



Case Statement
OutsidersInn
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OutsidersInn was founded in January 2015 by Adam Kravitz, a long time resident of Southwest Washington, who spent six of those years homeless on the streets of Vancouver, WA. The organization maintains a website (OutsidersInn.org) and Facebook pages ([Homeless in Vancouver WA & OutsidersInn.org](#)).

An introductory note from the Founder, Adam Kravitz: Due to many circumstances beyond my control and some within in, I lived for six years on the streets of Vancouver as a homeless person (temporarily displaced as I like to refer to it.) I was born into a family of parents who were addicts. At a young age I lost 3 family members to drug addiction. I had a relationship with a woman who got pregnant and just when I had gotten attached to the child (not even knowing if he/she was mine) she left and hasn't returned. I am still looking for them. Again, looking for a relationship I was with another woman who had a child and they were both tragically killed in a fire. At the time I had a full time job at a restaurant and was living in a house, but through the grief something snapped, and I walked away from it all to begin a life on the streets trying to escape and survive at the same. God got ahold of me during that six year period. It was humiliating the way people treated me because I never thought of myself as someone who deserved to be treated that way, but after all the looks and judgments from being on constant display, you start to believe that you are. God kept telling me that there was a road back and after six years, I found my way to it. Now I am an advocate for people who are temporarily displaced in their lives. I want to bring faith based organizations and community members into an understanding of and relationship with people who may seem different but really are not much unlike you or I.

§ **Mission, Values, Vision**

The overall goal of ***OutsidersInn*** is to use a multi-pronged approach to tackling the problem of homelessness, separation and discrimination through advocacy, awareness and support.

- Advocating for the homeless community with community partners, faith based organizations and service providers.
- Awareness through social media and presentations and events in the community.
- Support by partnering with agencies to be available for one on one peer support and resource navigation, as well as needs assessment and goal planning with continued follow up.

§ **Major accomplishments & Milestones in the organization's history**

- Contracting with the Council of the Homeless to do Housing Assessments

- Developing policy and procedures concerning due process of handling homeless person's belonging and camps.
- Advocating to in bring the voice of the homeless to the table regarding the upcoming Day Center. We completed approximately 150 real time surveys with the homeless community so they had input into the services the Day Center will be providing. --The effects of this kind of communication and engagement have deep and lasting results in not only the project going on, but also within the homeless community itself. Helping this community to be heard and listened to is the core of our work.
- Working closely with agency leaders to support the efforts in finding viable solutions, especially in regards to the need for a single women and couples shelter as brought to light by the surveys.
- Collecting food and clothing donations and distributing those donations straight to the people most in need. We are currently working on a Keep the Home Fires Burning winter Items collection drive.
- Providing "anytime" support and resource navigation through social media and our website, as well as face-to-face peer support daily. These last two points are part of the core efforts of ***OutsidersInn*** by developing trust and providing basic needs.
- Working on outreach and engagement for the Housing Solutions Center of Council for the Homeless as an ongoing effort to improve outreach to harder to reach individuals who we might never be able to reach if we didn't breach the gap of uncertainty and mistrust that currently exists.
- Working with agency directors to develop a training and development program that includes community health, trauma, recovery and peer support. -- This is one of the most vital and exciting aspects of our program right now. Not only will this help to shape and mold our own organization but we are hoping to make this into a model we can duplicate to help existing organizations throughout the state.
- Collaborating with faith-based leaders on a number of issues including being an active member of a committee trying to coordinate a possible safe car camping project, working with the inter-faith coalition to end homelessness, and supporting the different organizations in their humanitarian and housing programs. Included in those organizations are the Live Love Center of Living Hope, Grace Ministries, In His Care, According To His Word, the Rock, and of course, Friends of the Carpenter.
- Organizing events to bring people from all walks of life together for fun and unity. These events have included a recent Art Show and a Back to School Party, and plans are being discussed for even more future events.
- Establishing a partnership with Facing Homelessness of Seattle as a mentor for our Facebook journalism

§ Demographic information

OutsidersInn serves those people who are experiencing setbacks and have temporarily been displaced from housing, who live in Southwestern Washington region with a focus on Vancouver in Clark County.

§ Description of a real person who benefits from the organization

OutsidersInn serves displaced persons needing assistance in navigating the resources in the Vancouver, WA area in order to find safe, stable housing. We post stories and images in our Facebook **Homeless in Vancouver WA** of real people who are trying to avert and / or navigate homelessness.

You can read the story of Jessie & Vince who are presently both in separate programs and separate housing and never had to spend an actual night on the streets due to the help of **OutsidersInn**.

<https://www.facebook.com/HomelessInVancouverWA/photos/pb.882069388536732.-2207520000.1446764669./905482932862044/?type=3&theater>

§ What are the particular needs of the clients being served?

People who are living on the streets need people to treat them well and to care about their lives - just as anyone would need. They are experiencing setbacks and need people with resources to come alongside of them and to care. The main thing needed is shelter. If shelter cannot be provided, they need other options, particularly a safe place to sleep at night free of intrusion. Safe tent camp sites or safe car camping sites top the list of needs.

The basic needs are tents and tarps, sleeping bags and blankets, warm coats and gloves and backpacks and especially restroom and showering facilities. Many folks who are living outside hold down full time jobs so they need a place to freshen up before heading to work. For those who don't work, they need a place to go during the day to look for work and receive services.

Everyone who cannot afford housing needs to save whatever money they earn for housing. So the needs of displaced persons are all of the things you might think of in trying to manage your life - that hopefully they can be provided for free until they get their feet on the ground. They need the basic necessities like food, clothing, pharmaceutical, items for their children such as school supplies.

§ What challenges do the people served face?

In addition to basic shelter needs and sanitation needs, many folks who are homeless struggle with one or more challenges of addiction, mental health, and childhood or adult trauma (ACES). **OutsidersInn** is specifically suited to address these needs through a model of peer support. Having experienced the trauma of being raised in an unhealthy environment and having to navigate the streets, the staff of **OutsidersInn** is uniquely qualified to build trust among the clients served. The staff are trained Peer Support and Community Health Work specialists that have personally experienced homelessness and the navigation of the area's resources.

§ What pressing problems does the organization address?

OutsidersInn supports the needs of both the houseless community and the service provider organizations that serve them. The pressing problems are creating partnerships with groups willing to take on the expense and inconvenience of shelter, emergency shelter, places for people to park their cars or set up their tents - like safe parking lots. Other pressing problems are finding people in the community and faith based organizations willing to get to know people who have been displaced. Often there are stereotypes built up around the situation they find themselves in and it's difficult to find assistance from the general public; and unfortunately government resources are on the decline when the need for services is on the

rise.

§ What programs does the organization offer?

- Bringing peer support to the people outside.
- Advocating for the homeless community in public meetings.
- Advocating for the people and agencies that provide services for the homeless.
- Building awareness in person and online about housing issues.
- Bringing people together through healthy communication.
- Changing perceptions & stopping separation.
- Providing encouragement and inspiring hope.

§ What is the organization's reputation?

OutsidersInn is quickly gaining credibility among organizations like Council for the Homeless that are leading the community's initiatives as well as other partnering organizations. We have been invited to the table to discuss the initiatives in the works for Safe Car Camping and Safe Tent Camping. We have been invited to be trained on the Housing Solutions Center Assessment Tool and asked to do outreach with the homeless community to build trust and bring them in for services.

§ What evidence can be offered pertaining to the organization's stability?

The volume of Resource Navigation appointments being utilized has tripled since beginning less than a year ago. We currently have commitments to be at 5 service locations each week. We also coordinate donated items to be given directly to displaced individuals through volunteer efforts within the community.

§ What evidence can be offered pertaining to the fiscal responsibility—for example, a year or more of deficit-free operations?

OutsidersInn is a 501 (c)(3) being fiscally sponsored under the Consumer Voices are Born organization with a board of directors. Although we do not have a year yet under our belts, we have kept our expenses very low by accepting donations for the services we provide while not taking a salary. Our long term goals are to be contracted by service providers for outreach and peer support and to raise private donations to meet the needs (as addressed above) of the clients we serve.

§ Who are your partners? How are you different?

OutsidersInn homeless advocacy work is fully endorsed by Council for the Homeless, Share, and Consumer Voices are Born. We are unique because we focus on a peer support and communication from a place of real-lived experience.