

Summer 2017



Issue #11

The STAR Project's **Mission** is to provide persons being released from incarceration with the essential tools to successfully reintegrate into the community as productive, contributing members.

Our **Vision** is to increase community safety and reduce recidivism by assisting persons to successfully transition from incarceration to the community.

We welcome your comments!

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Homelessness in Walla Walla: Finding Solutions within Our Community

By Becky Turner, Executive Director

A great number of community members seek services through The STAR Project because we provide affordable housing for people with felony convictions. The STAR Housing program is by far the biggest draw for people seeking service through our organization. Our Housing program is successful because it is closely intertwined with our Case Management program: STAR clients must be actively engaged with the Case Manager in order to be eligible for housing. We require clients to remain clean and sober, to give back to the Walla Walla community by engaging in volunteer community service activities, and by programming in one-on-one or group appointments with their Case Manager.

The former Get Off the Road encampment for people experiencing homelessness and the subsequent move to a city-supported Sleep Camp have brought the issue of homelessness into focus for many community members. The STAR Project has always been, and will continue to be, engaged in efforts to reduce and end homelessness within the Walla Walla Valley. STAR's clients—people with felony convictions—are frequently screened out of affordable housing due to their conviction histories.

STAR's Housing program is supported in part by a county grant aimed at reducing and ending homelessness in our community. STAR staff members sit on a variety of local boards and coalitions designed to tackle homelessness. We cannot be successful without community support. If you are a landlord, and you are willing to give tenants a second chance at rebuilding their lives, please consider renting to The STAR Project. We have a variety of landlord incentives and program requirements that provide both landlords and tenants with the structure they need to be successful. If we work together, we can end homelessness in Walla Walla.



STAR Housing: *Landlord Incentives Help Reduce Homelessness*

By Christen Betts, Housing Coordinator

The STAR Project is a member of the Coordinated Entry system for people experiencing homelessness in Walla Walla. Along with our partners at the Blue Mountain Action Council and the YWCA, STAR receives financial support for our housing program through the Department of Commerce's Consolidated Homeless Grant.

In addition to providing qualifying STAR clients with rental subsidies, STAR is also able to provide landlords with incentives to rent to our clients. These incentives include having STAR as the leaseholder, which ensures timely payment of rent at the beginning of each month. STAR also covers the cost of repairing damage to units, and provides the landlords with a direct line of contact with staff in order to address concerns with tenants. STAR is also a proud supporter of, and participant in, the Crime-Free Rental Housing educational series for local landlords. For more information on crime-free rental housing in Walla Walla, visit <http://www.wallawallawa.gov/depts/police/rentalhousing>.

STAR also requires housing clients to maintain sobriety, regularly volunteer at events such as our weekly group dinner, and participate in programming with the STAR Case Manager. This multi-pronged approach keeps STAR clients on the right path; most of STAR's clients are self-supporting within 90 days of entering housing. In addition to being self-supporting, clients who have stable and affordable housing have a significantly lower recidivism rate than their peers without stable housing.

As the STAR Housing Coordinator, one of my duties is to engage in landlord outreach. STAR is always looking for new units to add to our housing inventory. If you are a landlord—or if you know a landlord—please consider giving people with felony convictions a second chance by renting to them. If you are interested in joining up with STAR and enjoying some of our landlord incentives, please give us a call today at (509) 525-3612.

Group Dinners on Wednesdays: *Bringing the Community Together*

By Andy Owens, Executive Assistant

In May of this year, STAR went back to weekly group dinners. We had been doing these group dinners once a month for a few years, but decided to return to a weekly schedule as a result of increased program funding from a successful grant application in December 2016.

STAR is pleased to announce that attendance has been steadily rising ever since we returned to the weekly schedule. We are seeing more and more families, single parents, and individuals every week. Weekly group dinner provides an opportunity for STAR clients to connect with each other, staff, and volunteers over a meal.

We would like to take a moment to thank our Board Members **Annie Capestany** and **Marc Goff** for cooking all of these delicious and nutritious meals. We could not do this without the help and support from STAR's amazing volunteers. If you are interested in donating to or volunteering at one of our weekly dinners, please send me an email at info@thestarproject.us or call me at the office at (509) 525-3612. We would love to see you there!



Amazon Smile: Supporting The STAR Project

By Andy Owens, Executive Assistant

Did you know that you can support your favorite 501(c)(3) non-profit organization through your purchases at Amazon? The Amazon Smile program is a simple and automatic way for you to support The STAR Project every time you shop—at no cost to you!



All you need to do is visit the Amazon Smile website, designate “Star Project in Walla Walla” as the charity you are supporting, make your purchases as you normally would, and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to The STAR Project. These funds are donated directly to STAR on a quarterly basis.

We re-initiated our Amazon Smile account at the beginning of the year, and we have steadily received donations ever since. If you are interested in supporting The STAR Project through the Amazon Smile program, please visit www.smile.amazon.com.

Client Snapshot: Agencies Working Together to House a Family

By Jackie Scholl, Case Manager

When Mr. and Mrs. Jones (names have been changed) came into the STAR office, they were living in their van with two small children. They were both working, but were waiting for a paycheck at the end of the month before they could afford first, last, and deposit on a new rental unit. This family was homeless, but they were “invisible” to the community. They came to STAR looking for help.

Through combined efforts between The STAR Project and our community partners at the Blue Mountain Action Council, we were able to work together to get this family housed.

Get Involved!

There are a number of ways to help The STAR Project:

- Donate to STAR online at <https://goo.gl/SyAAb1>
- Contact us if you are interested in renting to our clients
- Contact us if you are interested in employing our clients
- Contact us if you are interested in joining our Board of Directors
- Volunteer for our Adopt-a-Highway program
- Contact us if you are interested in helping with our Wednesday night dinner
- Contact us if you are interested in becoming a mentor
- Visit <http://smile.amazon.com> to donate through your regular Amazon purchases
- Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheSTARProjectWW
- Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TheSTARProjWW
- Sign up for our newsletter online at <http://eepurl.com/b3nEkv>

Thanks to all of our donors, coordinating agencies, staff, and supporters! We can’t do it without your help.

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For more information, or
to donate, please visit:

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We have transitioned to e-newsletters!
Please sign up at <http://eepurl.com/b3nEky>.

[Mail Merge Field]

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