration efforts through our managed care organizations. I'm hopeful that we can do that in a way. There's almost a billion dollars in Medicaid money that flows through this county, and if we can find a way to use that money in a smarter and more effective way to help people experiencing Medicaid, particularly those that are kind of in the deficit of services. We need to do that. An example of that would be, we want to revise that program so we can use some of that money to do things like provide housing where that would be a much better use of money and a much better solution for a person, instead of cycling them through an emergency department time and time again. So it allows that kind of smart things and build out kind of non law enforcement crisis response. So I guess in closing, I would just like to thank you all for highlighting again the importance of this at this time. I'm from Puyallup and was always very proud of the fact that the churches in Puyallup, of which I have had attended a few, did the freezing night's program. And the fact that that was not operating this year is very concerning for a lot of reasons - for the ability of the churches of the faith community in Puyallup to step up and help the homelessness problem in our community was a key thing, not only for them but for obviously for those experiencing homelessness. We want to see if there's ways that we might be able to revisit that or do something because one of the things that this whole thing highlights is we all have to grab an oar to get this thing done. This is not any one group or any one government or any one organization doing it. It's got to be all of us. And I want to thank you again for the great work you're doing and for your close coordination with the Pierce County Human Services team. Again, I'm really proud of Heather Moss and her leadership and John Barbee and his leadership, and appreciate your continued work with them on this very important effort. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Carlos Castanon

Thank you executive Dammeier. Gerrit will read a message from the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation.



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Thanks Carlos.

Gerrit Nyland

Unfortunately we don't have the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation with us, but they gave us a message. I know we're running a little bit late so we're probably going to go another six minutes and 30 seconds - and it's good stuff, so hang with us. First of all, a big thank you from all the Coalition members at the very start of the pandemic. The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation provided immediate and incredibly flexible financial support. And they've also been the major financial support behind the Coalition's work to increase winter shelter. So thank you. And now this from the foundation: Anyone living or working in Pierce County can see that many of our neighbors lack the most basic shelter. Looking closer at the data, trends emerge about who is most likely to find themselves without a safe home. People experiencing homelessness are disproportionately likely to be Black, Indigenous, people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants, members of LGBTQ communities, or possibly represent several of these demographics. Under COVID-19 conditions, system gaps have driven even more people out of stable living conditions. Even when COVID-19 pandemic conditions resolve, it is clear our community needs system change rather than a return to business-as-usual. Over the past decade, GTCF has learned from and funded community efforts to support individuals experiencing homelessness while also addressing the larger system issues that make it hard to effectively address the needs. Thanks to the hard work and collective knowledge of community organizations, agencies, and networks, we continue to learn about the needs, impacts, and potential solutions for our local housing and homelessness crisis. Through PIERCE COUNTY CONNECTED and other funding efforts, GTCF and other philanthropic partners have invested several million dollars of funding, communication, and advocacy focused on addressing the short-term housing and shelter crisis in our county. To create effective and sustained solutions, there must be concurrent efforts to tackle the root causes of homelessness alongside rapid response. In alignment with other community efforts to quickly improve shelter and housing opportunities, GTCF is seeking ways to address the longer-term system transformation necessary to resolve the underlying conditions that cause and allow homelessness to occur in the first place. Today's needs are urgent. A complementary long-range approach enables the community to examine all sectors of our social systems to review official policies, practices, and approaches with the question: Who is being served by this policy or practice? A thriving Pierce County depends on communities and organizations working together at every level and across many different strategies. GTCF recognizes that community-led innovation and aligned work are the keys to achieving the racially equitable system transformation necessary to ensure our neighbors can access the most basic human needs.

Carlos Castanon



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Thank you, Gerrit, I appreciate that. To wrap us up, it is my pleasure to introduce Maureen Howard, who is the senior policy analyst with the Coalition to end Homelessness, Ms. Howard.

Maureen Howard

Thanks Carlos, and thanks all of you who've stayed on. I closed our first safe shelter summit December 21st talking about how we could bend that arc of justice closer to Dr. Martin Luther King Junior's beloved community. And today, as we bring this formal Safe Shelter Summit II: Taking Action to an end, we have more shelter beds, more finely honed services more new partners, more publicly stated commitments. We have commitments not quite ready for public view. Some commitments simply turned out to need more time. And of course, we've added more requests. Even if we hadn't had the annual holidays, inches of rain freezing nights, the attempted takeover of our capital, a pandemic, challenges to our votes, and the inauguration, the start of our first remote state legislative session, newly seeded council members, and the death of a man in his 70s with underlying health conditions from COVID-19, some commitments will simply take longer. We learned that everyone with whom we spoke wanted to help. Providers need funding, new partners need more details about what we're asking, often more time to figure out how we can work together within their system. And that we have an immense, broad community of people of goodwill. We felt the new energy among ourselves, new partners and new possibilities do that, they bring new energy, they bring hope. We, The Tacoma, Pierce County coalition to end homelessness are sometimes a bit of a ragtag band, out big tent, our open table can be chaotic. About the only order we have is our weekly Friday morning meeting agenda, and our website, a network of people bound only by commitment to ending homelessness and to respect each other, can make it difficult to know who actually has any authority, or how to find your way in. About the only thing predictable about us is that we will do this work, as well as we can. Until we don't have to do it anymore. We're not stopping our safe shelter summit work. We don't know exactly how we're taking it forward, only that we are, and that there is more than enough room for each of you to join us. We're using a messy sort of grassroots model where anyone with the time, energy and passion to take on one of the requests or commitments can serve as the lead of a group of like minded and diverse people willing to work together. Think of a giant web across this county, some nodes, some requests, some commitments clearer and easier and even stronger than others. Some more fragile. Some just waiting for the right person, the right moment. Maybe you are that person. And maybe this is that moment. Maybe that giant web is in fact, our beloved community. On the night of December 6 in the wake of Patrick's death. I wrote an email to Mayor Woodards, and I said, in part: We all want permanent housing. But in the meantime, real people live their real lives in real tents and real vehicles on our streets, and in the hidden byways all across our city and our county, until we can provide them with housing they can afford to stay in permanently, we owe them safe encampments. So to Mayor Woodards for partnering with us, for County Executive Dammeier, for bringing forward the regional nature of ending homelessness. To those of you who made today possible - everybody who worked on this summit and especially Gerrit Nyland. And to all of you who joined us today. Thank you for the sometimes very difficult conversations, for the willingness to consider yet another new idea for the challenges to the way things are, while we figure out how they could be further frustrations, for the



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agreements, for the laughter, for the tears, for the COVID tests, for the first COVID vaccine shots, for one more broom, for a street encampment, for keeping one more family housed, for moving one more child from a car to a home, for getting up one more morning and bringing one more person without a home into a safe and dry place to stay, for one more warm blanket. Gousing keeps people alive, whatever their troubles, whatever their needs. Thank you.

Gerrit Nyland

Thank you everyone. We very much appreciate your work here. We are going to continue with in depth one on one conversations with all of you. And the Friday provider meetings, you can see it at pchomeless.org at nine o'clock we're going to break out in smaller groups to talk about how we can move these commitments forward - what can we do to support all these amazing organizations that have committed today to do more. So thank you all, and you can hang out afterwards, we're going to allow folks to unmute and you can have a little bit of a chat and I appreciate y'all staying late, thanks everybody.