



Food Fairies Deliver Dinner

While the farm's kitchen is under construction we asked people to sign up for a meal train to help the guys out. It's been going great!

Roxanne (above) was the first to deliver a hearty dinner to the residents. Farm manager Ross Sears (below), is so grateful for the support that he crafted a fine wood board for one donor. We'll pick a winner from all of the meal train sign-ups.

You can volunteer to deliver an entree by signing up on our website at BlanchetHouse.org/Volunteer.



Surprise Return to Farm

In a poignant turn of events, Aaron Conard (above), who once found refuge at Blanchet Farm to overcome addiction, is now among the crew building the farm's new dormitory. Employed with TT&L Sheet Metal Inc., Aaron is leading a skilled crew installing custom metal-work. His appearance was a pleasant surprise to Blanchet Farm manager Ross Sears.

FARM NEWS

"It was so cool to spot Aaron up here working on the building. He's a real success story!" says Sears, who spent time with Aaron 12 years ago as residents at the farm, trying to gain sobriety in its recovery program.

While Aaron's involvement with the new dormitory may not be a headline-grabbing story, his quiet contribution to the project resonates with staff and others working to rebuild their lives from addiction.

"Returning to the farm as a worker on the dormitory project is surreal," says Aaron. "It feels like a full-circle moment, and I'm grateful for the chance to give back in this way. As a husband and father, being part of this project is not just a job, it's a way to provide for my family and show them the positive changes I've made."

The new dormitory is a critical initiative by Blanchet House to assist more men struggling with addiction in rebuilding their lives. With a total cost of \$9 million, the farm is actively seeking to raise more than \$2 million to complete construction, ensuring that more individuals can find support in their journey toward recovery.

Aaron's job and sobriety exemplify the mission of the farm and the need for the construction of a bigger dormitory. His triumph over adversity inspires others to stay the course despite the challenges to recovery.

"I see the potential in this new place and it's going to be so much better," Aaron said about the new facility. "I'm excited that more people are going to be there."

Every contribution to the new dormitory at the farm is part of a larger pursuit of healing and hope.

We need your support to complete construction this year. If you can help, please call us at 503-241-4340 x109 to make a donation or visit our website at BlanchetHouse.org.

PRESENTED BY
The Heatherington Foundation for Innovation and Education in Health Care, Inc.

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Contact Meg Stark at 503-241-4340 x109 BlanchetHouse.org/Brunch2024

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Megan and her dog Teddy Lee visited the cafe for lunch.

We Won't Give Up

A few days before Christmas we received a phone call from a man named Patrick.

**IN THE
CAFE**

"God put it in my heart to call you today," he said. "I want to let you know that there are real success stories. I was one of the people you see standing in line at Blanchet House. I was nasty, violent, dirty, and unstable. No one wanted me around. There were a lot of us out there on the streets that were no better than a bug but you still fed us. We were in despair. I now have 12 years away from meth. I'd like to donate but it could only be \$10 or \$20 because I'm on a fixed income."

Thank you, Patrick, and thank you to our supporters for not giving up on people.

Congratulations, James!

James received the best Christmas gift—keys to his own apartment! It's hard to believe that only a year or so ago, he was homeless due to addiction and struggling to survive on the streets right outside Blanchet House. Now he's thriving after staying with us in the residential program surrounded by sober peers and a stable environment.

**SUCCESS
STORY**

James is employed helping others and he's already making such a positive difference in the world. We're so proud of you, James. We'll miss your humor and smile around the House.

Please help us give someone else a safe place to stay by donating to our residential program using the envelope included. We're helping to end homelessness one person at a time with your support.



James stands in the hall outside his room at Blanchet House.

Stuck on the Street

We've been trying for at least a year to help an older woman, L.B., with schizophrenia get into a permanent care facility. But, the system is set up to keep her homeless unless she can advocate for herself. The irony is that she cannot consent to care because of her mental illness. She is fearful of service providers, but feels safe on the sidewalk in front of Blanchet House.

Like L.B., there are many people experiencing homelessness with cognitive and mental challenges. They have exhausted their family's abilities to help. They need professional, 24-hour-a-day care with medication monitoring.

We recently heard from Susan, whose son was a long-time cafe guest. She wrote, "Thank you for feeding my son during the years he was missing. I finally found him and he's now medicated for his schizophrenia and clean! ITS A MIRACLE!!!!!! Thank you I would not have him back if he had starved out there!"

Your support makes our life-saving services possible. When people thank us, they are really thanking you.



L.B. sits alone with a tarp on the sidewalk.



Oliver in the kitchen.

Heroes Among Us

Shoutout to Oliver who volunteered to cook breakfast during a week of terrible ice storms in Portland. Oliver and other residents stepped up to keep the cafe going when icy roads kept most staff home. And so many volunteers braved the slick streets to ensure people could get food and warm clothing at Blanchet House.

EVERYDAY HERO

Despite a week of weather challenges, we served a total of 6,329 meals. That's a bittersweet accomplishment as you surely understand because every plate served represents someone without access to hot meals.

It's so important that our cafe remains open during the worst weather when it's often the only refuge for people experiencing homelessness. The temperatures were so low that a meal guest died from suspected hypothermia in a tent. Her friend came to tell us because he didn't know where else to go to share his tears and heartbreak. He knew that the staff and residents at Blanchet House would care.

Staying in our residential program downtown and helping with meal services gives residents purpose. It's a special community and we're so thankful for them and our volunteers. Together they brought so much relief.

Clothes Needed

We recently gave out 172 coats and sweatshirts in one hour during lunch. On cold and wet days, the line for clothes is longer than the line for food. It's hard to keep up with the need for large sizes.

CLOTHING CLOSET

Often the only items left are small women's sizes. Yes, we serve many women but they also select men's items because they are good for layering. And women tend to choose darker colors for safety so that they can hide more easily at night

If you can donate large coats or sweatshirts we will give them out ASAP as the need is high. Many people are asking for dry socks, too.

Please drop off Mon-Sat, 8-10:30 a.m. or 1:30-4 p.m. at 310 NW Glisan. You can also shop our Amazon wish list which you can find on our website or by Googling "Blanchet House Amazon wish list." Thank you so much.



A guest looks for a coat during lunch.



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A Meal. A Home. A Future.

Super Mailman

Our new mail carrier, Johnny, signed up to deliver our route in Old Town after noticing no other carrier wanted it.

There can be disturbing and sad scenes as he goes about his route in "Skid Row." But as a previous meal guest of our cafe, he has an understanding of and empathy for people suffering on our streets.

"When I ate here, I was trying to make my rent. It's humbling. Being able to nourish yourself here gives you more time and energy to build yourself in the right direction. It's one less thing to worry about. Now, I'm trying to find ways to return the favor."

Thank you, Johnny! We're so grateful you're in our community.

EVERYDAY
HERO



Another Day Out in the Cold

We're seeing an influx of people seeking us out for a simple warm meal and dry clothing. It's become all too common for there to still be a line around the building halfway through the meal hour for entry to the cafe. This means fewer chances for second helpings because seating is limited.

Also, people don't want to leave the cafe after they finish their plate. And can you blame them? It's so cold and wet out. Many have nowhere to go.

Often people show up to our cafe so hungry while experiencing a mental health episode or suffering from addiction. It's a miserable state of being that only compassion can fix. Every day we offer food, clothes, referrals to shelter, and a safe place to stay while you take the steps needed to heal. Your support makes our services possible. Please help us keep going strong in 2024 with a donation today. Every dollar helps. Thank you.