

# ATTAIN NEWS

SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER



Photo credit: Peter Clancy

## Let's Ride! 7 Hills of Kirkland

Join us for the Eastside's best Memorial Day activity!

The annual 7 Hills of Kirkland bike ride is right around the corner! Every Memorial Day, Attain Housing hosts and organizes the 7 Hills ride as a fundraiser to support homeless and at-risk families and individuals. With the help of many dedicated and generous volunteers, the ride starts and finishes in scenic Marina Park in downtown Kirkland as riders take their pick of three courses: Traditional (40 miles), Metric (60 miles), or Century (100 miles).

Years ago, the tradition began of serving strawberry shortcake to all riders upon finishing. It's a great

recovery snack and you'll see many riders sprawled out on the grassy areas of the park, stretching and enjoying their well-earned shortcake.

Even if you're not riding, we encourage all Eastside residents to come down to the park and cheer on the riders and check out vendor booths from local businesses. If you haven't registered yet, you can do so with ease on the morning of the ride or online by midnight on Thursday, May 24. It's also not too late to volunteer! Click here to see what jobs are still open.

We'll see you on Memorial Day!

*Bringing our community together to partner with homeless families by providing affordable housing and empowering them with practical case management and hope.*



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The Simple Joys of Home

No one benefits more from a safe and stable home than children. Photo credit: Ashish Keshwani

## A Message from our Executive Director



### Springtime and Landlords...what do they have in common?

If it's time for 7 Hills of Kirkland, it must be spring! We're excited to see as many riders, volunteers, and spectators as possible to support the primary fundraiser for Attain Housing. All the registration fees and donations at this point go straight to serve our families through housing, financial assistance, weekly suppers, and holiday meals and gifts. It's an exciting event to watch and just plain fun.

Hope to see you at Marina Park on Monday!

If I told you that you could earn rental income every month without the hassles of being a landlord, what would you say? If you also knew that you were doing your part to help homeless families on the Eastside, would that be even better? Of course it would! And here's how...

King County has awarded us funding to expand our housing and services to two additional families in need. We will do this by leasing apartments, condos, or homes from owners and then in turn renting to two of our families. We would handle all of the intake of residents, handle all maintenance issues that arise during their stay, and turn-over the apartment to the owner two years later in exactly the same condition in which we leased it. Increased value in your asset and no hassles to deal with!

Here's where we need your help. If you, or anyone you know own a home in the greater Eastside area (including Bothell, Kenmore, Woodinville, Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, etc) and would be willing to lease to us for \$1,200 to \$1,600 per month for a minimum 2-year lease, please call me. I know it's much less than the going rate for 1 and 2 bedroom apartments, but it's all we can pay. You provide the housing, we provide the case management to help that family become self-sufficient and move forward. Help a homeless family in the best way possible! Call me today: 425-576-8071.

*Kathy*

Find us on social media!



Facebook.com/AttainHousing



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IG: @AttainHousing



# Keeping the Faith: Families Show Grit in Staying Housed

## A recap of our Affordable Housing Week event

By Carol Ryan, Development Director

Spending your 15-minute work break making calls for rental assistance. Calling back up to 20 agencies every two weeks to make sure the family's name doesn't fall off a waitlist for permanent housing. Driving your kids from your budget hotel in Kent to Bellevue every school day to make sure their education stays on track.

These are just some of the realities that neighbors in Kirkland and Bellevue struggling to stay housed shared at the event, "Affordable Housing: Why is it so dang hard?" Wednesday, May 15, at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Kirkland.

These neighbors told how a life event—for one, a partner's sudden death, for another, getting laid off—spiraled them into a housing crisis. With the number of affordable units on the Eastside shrinking and rents going up every year, finding housing and staying housed is extremely challenging, they said. There were also several mentions of the impact of having an eviction on your record and the impossibility of finding future housing. "Even if you paid off your eviction, landlords don't want to talk to you. It is so discouraging."

"I just kept my faith," said one Attain Housing client, Johnny. "That's all I could do."

Part of Affordable Housing Week, the May 15 event was organized by a coalition of Eastside providers, including Attain Housing, Tech 4 Housing, The Sofia Way, and Lifewire. The individuals who shared their personal stories ranged from extremely low incomes of less than 30% of the area median income, to those earning almost 80%. And yet their stories were agonizingly similar.

Tech 4 Housing's Calvin Jones urged those attending to speak out on behalf of their

neighbors' housing struggles at city council meetings and other public forums.

Attain Housing client Alicia and her daughter were among those who shared their experiences at the event.

"I'm looking for anything to keep us stable," Alicia said.

Laid off from her job as a recruiter, single mom Alicia struggles to keep her daughter in the Bellevue school where she is overcoming her dyslexia with the help of caring teachers, loving friends, and an individual education plan. Alicia continues to struggle to find a landlord who is willing to accept rental assistance funds.

"I don't even mention that I'm looking for 'affordable housing,'" Alicia said. "You can see their face change and all of a sudden they're not interested in renting to you."

Former Attain Housing client Guillaume shared his story of finding stability here on the Eastside after he, his wife, and children immigrated here from Africa.

"My case managers did all they could to make sure within two years we'd be able to rent our own house."

Guillaume and his family were able to recently secure permanent housing. He estimates that he submitted at least 20 applications to local affordable housing complexes and needed to follow-up almost daily to ensure he remained on the wait list. It was very hard while trying to work full-time and maintain his family.

Understanding affordability housing struggles in our community is the first step toward advocacy and we want to thank everyone who attended the event and also give thanks to our clients who shared their stories.





**Save the  
Date!**

**Fall  
Luncheon  
2019**

**Thursday, September 26**

Bellevue Presbyterian  
Church  
1717 Bellevue Way NE  
Bellevue, WA 98004

We would like to welcome all current and past volunteers, board members, and supporters to join us in celebrating 30 years of serving Eastside families!

**Are you a champion for affordable housing? Want to be an advocate for homeless families? Be a Table Captain for the Fall Luncheon and help lead the fundraising charge! Contact [Carol@attainhousing.org](mailto:Carol@attainhousing.org) for more information.**



# Stable Home

**Formerly known as Welcome Home, our rental assistance program is bigger than ever—and it needs your help**



*Photo credit: Ashish Keshwani*

Is prevention the best strategy in reducing homelessness numbers in our region? It may not address the full, systemic picture of what causes homelessness, but eviction prevention and rental assistance remains a very fiscally sound and overall effective way of keeping people from ending up on the street, in their cars, or in shelters.

For an average of \$700 per household, Stable Home keeps people housed through a short-term crisis.

A single eviction often sets in a motion a downhill trajectory of negative consequences in a person's life. It hurts your chances of getting accepted into public/low-income housing and can tarnish your credit rating, which leads to evicted families and individuals having to accept substandard housing in disadvantaged areas.

Our Stable Home program has grown consistently in both bud-

get and in the amount of people we've been able to assist ever since we started it in 2017. The need for services like this is not going away. As donors, this program represents a way for people to see the immediate impact Stable Home funds have for those who need it most.

The need is huge in our region and fortunately we haven't had to turn people away yet, but we do need help from our donors and supporters to help us continue to meet this need. So, if you typically wait until the Fall to donate or haven't donated in a few years, your contribution would be extremely appreciated by the families and individuals who need just a little help to avoid the trauma of becoming homeless.

**Donate Today!**



# Staff Spotlight!

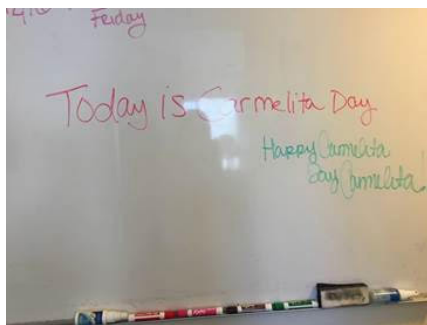
## Carmelita Parraz, Director of Programs & Facilities

Carmelita Parraz has been the backbone of Attain Housing's case management and facilities management for over six years, but will be stepping away from her role later this summer to take on another big role: motherhood! We are so excited for Carmelita and her husband to take that next big step into parenthood, but we will be very sad to lose her dedication, her knowledge, and her extremely wry and sarcastic sense of humor and perspective. We asked her a few questions reflecting on her time with the organization and here's what Carmelita had to say!

### What will you miss about Attain Housing?

I will miss the people that I work with the most. I truly value working for a small nonprofit where it is easy to communicate and build strong, working relationships with one another. I have always felt the support from my team and co-workers, during the more challenging times.

I will also miss being able to directly make an impact on the stability and growth of our families who have come to us for help over the last six years. I have met so many wonderful families and children from all over, and I will always cherish those conversations and interactions that I have had with them.



**If you had to pick one story from over the years that always makes you smile, what would it be?**

Friday, August 12th, 2016 was declared Carmelita Day by my co-workers. It

makes me smile because everyone treated me extra special that day for absolutely no reason at all. I took a photo of the white board that proclaimed "Today is Carmelita Day!", and posted it on Facebook. The special treatment continued with loving and



supportive comments from friends and family members. I sometimes look back at this picture when I am having a difficult day at work because I know that people truly care about me!

**What life lessons from your Attain Housing experience will you always carry forward with you in life?**

Never be scared of a person's past, because chances are, they are trying really hard to rebuild a better life for themselves and children, despite the barriers they face.

**The staff here at Attain Housing will miss Carmelita tremendously. We wish her the best in her next adventure and hope she comes back to visit whenever she can!**

# Volunteer Spotlight!

## In appreciation of our intern, Anastasia Vaneeva



We have been very fortunate to have had the help of a very devoted intern and volunteer for the last year. Anastasia, or Ana as she tends to go by, is studying behavioral and social services at the Lake Washington Institute and has helped out our staff immensely by processing Stable Home rental assistance requests and interviewing applicants. She has also helped out with numerous office organizing projects and helps keep our donation room in tidy, working order. We want to give a huge, sincere thank you to Ana and we wish her all the best of luck with her career in social work!

## Volunteer Yard Work Help Needed This Summer!

Please contact [Eric@attainhousing.org](mailto:Eric@attainhousing.org) if you are interested and available for regular yard work over the summer months like lawn mowing, weeding, cleaning, pruning, etc. Thank you!



Taco Tuesday!

Volunteers from Higher Leaf and Green Theory serve up a lovely meal at Community Supper

## Community Supper

Sometimes a warm meal can make all the difference!

It's a rainy Tuesday evening. A woman gets off the bus and walks into Holy Spirit Lutheran Church. In the Fellowship Hall, she sees tables and chairs filled with men, women, and children enjoying a meal and then a long table staffed with volunteers serving food. She scans the room and sees someone who looks like they're in charge.

She goes up and asks, "Is it okay for me to be here?"

The answer is always "Yes" at Community Supper, a program Attain Housing has organized for decades at Holy Spirit.

Every Tuesday, a different volunteer group from the East-side community prepares and serves a hot meal, free to all. Whether you are homeless, on a fixed income, or just trying to get to know your neighbors, all are welcome.

If you'd like to organize a group to host a meal, please contact [Eric@attainhousing.org](mailto:Eric@attainhousing.org).





# 30 Years of Supporting Families



## Putting in work!

Volunteers have long been the life force of keeping our properties in good working order.

Here's a throwback to a 2003 renovation and maintenance volunteer project by a group from Windermere Real Estate at our Petter Court property. Do you have old photos of volunteer projects collecting dust somewhere? We want to see them! We are gathering memories from our organization's history to share and celebrate at our Fall Luncheon on September 26, 2019. We can even scan them for you! Contact [Carol@attainhousing.org](mailto:Carol@attainhousing.org) to share your Attain Housing stories.



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