



History

Dignity Village was birthed on December 16, 2000, when 8 homeless people pitched 4 tents on public property as an outgrowth of several months of meetings of homeless people and supporters from the community.

The meetings were hosted by *street roots, inc.* The project, originally named “Camp Dignity,” was both a straight-forward response to the basic needs of street people and a way to raise public awareness of some of the critical issues surrounding homelessness – particularly related to the criminalization of homeless people who, for various reasons, do not “fit” into the current shelter system. In Portland there are only 400-600 beds to serve about 3000 homeless people.

Over time, the camp has steadily evolved into a vibrant urban “village” of about 60 intentional residents, occupying about 45 tents. Despite its brief history, 6 forced moves, and numerous other obstacles, the Village has taken on a dynamic life of its own.

Mission

The mission of Dignity Village is to create a “green” sustainable urban village for those who are currently seeking shelter but are unable to find it.

We feel it is necessary to establish a community based living facility where people living on the streets can have their basic needs met in a stable, sanitary environment, free of violence, drugs and alcohol, until they are able to access another form of housing.



Core Values

Dignity’s **self-governance** and **self-help** approach to homelessness create an environment where formerly homeless people support one another in **partnership** with supporters from the larger housed community. Building upon its largely private support base, the Village is steadily moving towards complete economic self-sufficiency through development of DigsVille Farm, the leather work co-op, and other worker owned micro enterprises.

How it Works

Homeless people come to the Village for a variety of reasons, including shelter overflow or an aversion to conventional shelters. Over 800 people have transitioned through the Village since its inception. It is estimated that some just stay a few days or weeks (25%), some stay several months (55%), and some stay on a more permanent basis to become part of the Core Operations Team (20%). Many of those who stay for longer periods succeed in finding permanent housing.

To date, over 115 former Dignity residents have moved on to secure permanent housing. Dignity itself hopes to purchase a permanent site to develop a green village of formerly homeless people sharing common values of sustainability and self-determination. Our vision and long-term goals are outlined in detail in its proposal to the City of Portland that describes plans for the “staged development” of its permanent site.

The proposal can be viewed at www.dignityvillage.org.





Dignity Village

Do your part for Dignity today.

- 1) **Call** (503) 803-1348! We want you to be our supporter. Talk with us and share your ideas. Come and join us. Be a part of history as it happens!
- 2) **See** what we're up to out here! Go to our website (dignityvillage.org). Read all about us and tell us what you think!
- 3) **Visit!** You are welcome to come out anytime. Call for a personal tour of our thriving community.
- 4) **Ask** about our presentations! Email our Outreach Coordinator, Tim McCarthy at tim97211@yahoo.com



Out of the Doorways