



# Dignity & Peace

“Building relationships + providing our houseless neighbors with daily necessities in PDX”

## Welcome to Dignity & Peace- A little about the organization



Dignity and Peace has its roots in the in the 40-year history of the St. Francis Dining Hall. Its founders are formerly staff and/or long-time volunteers at the Dining Hall which served three meals a day five days a week to the Southeast Portland, Buckman neighborhood as well as provided essential necessities

for those living on the streets. When the Dining Hall closed in March of 2019, staff and volunteers were concerned about the welfare of those who could no longer access services or supplies. Those familiar with the houseless community noted the mental and physical deterioration of those who had previously frequented the Dining Hall. The former director of the Dining Hall, Dinae Horne, initiated a discussion with longtime Dining Hall volunteers and supporters about a mobile service delivery model. By September the concept was clarified, and a van was purchased. An open invitation was issued to a wider group of Dining Hall supporters to join a planning/work team which began meeting once a week, to start a new organization – Dignity & Peace. Call to Action NW Oregon became the sponsoring 501(c)(3) non-profit to provide mentorship until Dignity & Peace becomes an independent organization, which is anticipated to occur by the end of the year.

The Dignity and Peace van makes a minimum of two routes each week but will add routes when other partnering organizations cannot provide services. The goal is to provide consistent services.

The volunteer services team is made up of six people. These are the folks stocking the van, organizing and inventorying our donations at our garages in Ladd’s Addition and then setting out to provide service. Our Thursday service can take orders for specific items i.e., size 14 shoes, and then returns to the Friday service with their prized items. The flexibility of the delivery model has allowed the teams to be out when there have been very harsh conditions for serving people.

## Van Drivers Missive-

To begin a story in the middle is always challenging. Looking back on the project of Dignity and Peace it is difficult to determine where the beginning was, exactly.

In context, every story is a portion of some other, larger story. The challenge of this missive is to provide context for the work we have been doing these last few months while purchasing a van and accumulating and sorting donations to distribute to our houseless friends and neighbors. We have distributed potentially life-saving necessities to over one thousand people. In counting these guests, we lose something of these individual interactions. Distilling the ground level, human interactions down to numbers subtracts so many details. The question for every missive I write is about inclusion and omission, because every story of an interaction with a single houseless guest leaves open one constant question: how did we get here?

How do we have a society where this situation is considered acceptable? How do we live in a time and place where there are so many resources and the difference



between someone living or dying tonight, in our city, might be a sleeping bag and tarp?

So, we begin the story wherever we are, with whatever we have, on a Thursday under the Morrison bridge. We talk to the people who show up. We omit their names in the stories we tell. We omit their photographs. The details we omit are sometimes a show of respect in themselves. This Thursday we serve twenty-two people who are living outside.

Our place in this story is to tell you what they ask for and to bring it to them if we can. We know this story is so much bigger and that the part we are doing is small, but important.

Last week we heard requests for reading glasses. People needed pants in sizes we have run out of, 30 to 33. There are requests for t-shirts, water bottles, always socks. Sometimes someone makes the joke that they need housing which is always a good joke, hard to hear, like we might have it with us in the van. For a consolation prize we have candy. Everybody gets a lollipop and is very particular about the flavor. Someone needs a size 11 shoes but wide because his feet are swollen from walking all day every day. Someone needs dressing for a stab wound two days old. A person wants adult diapers in size medium for women.

We know many of these people and that some of them are actively caring for others who aren't present because they can't leave their tents and travel far due to sickness, mental or physical, or use of a wheelchair. We know that many of the people living outside are only alive because there is a community of people caring for each other in the camp they inhabit.

Our news this last week is that many houseless folks are concerned about the city's decision to begin aggressive sweeps again. We know, of course, that they never completely ceased.

### Partner Highlight-

D+P partners with many organizations to provide essential services to people experiencing homelessness. Shout Out to these organizations for their excellent work! Thanks!

**Call to Action NW Oregon**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit since 2008, and our sponsoring organization.

**St. Vincent DePaul/St. Francis of Assisi**, serving as the delivery service of food for those in need, provides supplies that D+P deliver.

**Hygien4All**, providing clothing, shoes, tents, tarps, and essential supplies for those who come for medical help and showering. They are located under the Morrison Bridge.

**People's Depot –Recycling Center** for can and bottle redemption – Draws people who can then access resources from Dignity and Peace.

**Rose Villa Retirement Community**, providing donated clothing, bedding, hygiene supplies, shoes, and coats.

**Simone Weil /Dorothy Day House: In My Backyard**, provides housing for people looking to live in community indoors. Dignity and Peace shares donated items that are more suited for housed individuals.

### Quick Thanks to a few of our sponsors-

The saying "it takes a village" is so very true! We are so very grateful for the many people who have volunteered their time, talent and treasure to get Dignity and Peace on it's feet and off to a successful start in serving our houseless neighbors. The number of people who have donated hard cash is amazing! The number of people who have donated clothing, blankets and other essentials is amazing! The number of people who are keeping the van operating for our service is amazing! The number of people who are volunteering their time, which is in the hundreds of hours if not thousands, is amazing! WE SIMPLY COULD NOT BE SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT THIS "VILLAGE OF SUPPORT" and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



### The Travels of Your Donation- Where do Donations Go?

We have purchased a large maroon van, van insurance, The Club for security, gas and oil, a tune-up, a title, and the DEQ fee. We needed a place to store all of our donated items, so we pay for the rental of

two garages. We purchase shoes, wipes, underwear, health supplies, bus tickets, pillows, blankets, and sleeping bags when there is a need.

We rent a post office box and donations covered the cost of our incorporating and creating an online presence. There are some small costs associated with bookkeeping and, of course, the Zoom subscription to conduct virtual meetings.

The in-kind donations are directly distributed to the houseless, including but not limited to: sleeping bags, tents, coats and hats, winter-wear, medical necessities (band aides, lip balm, antiseptic), socks, new under wear, boots, gloves, shirts, clothes, special holiday gift bags and Life Pax, which contain juice, crackers & cheese, a can of ravioli, a wipe, and utensils, with a good luck wish and a list of emergency numbers.

## **Where you can find Dignity + Peace-**

Website: [dignityandpeace.com](http://dignityandpeace.com)

Email: [withdignityandpeace@gmail.com](mailto:withdignityandpeace@gmail.com)

Facebook:

Instagram: [@withdignityandpeace](https://www.instagram.com/withdignityandpeace)

Donations (In-kind): we can pick up. Email us

Donations (monetary): visit our website for a paypal link

Van Services: Under the SE Morrison Bridge Thursday 11am-1pm, and Friday 6-8pm