

Community NEWSLETTER

September 2025

What is This Newsletter?

The purpose of the Community Newsletter is to share updates on Opportunity Council's Downtown housing communities. This includes 22 North, Dorothy Place and Laurel Forest.

Each month, staff facilitate a variety of services and activities at these properties. This newsletter will highlight their impact on residents and the broader community. By providing a transparent and informative monthly update, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of our programs and the people we serve.

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What is Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)?

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) blends affordable housing with individualized support services to help people and families experiencing homelessness. The goal is to make sure highly vulnerable individuals and families have the stability of a home while ensuring access to life-changing resources such as mental health care, substance use treatment, and employment support. Opportunity Council's PSH programs, like 22 North and Dorothy Place, exemplify this approach, offering not just a place to stay, but a community where residents have the freedom and support everyone needs to thrive.

22 North

22 North is a PSH community developed to provide wraparound support services to adults experiencing homelessness as they build lives of stability and opportunity.



Law Advocates, Evergreen Goodwill, Northwest Youth Services, Northwest Regional Council and Whatcom Public Health Department all came to 22 North to provide information on the services available to support tenants to reach their goals, such as employment prep, legal advice, in-home care, and medical care. Residents were invited to deepen their engagement through a bingo game and raffle prizes!

Resource Fair



Providers in Attendance

LAW Advocates. Provides free civil legal aid to low-income individuals, including help with housing, family law, and reentry support. Hosts "Street Law" walk-in legal clinics.

Evergreen Goodwill. Offers job training, education programs, and employment readiness support for people facing barriers to work. Operates thrift stores that fund community programs.

Northwest Youth Services. Serves youth ages 13–24 experiencing homelessness or instability through housing, mental health support, street outreach, and employment programs.

Northwest Regional Council (NWRC). Coordinates aging and disability services across Northwest Washington, helping seniors and adults with disabilities access healthcare and long-term support.

Whatcom County Health Department. Promotes community health through immunizations, WIC, substance use prevention, mental health programs, and public health education.



Hosting a resource fair that brings together these local resource providers gives invaluable support to residents who are working to rebuild stability in their lives. By holding the event directly at the 22 North, we eliminated the barrier of transportation, making it easier for residents to connect with service providers, ask questions in a familiar setting, and take meaningful steps toward greater independence and long-term stability.

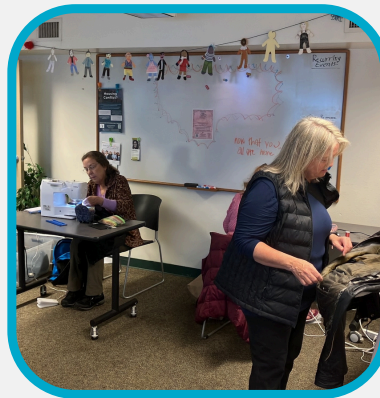
Dorothy Place

Ragfinery is SEW Welcome at Dorothy Place



Ragfinery's mission is to "grow a culture of creative textile reuse through education, entrepreneurial opportunities, and job training," recently suffered a devastating fire at its longtime location, damaging its stock, fixtures, and workspace.

In response, Ragfinery partnered with Opportunity Council to host a community event using the craft room at Dorothy Place. This arrangement enables Ragfinery to continue fulfilling its mission by offering mending services and textile education directly to residents—even while its own facility is under recovery. For Dorothy Place residents, this means they can have clothing mended on-site, helping them avoid the need to purchase new garments.



Through this collaboration, Ragfinery maintains its connection to the community it serves, while longtime residents of Dorothy Place gain access to repair support, creative reuse education, and opportunities for empowerment through sustainable clothing solutions.

About Dorothy Place

Since 1999, Dorothy Place Apartments have been a sanctuary for individuals and families who are homeless after escaping domestic violence. Our first official supportive housing program, Dorothy Place is a crucial resource in our community, ensuring that vulnerable families have a safe and stable place to call home. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a proven, long-term solution for helping people experiencing chronic homelessness achieve stability. At Dorothy Place, PSH offers stability, housing, and supportive services for children, families, and other people in need.

Laurel Forest



Walking with Wild Whatcom - Whatcom Falls

This month, residents of Laurel Forest joined Wild Whatcom's "Wonder Walks" at Whatcom Falls Park. Wild Whatcom's mission is to foster lifelong connections to nature in order to promote the health and well-being of community members and to support a generation of environmental stewards who care for each other and the planet. As residents gazed in awe at the pristine beauty of the park nestled in the heart of the city, it was clear that Wild Whatcom was truly fulfilling its mission.

Weekly Tai Chi classes at Laurel Forest

Tai Chi classes are now being held weekly at Laurel Forest, offering residents a chance to experience the many health benefits of this gentle, mindful practice. Research has shown that Tai Chi supports seniors by improving balance, flexibility, and strength while reducing the risk of falls.

It also promotes cardiovascular health, lowers stress, and enhances mental clarity and mood. The slow, intentional movements help ease joint pain, increase mobility, and encourage deep relaxation—making it an ideal exercise for all ability levels.

Beyond the physical benefits, these sessions provide residents with a peaceful way to connect with their bodies, calm their minds, and build a stronger sense of community.



Laurel Forest is an affordable housing community for senior adults age 55 and older. Supportive services and community engagement activities are available to help residents prevent isolation and build community.

Looking Ahead



Monthly ANT at Laurel Forest

Animals as Natural Therapy's Mobile Program will be visiting Laurel Forest Residents once a month, with their first visit on October 22nd. Animal therapy provides a wide range of benefits for seniors. The interaction with trained animals can reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, while offering companionship and a sense of purpose. Studies show that even a brief interaction can lower stress levels by reducing the hormone cortisol and increasing serotonin, which boosts mood. Physically, activities like petting, grooming or holding an animal can improve motor skills. For seniors experiencing cognitive decline, animal therapy can stimulate memory recall and improve focus.

Trunk or Treat for 22 North and Dorothy Place Residents

The upcoming Trunk or Treat event is more than just a festive gathering, it's a chance for residents to connect, celebrate, and create joyful memories together. For individuals who have experienced housing instability, participating in a community-oriented holiday like this can offer a sense of normalcy and belonging. By engaging in fun, seasonal traditions, residents can build new, positive associations with their neighborhood and strengthen their connection to the community. This event celebrates creativity, togetherness, and the power of shared experiences.



Apple Pickin' at 22North

22 North has their own apple trees that produce fruit every year! So, we are getting into the fall spirit and making candied apples! Picking your own produce offers a wide array of benefits that extend beyond just having fresh food, it fosters a deeper connection to nature and a greater sense of self-sufficiency.



Pumpkin Painting at DP

Art is a powerful tool for survivors of domestic violence, offering a creative channel to regain their sense of self. The tangible act of creating something is empowering, boosting self-esteem and confidence. This sense of accomplishment can extend to other areas of their lives.