

WhatsBrewing | Portland Congregation

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Carla Long, Daniel Rose, Becky Lee, Tim Polly, Jan Polly, Seclenda Poynter

Carla Long 00:26

Hello, and welcome to the *Project Zion Podcast*. I'm your host, Carl Long, and today you're listening to "What's Brewing", which is a series we have that talks about all kinds of cool missional activities that happen all over the Church. And I am so, so super excited today to be with this amazing group of people from the Portland congregation. There's about five people who you're going to be listening to today, and just want to say, "Hi", to everyone. Hi.

Daniel Rose 00:53

Hello.

Group Response 00:54

Hi.

Carla Long 00:55

And you're gonna get to know these beautiful, wonderful people in just a second, but I've just heard so many wonderful things about the Portland congregation and I was just talking to this group, but, right before we started recording, and I'm like, I heard wonderful things, but I have no idea what these wonderful things are. So, I am going to be an avid listener as well and start learning about what's going on up in Portland. So, let's do a few introductions. Daniel, why don't you go first?

Daniel Rose 01:19

Hello, I am Daniel Rose. I'm the pastor for the Portland Community of Christ congregation.

Carla Long 01:25

Thanks, Daniel. Jan.

Jan Polly 01:27

My name is Jan Polly, and I am a member of the Portland congregation, but I'm also one of the coordinators for a group that we have meeting called Family Promise Metro East. And along with that I am a liaison between that organization and the congregation.

Carla Long 01:46

Oh, wow, that sounds busy. Thanks, Jan. Tim, what about you?

Tim Polly 01:49

My name is Tim Polly. I serve as a congregational support minister or a work attached with the Mission Center, and I serve in the congregation as an evangelist and just do what I can to help support whatever's going on.

Carla Long 02:05

Thanks, Tim. Seclenda.

Seclenda Poynter 02:08

Hi, my name is Seclenda Poynter, and I am part of Community of Christ. I'm on the pastor team. I'm also a very excited board member of Family Promise Metro East.

Carla Long 02:21

Seclenda, it sounds like you're a very excited, just member of life. So, I'm very excited to get to know you. And last but not least, Becky.

Becky Lee 02:28

Hi, everybody, this is Becky Lee. I am also a member of the Community of Christ, although this is my opportunity to come out on this podcast and say, I'm a really terrible attendee of church, but very actively engaged in our congregation, and I'm excited to talk to you about that today. And I, in addition to being a member, serve as the board chair for Family Promise of Metro East,

Carla Long 02:48

Becky, there's no need for confessions on the podcast, but, I mean, you can do it if you really want to. But thank you so much to everyone, for introducing yourself. So, I'm just really going to open up this question to all five of you. What is happening in the Portland Community of Christ group? I'm assuming that I'm going to hear a little bit more about Family Promise of Metro East at some point on this. So, what's happening in the Portland congregation?

Daniel Rose 03:12

So, I think the short answer to that question would be we have partnered with a nonprofit called Family Promise. It is a nonprofit that is all over the country. They have lots of chapters, different pockets all over the United States. The nonprofit is an organization that helps coordinate a network of churches within cities and communities that partner with each other to address houselessness for the community. And so, we've partnered with about, it's close to 11 or 12 other denominations within the Portland area, where we are serving the needs of up to four families in our area. There's a lot more details to this that I'll let our other more detail-oriented people explain, but essentially what the congregation is doing is meeting and addressing the needs of our community and feeling like we are being called to interact with this demographic of people who are suffering needlessly and using what resources that we have with space and with time to help alleviate some of that suffering.

Carla Long 04:25

That sounds amazing. Yes, Seclenda.

Seclenda Poynter 04:28

One of the things that our church, Community of Christ, did, we took part of our church where we used to have our classrooms that, we still have classrooms for our kids, and we revamped that whole area to make it Family Promise Metro East as a temporary site for our day center. We temporarily redid the whole right side of our building to have about four rooms now: reading room, a play room, a baby room, and a area that everybody can be in, but we also have a director and a case manager. But you know, what's the best thing is that we are taking a little bit out of homelessness in our community. These are families, women, men, you know, with children who we are taking off the street. And to be honest, in our community, we have over 1000 kids who are living homeless right now. So, for us to just take part in that homelessness is pretty awesome, and I'm excited.

Becky Lee 05:25

Just gonna follow on what Seclenda said so beautifully, which is that our city, Portland, like many other cities, is really struggling with a number of folks that are living either with housing instability or sleeping outside. And I think what Portland Community of Christ has done, it's say, we're not just going to sit here in concern, we're going to be part of the solution. And so the church has made a really substantial commitment to both dedicate a big portion of the space for the day center, which is a safe place for families to be during the day where they can access case management that Family Promise of Metro use provides on site, as well as laundry that the congregation had put in in previous years, and showers that the congregation had put in, in previous years, computers, and frankly, just a safe place to be when folks aren't at work or at school during the day. The Portland Community of Christ has become the Family Promise of Metro East co-located center, right. We're now using a good chunk of the building on a daily basis, and four weeks of the year on a nightly basis, to make sure that families experiencing homelessness have a safe place to sleep at night, have more meals and have some connection to community that we all get an opportunity to provide as part of this work.

Seclenda Poynter 06:34

We have churches that are hosts, and then we have support churches, and it's all in 20 churches right now, but we're still reaching out to other churches because we need more. It's a ongoing process. We are in the beginnings to be said we're not really a year in but it's so fantastic. We've already had six families cycle through our system already.

Becky Lee 06:54

Yeah.

Seclenda Poynter 06:54

And now we have four more that we're working with right now...

Becky Lee 06:57

Yeah, I think that's about right.

Seclenda Poynter 06:58

...four more at this time. In our community most of the families that we have that we're seeing is a BIPOC community, is everyone the families are of every color, but we seem to be getting a lot more people of color. And so, it just really sad to be for homelessness in general. But it saddens me that a particular population is more hit than any other population there is. And so that's probably one of my passions is not just homeless in general, but I am, but also that they need to see the face of someone who is like them and also who is volunteering. And that's, that's kind of the community that I'm trying to reach out to also. We do have a lot of volunteers, but I'm really trying to reach out for those people who look like the people that we're serving.

Becky Lee 07:41

Absolutely right. I mean, racist systems and structures that have existed for years and continue in this country mean that homelessness disproportionately impacts people of color, and we're seeing that firsthand in our shelter.

Carla Long 07:54

So, all of this sounds just absolutely incredible. So let me make sure that I understand. And maybe we can back up and just jump into how did you start this? Daniel.

Daniel Rose 08:03

I think that this has probably been at least a five-year process. It has taken a really long time. There was a similar program called Daybreak and that we were a part of. It pretty much matched the same model of networking with other churches. But in around 2018, I think, the program just kind of got over extended. There was some disconnect that was happening with the shelter that we were working with. And so there was this very critical moment that kind of happened where all the churches who were involved with the Daybreak Shelter idea, more or less, had an opportunity to reorganize and try and do this again, in a different way. I think the Daybreak folks connected us to Family Promise, it's a national organization, and so that I think there was a momentum to get us started with the closure of the Daybreak system into a Family Promise system. The trouble was, is that it was very slow going. It took a very long time. There were lots of moving parts. There were lots of congregations that, at no fault of their own, kind of felt uncomfortable with how things were moving, and so, we had people back away and then become less involved, and there were parts that were tricky. Well, Community of Christ kind of was really interested in getting this off the ground, and so, we, despite all of these setbacks, and these, just very slow-going process, and I really do have to commend Beck and everybody here but particularly Becky. Becky was determined to make this happened. And after five years of dreaming and exploring and going around to other communities within the area to see how this program functions, because there's Family Promise chapters in Beaverton and some of the other cities that are around the Portland area, that are flourishing and are very successful in what they were doing. And after a very long time of trying to get this going, the momentum started to pick up in a way that was more substantial. And the tricky part of getting congregations on board to participate in this is that you need a certain amount of momentum to feel legitimate and to feel like the churches can latch on to something that this is like a real deal thing that you're doing. And so, as that started growing, and it started to becoming more apparent, we came to this moment where we realized that we really needed a day center to feel and to look legitimate enough to continue to get this going, otherwise it's just going to

continue to spin our wheels a little bit, basically. And so, we decided to really go in on it, basically. And we approached the congregation, Portland congregation, and gave them this idea and said, we've got these classrooms, they were being utilized, but we were just looking around our building and I think we just came to the realization that we could be utilizing this space differently and that there was definitely room for everybody involved. There was room to have the day center and still have room for our kids, right, and to have the Sunday school classrooms and stuff and to have a nursery and have the resources that we would have regardless. But to use those classrooms and that nursery space on the right side of our building in a way that would be beneficial for getting Family Promise off the ground, to make it feel more legitimate to make it feel like the momentum is there for other congregations and other denominations and churches to see, "Oh, this is legit. This is the real deal. We're really doing the work here." So, we brought it to the congregation, we discerned, we discerned about discerning. We, we took a long time to really consider you know, is this something that we could do? Is this something that is within our capacity to share and to give? And after maybe five or six months of really sitting with the question and exploring, the congregation overwhelmingly was like, yeah, let's do it. Why not? Let's give it a try. And so, we did. We got the ball rolling, and we remodel all these spaces. And there's just been so much work going into the rooms in the day center space, and they're just really pleasant environments for our families to just be, to just kind of relax and to let your guard down a little bit, which I'm just thrilled about, honestly. And I say this all the time with our folks, I help with the volunteering and stuff, the major lifting and the major working is everybody else here. I kind of just facilitated the conversation initially and let the ball go from there. It's just been really enjoyable to see how much the congregation has responded, and how much work the congregation had. There were lots of rearranging of stuff. We had to move things around. And we had a work day, and this is the biggest moment that I realized that this is going to happen. We had a workday and I wasn't expecting a lot of people to be there, maybe have two or three. We had 10 people show up. We were moving stuff. We were putting things in storage. We were taking things to Goodwill. We were getting the space ready to remodel and bring the building up to speed with doing this day center thing. And I just sat back and was like, this is the coolest thing ever. This is moving in a way that I didn't predict. And I'm just really grateful for all the volunteers.

Carla Long 13:50

Daniel, I have had those moments in congregations too and I'm sure everyone here has and you're just like, oh, my gosh!

Daniel Rose 13:56

It's just great.

Carla Long 13:57

It's just a moment. Oh, I love those moments. You build your ministry on those moments, and the congregation builds their ministry on their moments. So, thank you for explaining about that. That was a really great explanation how it got started. Becky, I think you wanted to say something.

Becky Lee 14:11

Yeah, thank you. This is so fun to think back over the last three years.

Daniel Rose 14:14

It's been a while, right? It's been crazy.

Becky Lee 14:17

Yeah, it's been a full on leap of faith by both the Portland congregation as well as those of us that are volunteering with Family Promise. So, I just want to make sure it gets said that when you say, Carla, how did this start? This started with intentional decisions many years ago by the Portland Community of Christ congregation, that we would be outwardly facing that we would be a partner, an active partner in that community to address the suffering that is happening right here in our community and with Daniel, and Jan, and Tim, and Seclenda, and many more people's leadership. That's why we're here today. So, I don't want that to go unsaid. For a little bit more context on Family Promise of Metro East, so we are our own 501(c)(3) nonprofit that really did start with a lot of leadership from the Portland Community of Christ congregation when Daybreak shelter ended, to say the same thing still exists in our community. There's still too many people sleeping outside, and our building is still empty at night, and in some ways underutilized, right? And I think that's not different from what a lot of congregations across the country are wrestling with, right? We've got spaces in our building. What is the best use for those during all of the hours of the day because these are incredible gifts to us? A group of us got together from a few different congregations, but with significant leadership from Community of Christ, to say, should we form this new nonprofit here to support families in northeast and southeast Portland addressing homelessness? And made the decision to do that. And it has been a three and a half to four year long journey to do some of the things I've never done before, like start a new nonprofit organization, and cold call a bunch of churches and say, "Hey, will you join us in addressing homelessness?" And it's been pretty incredible. So, what is happening now for Family Promise of Metro East is that we serve three to five families at a time, no more than 14 folks, who are currently experiencing homelessness, with shelter, case management, and support as they do the work to get back into permanent housing. That shelter is provided in a network. So, what we're working to build are 13 host congregations that provide overnight shelter for families four weeks a year. And so, our commitment as Community of Christ is that not only are we the day center where families are during the day, when they're not at overnight sites, we're also a host congregation, which means that four weeks a year and a little more right now, as we're recruiting other churches, we're overnight hosting families, providing meals, and activities, and overnight volunteers who are sleeping at the church during our hosting week to make sure that folks have the support that they need, and we've got a safe place for people to be. Jan is our volunteer coordinator. I'm going to stop talking and let you talk a little bit about how you're partnering with support congregations to fill those shifts during our hosting weeks, and to coordinate some of the other activities of Family Promise.

Jan Polly 17:03

I think one of the things that I have gotten most out of this whole process is the fact that we are working with some amazing congregations and some amazing volunteers. And we really didn't have a choice of who our support partner was going to be. It just kind of happened. And we are partnered with a Presbyterian Church, Park City, Presbyterian, and it's just such a wonderful group of people. We just come together. We're getting to know each other real well, and they're just new friends, and with a commonality of Jesus Christ in our lives. You know, we're all working for that mission of helping the houseless people of our community. It's been quite a journey. And I was not really a part of the journey

that Daniel and Becky have talked about, other than being a member of the congregation. But when I started really getting excited about Family Promise was when it was proposed to our congregation, and then that discernment time, and when we voted on it, it was like my mind just went, wowzie! What have we got to do? You know, and it's just like, okay, we got to clean those classrooms. Now, just a little bit of history there. Those classrooms had items that had been stored in those classrooms. I mean, we were using them as our children's classrooms for Sunday, and the items that we had stored in there, there were some boxes that had never been opened from years ago in the early '70s that had come from other churches when the Portland congregation, at that time was called the Metropole, when that was developed. And so, it was kind of fun going through all this stuff. But I tell you, we really weeded things out, and we recycled whole lot of stuff. And that was very freeing to do that. But we had to do that in order to get that space that we were having Family Promise create the day center in, to clean that out. And so huge group of people came in and I mean, we had, I don't know how many days of doing this, but it was several, probably 20 days during the course of several months, that we went in and cleaned these rooms and it got done. And then Becky and her team came in. Seclenda was a big part of the reconstructing of that space, painting, and they put flooring in, and they've created a beautiful place for the families. One of the things I did want to address too was how a day would be for the families. And what happens is that during the daytime they are at the day center and they will work, the children will go to school, the mothers and fathers sometimes walk them to school. They sometimes ride the bus to school. They don't always go to schools who are local, so there may be a distance. We've even had a family have a taxi provide to pick up the children to take to school. That takes up a lot of their time in the morning. And then the parents, some of them work. Some of them do not work, and they are at the day center. And they are working that whole time with our director and our social worker, which we call a navigator, Layasia. And they work with them in getting the things done that they need to do in order to get housing, and what that looks like, and how that happens. And that's such an important part, that they get that support, and they have a lot of organizations that they partner with. And then in the evening time, we have a bus. We've partnered with Ride Connection, and we have a mini bus that it holds 14 people. And that's the max number of people that our facility can have is 14. They then will pick them up at the day center, which is our congregation, and then they take them to the host congregation for that week. And we change host congregations on a weekly basis, sometimes two weeks. And then they are dropped off at that facility, and they go in and they are provided a meal. They're provided, like Becky was saying, some activities and then a safe place to sleep. And then in the morning that's repeated. They get up, the bus picks them up and brings some back to the day center. So that's kind of how a day would look like. There is a kitchen upstairs in our facility, so they have that available for their lunches, or snacks and that. They can have their own food up there in that area. That's kind of how the day goes. That's what I do.

Carla Long 21:49

That's really helpful, Jan, because that sounds like A) a lot of coordination between you and other churches, just always making sure that there's a place to have dinner. That sounds really awesome, though. And really helpful that church member has to sleep in a building if there's people there, right, two people have to sleep. So, if everyone who's part of the program is sleeping in the same place, you only have to have those two people? Is that right? So, everybody's sleeping in the same building every time? Is that true?

Jan Polly 22:15

That's true. We try to have each family have a little privacy in their sleeping quarters, so they have a safe place, and not only that, but a private place that they can go to in the evening, just to get away. Everybody needs that kind of a space. But in the coordinating of the weeks, we have every host congregation has at least one coordinator. Some have several coordinators. And what they do is they would set the schedule up as to who's going to bring the food, who's going to help clean up, who is going to help with activities, and who's going to be the people to sleep over that night. The one task that is the hardest to fill is the sleepover. However, that's the most, easiest task there is, to get there in the evening time. And you of course associate a little bit. But most of the time during the school year, especially, I'm finding that our families are in their rooms, get ready for bed by eight o'clock, and then you have your evening, and then you sleep over. We do have to follow the fire marshal rules, and there's some, some that with our sleepovers and some of our churches. I know we have such a great group of volunteers. When we host at Community of Christ, we have volunteers that come from our congregation and our support congregation, Rose City Presbyterian Church, as well as we call non-affiliated volunteers. In other words, the people who really are not affiliated with any of the congregations, but they're people who are just interested in helping. And we've had several people that have just come to Michelle, our director, and just say, "Hey, I've read about this. I've heard about this. I'm excited. What can I do to help?" They get hooked up and they are rovers, I guess you could say. They go from different congregation to different congregation and volunteer and help. So, it's just not all churches. We do have I think one group that are members of kind of the non-affiliated, they're just friends of friends. I'm not sure actually where they actually host. It's Warner Pacific, so it has something to do...

Becky Lee 24:17

Yes.

Jan Polly 24:17

...with the college.

Becky Lee 24:18

Yeah.

Jan Polly 24:19

That's where they host. Okay.

Becky Lee 24:20

Yeah, they, they're a support partner.

Jan Polly 24:22

So anyway, it's just wonderful. So, you don't have to be a church to be involved, could be any community organization or a lot of different options there.

Carla Long 24:31

This sounds amazing, just sounds so incredible. And my heart is overflowing with gratitude to the Portland congregation for doing all of that. That's a lot of work to go into it and a lot of people to say, "Yes, we want to do something," in order for that to happen. So, I'm just overwhelmed by gratitude. I'd love to hear if there are any stories you could tell me about families that have come through, or stories about how it's changed your congregation as Community of Christ. So, any stories that we can hear about families or about the congregation and how life has changed for anyone. Yes, Becky?

Becky Lee 25:06

Yeah, I want to add to what Jan said so that it's clear to folks that are listening, that Family Promise of Metro East is a shelter program, right? It's not a drop in shelter. Families do come in and are accepted into the program, and they're with us until they exit into permanent housing. And so, what we do have is the opportunity to build a relationship with people and also it provides an important construct. I will tell you through my outreach to other congregations, I've met with countless pastors who've said, we really wanted to help people experiencing homelessness, so we started letting someone sleep inside, and now we're not sure what to do, right? And so, it's nice to partner with a program that has case management so that we don't have to be necessarily the experts, right, in how to end homelessness, but that we can use the skills and the strengths that we have, which is meeting people where they're at and serving without judgment and having our hearts there to be able to connect with folks. And that's, I think, one of the most beautiful things about this program. Here's my quick story. So, I was staying overnight one night playing cards with one of the girls that was staying with us. I think she was eight, if I remember, right, eight or nine years old. She said something to me, and I said, "Well, that's because I'm the nicest person in the world," kind of joking. And she said, "No, you're not, Jan Polly is." And it's one of my favorite stories. And I said, you know, what I said to her is, "You're not wrong."

Jan Polly 26:25

One of the things that I have found is, because we have the families for several months normally, is that you do get to know the families, especially with you're working with them a lot. And the kids, they are so hungry for attention. Now, right now we have all mothers and all boys. And so, the boys, not having fathers, they may have fathers in their lives that are active, but we don't see that. But what I do see is I see these little boys, every time Daniel comes down, or any young man, not even young, some of the 60 year old men, they just grab on to these men and just hug 'em and love 'em. And poor Daniel gets so wore out because they chase him and they, all this boy stuff. But it's fun. It's just so fun. But we've had some really great successful stories. We've had one, this was a family of three, and they were from Hawaii at some point in their live, that's, I think, where they grew up, and they were going through the shelter, and they were going to be going back to Hawaii, it was being paid by their family for a funeral or memorial service. And they got back there, and the family says, "Why? Why are you going back? Stay here. We will help you. We will provide for you." And even though that was a story that we did not actually help the person find the housing and an apartment, it was a success story, because this family was able to get the support from their family that was not there when they were here in the States. And that was just so wonderful. We've had other success stories. We had a lady with a child who found an apartment and she did a lot of the work on herself. She just, by herself. She was working part time, and she was bound and determined, before Christmas, to get into an apartment, and she was able to do that. And you get to know these people. And it's hard to see them go in some ways. I mean, you're so happy for them. But this one particular lady, we met up with her after she had moved to her apartment,

she came back to the day center, and I was there, and she said she is the happiest she has been in years, and that life was going wonderful. Her work was going good, her daughter did not have to change schools in the middle of the year, her boyfriend and her were getting along. And the one thing that she told me, she says, "I have to tell you, the thing that kept us going was saying prayer every morning when we got up." And that was a conversation that we had had when they were in the shelter. We don't encourage conversation about Christ. I know that doesn't sound good, but we've let people be where they are, and if they want to initiate that conversation, that's great, we get involved in that conversation. And there was one time I was driving her and we were talking and she mentioned to me, she says, "Well, you know, I used to go to church," and she says, "We're going to start praying every morning. When we get up, that's the first thing we're going to do is we're going to say a prayer for that day." And she did that every day, and she recognized that she was where she was because of the love that Christ has for her. And she acknowledged that she was loved and valued and that that is what made her be where she is. And she was continuing that as they were in their new apartment. To me, that was a great success story.

Carla Long 30:08

Yeah, Tim.

Tim Polly 30:09

Some of the observations that I have, with what I've been involved with as part of this whole process of Family Promise, we were working on it as the pandemic came on. And the pandemic, of course, kind of slowed everything down. And then we went for, what, Daniel, almost two years without even meeting at church? We learned a lot about Zoom. But as we began to be able to meet and to regather, our congregational attendance had decreased by probably 40-45%. And during the pandemic, we had folks who passed away, we had folks who aged out. And so, as we were looking at this, and were thinking about our responsibility, and what discipleship means to us, it seemed rather daunting, because a lot of the go-getters, movers and shakers that used to be in the congregation weren't there anymore. And I think it was very much an act of faith to really look at our facilities, look at what we had. We already had the showers in place. We already had the washer and dryer in place. And so as making the changes of a few classrooms to accommodate this need to really get Family Promise off the ground and going, was something that, the more we looked at it, it was more of a no brainer than anything. But for me, the thing that I find most fascinating, and most evidence of the Spirit at work in this is what has emerged in the ecumenicism, that we are very heavily involved with. Now, if you were to put God on the top of a pedestal as a big ball, and you had people from all over Portland looking at that ball, and there were different aspects of colors and shapes and everything on the ball, every person from their perspective is going to see the ball differently. And so, what they're going to describe is going to be, a person looking from the south is gonna see something different from the person looking from the north. It's the same ball. It's same God. And that's kind of how it is with the congregations that we are partnered with. And when we talk with our brothers and sisters from Christ who come in from those other congregations, what we're seeing is a commitment to service of the Christ. We're trying to do it one family at a time, which has a huge impact when you take all of the things that are going to happen over the period of time that we're able to do this. And we are actually putting hands, feet, and legs into our Enduring Principle of Abolish Poverty and End Suffering. And that's what we're trying to do. And it's all because of how each individual in each congregation has felt the impress of that Holy Spirit. And so, the Holy

Spirit is definitely heavily involved in all of the activity that we see going on. And to me, that's, that's the whole testimony of what makes it work. Our congregation is kind of interesting. It used to be when we were doing the Daybreak Shelter stuff, and then we also had a huge vet program where we were working with homeless vets, and it was all pre-pandemic, anytime you put a signup sheet out, if you really wanted to volunteer and be a part of it, you had to know exactly when the signup sheet was going out, and you had to run fast to get there and sign up, because we have all these people who don't regularly attend church find out about a call in and they've got all the spaces taken before the regular people that go to church have a chance to look at it. We see a lot of that going on even today. And we've done, Jan and I've been involved, we've done hosting, we've done overnight so far at three different congregations, ours is one of them. But it's something that, it's extremely important and it gets those families off the street. It's been cold here. We've had temperatures, just before Christmas down into the teens, and we've had cold winds and everything and we just can't have these families out on the street trying to live in a tent. And we can't do as much as we would love to do, but we're trying. We're trying to make a go of it. And hopefully the Spirit will continue to show us ways. I know that Becky and Michelle have been bringing in people from other congregations. Now that we've got it up and running, they want to see what the day shelter is and they want to see what that's all about. So, they come in and look at it. They want to know about how hosting goes for the hosting congregations. And so, and the more they see and the more that they talk to other congregations who are involved, the more willing they are to become a partner either as a hosting congregation or as a support congregation. And it's all of us working together that's going to make this be very successful and continue to go.

Jan Polly 35:17

Within our congregation, I think it's good to note also that there's many ways to volunteer, and we have found that true, other than being there the evening that we're hosting, or, you know, cleaning out the rooms, and that kind of stuff. We have, on a regular basis, a quilting group that meets every Tuesday morning. And one of the things when we first started this is they came forward, and they said, "We want to make a quilt for every family member. So, when they leave the program, they get to take a brand new quilt home with them." And we have one lady who does quilting at her home. The same thing. She has been making quilts, and giving them to us. So, there's those volunteers who are helping that may not always be recognized as the kind of the behind the scenes kind of people. And it's been absolutely wonderful to have them do that. It's amazing to see the faces on the kids and the parents, but the kids, when they get to pick out their special quilt. And luckily, so far, we've had the right colors, and some of them have had the right designs on them. And you know, one little boy wanted a red one. Well, doggone it, we had a red one. And he was just thrilled to get this red quilt. There's just so many things like that. There's people in the congregations who are not able to come down and help, but they'll make desserts. They'll make homemade desserts and bring them down for the families. We have people that, at the end of our hosting, will take sheets and blankets and all that and take them home and wash them and get them all fresh and ready to go for the next time. A lot of the behind the scenes stuff that goes along, that people are volunteering, other than being right there.

Carla Long 37:08

Well, you have all made me cry about four times on this podcast. I have been so touched by what you're doing and what you continue to do. And I am just thrilled to hear about the wonderful ministry of the Portland Community of Christ. Yes, Becky.

Becky Lee 37:24

I just wanted to acknowledge a couple of things. Our commitment to Family Promise or to restarting a rotational shelter network that engaged our church as well as others in the community, really started when Val Walker was still our pastor, and she didn't blink, right? She didn't hesitate a second to say, "We're in." So, that kind of leadership, and then, that Daniel has taken that leadership on and, as well as our pastoral team, is invaluable, right. I mean, that's, this is how it starts, right, is the openness to conversation from community. And then I also just want to acknowledge too and appreciate the GPNW Bold Moves Program for helping support Family Promise in these formative years and give us some of the financial support that we need to build this ecumenical network of faith communities coming together. So, just really appreciate the leadership from the Church in so many different ways, from people signing up for shifts, to the coordination, to the cleaning, to these grants, and to just really the ability to say, "Yes."

Carla Long 38:24

Thank you, Becky. Daniel.

Daniel Rose 38:26

The last thing I just want to say is I'd want to encourage anybody who's listening, honestly, you can do this sort of work. Chances are, look it up, there's probably a Family Promise chapter near where you're at. There are a myriad of ways to help and to volunteer, whether that's using the space that we have, that's a thing that Community of Christ is blessed with, we have space, right? And we can be sharing that. Whether you want to be a host congregation, that's awesome, but if that's not something within your capacity, there are opportunities to volunteer with other host congregations, to be a support congregation, to cook meals, to go and wash dishes, to play around with kids, or just eat food. And there's so much benefit just to the individuals, and to the people that are going through the program, but also to yourself, into the heart, into the health of your congregation, and to yourself. I want to encourage everybody who's listening, please, type in your zip code and look up Family Promise, because there's more than likely a chapter really close to you that is probably already established, and you won't have to go through the work of building it yourself. All we have to do is just share a little bit, and cook a plate of lasagna or something. It doesn't take a lot to be a part of a solution in this way. It really is totally within our capacity, I'm convinced. Check it out if you can.

Becky Lee 39:53

Guiding principles in action, right?

Carla Long 39:55

Absolutely. Thank you so much. Thank you so much to Daniel, and Jan, and Seclenda, and Becky and Tim, for being on this wonderful podcast. And, Daniel, I just want to echo what you say, one of the things that Community of Christ is certainly blessed with is buildings and property. And if we find a wonderful ways to use those throughout the week, not just on the two hours on Sunday morning when

we're there, I feel like that we would be definitely promoting God's purpose in the world. So, thank you so much, everyone. I really appreciated talking to you and learning about the incredible work the Portland Community of Christ is doing. Thank you so much.