

ATTAIN NEWS

SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER



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

7 Hills of Kirkland: Shifting Gears

Track your miles in May and raise money for homeless families!

Attain Housing's classic 7 Hills of Kirkland is going online! Join the challenge from your home and then get pedaling for real for an entire month of cycling challenges, weekly mileage & climbing contests, and community!

Perhaps you've never ridden 7 Hills before because you're more of a casual/leisure rider and those hills just don't appeal. Well, here's your chance to ride in your preferred fashion AND help ensure that homeless and at-risk families stay housed and leave homelessness behind.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis and restrictions on large events, we had to make big changes to this year's fundraiser. While we will miss seeing everyone at the start and finish line (not to mention the strawberry shortcake!), we have faith in our community and in all the loyal

cyclists out there that we can make this online fundraiser a ringing success in spite of the circumstances.

The 2020 7 Hills of Kirkland will take place May 1-31. Do you track your miles when you ride your bike? Then you're already half-way there!



Register to ride and you'll be invited to our Ride With GPS event page, where you will find our classic 7 Hills, Metric, and Century routes posted. Take part in month-long, weekly, and daily ride challenges, with prizes for miles

ridden and elevation climbed, share photos from your rides, see your route times on the 7 Hills Leaderboard, and more!

Some month-long contests with prizes:

- **Most miles in May**
- **Most elevation during May**

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HOUSING

If you are interested in donating through #GiveBig on May 5 & 6, we are registered! Find us at GiveBigWA.org/Attain-Housing

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- 7000 feet in 7 days
- 250 miles in 7 days

Fund-raise for More Impact!

This year, you can generate more support than ever for Attain Housing families. Once you've registered, follow the links to our 7 Hills fundraising platform, create a fundraising page to share your experience, and let your family and friends support your ride for vulnerable families in our community. Read more about fundraising below.

Riders who raise \$500 or more will receive the 2020 Ride Jersey by Primal Wear.

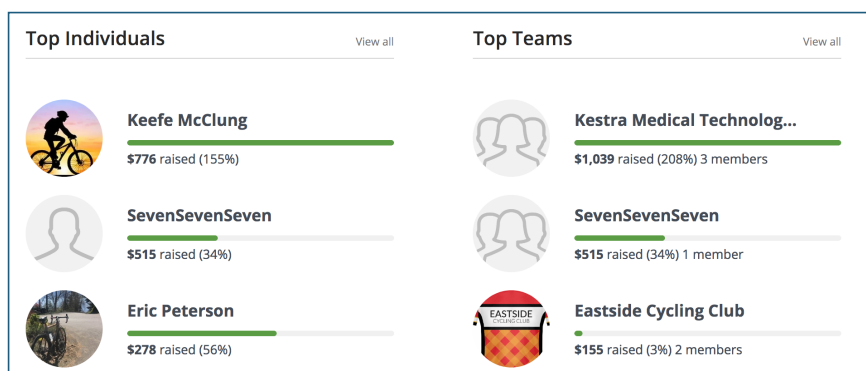


How to Create Your Fundraising Page

Help us reach our goal of raising \$50,000 on Classy.org!

Even if you're not a cyclist, you can fund-raise during the entire month of May for Attain Housing. Here's how you can create your own fundraiser page on Classy.org. Individuals who raise \$500 or more will receive the 2020 7 Hills Ride Jersey by Primal Wear!

- Go online to 7Hills.AttainHousing.org.
- Click on "Create A Fundraising Page" on the far right of the top navigation menu.
- This takes you to our 7 Hills page on Classy.org.
- If you just want to make a donation, click on "Donate Now"
- To make your own Fundraising page, click "Become a Fundraiser."
- You have three options: individual, start a team, or join a current team.
- Make your selection and the site will take you through the rest of the process.
- After you've made your page or joined a team, make sure to share a link to your fundraising page on your Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages. We need your help to spread the word to folks who may not be aware of Attain Housing yet!



The top three individual and team fundraisers as of April 24. Way to go!

That's it! You're good to go! Whether you're tracking your miles on the 7 Hills course on Ride With GPS, racking up miles on your Peloton/stationary bike, or just spreading the word to friends and families and raising money to help us serve homeless families, we can't thank you enough.

Although we wish we could see all your smiling faces on Memorial Day like usual, we really appreciate everyone who is already jumping in and adapting to this online fundraiser in a big way. We hope even more riders and fundraisers will join us throughout May. As the saying goes, "We got this, Kirkland!"



A Message from our Executive Director



What a difference three months make! In our last newsletter, I talked about the great year we had in 2019 and how I was looking forward to 2020 as we planned to add 8 apartments to serve more families. Then Feb. 29 hit and our world was turned upside down when the first COVID-19 death in the United States occurred directly next door to client families living in our largest apartment complex

in Kirkland.

As everyone in our area pivoted the way they worked, adjusted how they get groceries, and found new ways to stay in touch with loved ones, we at Attain Housing have been no different. As I write this, we have been working from our homes for 53 days (!) and we are in the people business!

I am very proud of my staff as we have continued to serve our community in new and different ways. Case management is now about keeping our 117 residents safe in their own homes and communities; helping them apply for unemployment or find new employment when over 50% of our households have lost most or all of their income; and bringing them or connecting them to sources for groceries and meals. Long-term goal setting has taken a backseat to addressing basic needs for survival. We have also

continued to bring new families into our communities despite the difficulty of apartment turnovers and interviewing new referrals. See the article on page 8 to learn more.

I have worked to keep our donors and supporters informed of how our clients and our organization are handling this crisis. Most recently, I hosted an Informative Q&A session on Zoom where I addressed what impacts our clients are seeing, the financial situation for the organization, and what Attain is doing to address the growing needs and remain stable in the process. You can watch a recording of that session on our website.

I am excited about 7 Hills Shifting Gears, our new approach to our classic Memorial Day cycling event. All of us, (even me - an amateur cyclist at best!) can participate and fund-raise with family and friends to support families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. How fun is that?

Finally, I am so grateful for the many individuals, organizations, businesses and congregations who have really stepped up to provide us with additional financial donations during this crisis. To my surprise and delight, checks have shown up unannounced in our mailbox and have at times brought me to tears. You are an amazing community and together we WILL get through this and be stronger for it in the end.

Thank you.

Kathy

Find us on social media!



Facebook.com/AttainHousing



@AttainHousing



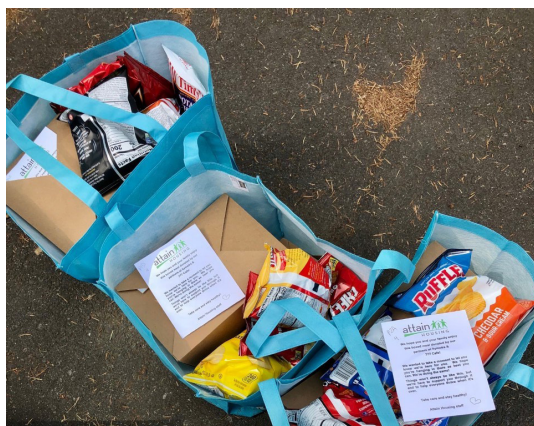
IG: @AttainHousing



On Friday, April 10, Symetra and 777 Cafe coordinated the donation of 120 free meals for delivery to our client families in our Transitional Housing program. Our staff and a volunteer made the drop-offs observing all social-distancing protocol and it gave a lot of folks a much-needed boost.

We were able to do a similar meal delivery on Friday, April 24 thanks to coordination by Overlake Park Presbyterian Church. 120 meals donated by Microsoft and Jubilee Reach were distributed by our staff to all our client families.

Free meals make a big difference to our families as over 50% of our adult clients have experience job or income loss as a result of COVID-19. We'd like to give an extra big thank you to Symetra, 777 Cafe, Overlake Park Presbyterian, Microsoft, and Jubilee Reach for their giving spirit!



Donor Spotlight

Kiwanis Club of Kirkland



In response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the Kiwanis Club of Kirkland has donated \$5,000 to Attain Housing. This very generous donation covers revenue lost since the crisis first hit in early March. Kiwanis joins a growing list of local supporters stepping up in a huge way and donating to Attain Housing.

The charitable relationship between the Kiwanis Club of Kirkland and Attain Housing goes way back. Kiwanis member and Kirkland local legend Bill Petter was a huge early advocate for Attain Housing, known back then as Kirkland Interfaith Transitions in Housing (KITH).

Established in 1947, the Kirkland Kiwanis continue to bring local business owners and community leaders together to rally behind the International Kiwanis mission: "Serving the children of the world."

"Our club exists to give back to the community and while our primary mission as Kiwanis is to serve children, we believe that Attain accomplishes this in a huge way as they support mothers and children in need of temporary housing following whatever crisis put them there in the place of need," said Bill Badgley, former Club President. "All of us at Kiwanis appreciate what Attain Housing does for our community and we feel it is one of the best outreaches that we have."

Michael Marquess took over as Club President in October 2019 and he shares Bill's sentiments regarding the club's partnership with Attain Housing.

"Kiwanis is all about helping the less fortunate kids in our local area and Attain Housing does exactly that by housing families," Michael said. "We all know that for the children to be strong, the family as a



Kirkland Kiwanis members serve Community Supper pre-COVID-19.

whole needs to be strong and Attain provides that support."

Historically, the Kiwanis Club has hosted a large Pancake Breakfast every spring, which is a tradition that Kiwanis member and former Attain Housing board member Walt Krueger was instrumental in starting. The club would then use part of the proceeds as their donation to the 7 Hills of Kirkland bike ride, Attain Housing's spring fundraiser. This makes the club's Rental Relief donation all the more significant to us, as we know they won't be able to hold their usual Pancake Breakfast due to restrictions on large group gatherings. And since we've had to shift gears and make 7 Hills an online fundraiser, Kiwanis is pitching in on that front, as well.

The club created their own fundraising team on Classy.org along with all

the other 7 Hills riders and fundraisers out there. You can find them on our 7 Hills Classy.org page.

The Kiwanis also have a long history of supporting Attain Housing's Community Supper program, in which volunteer groups provide a free, hot meal open to all community members every Tuesday evening at Holy Spirit Luther Church. The program is currently suspended due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Kiwanis members Mark Tillman and Reddith Ross co-ran the program and coordinated volunteer groups for many years. In recent years, Bill Badgley and his reliable crew of Kiwanis members have been serving up their classic meatloaf, mashed potatoes, and beans about once a quarter. The made-from-scratch meatloaf is always a big hit with attendees.

"The suppers are a project that all of us can work at together on and we can see the results directly as we prepare and serve the meals," Bill said. "We always have a great time and cherish the opportunity."

How Domestic Violence Intersects with Homelessness

Attain Housing Case Managers guide clients to a safer future for their families



Photo Credit: Stefan Neubig

Over 75 percent of Attain Housing client families consist of a single mother and her kids. Nearly half of these women have experienced domestic violence and for almost all of them, it's the direct reason why they are experiencing homelessness.

It's a massive cultural problem in our society, but domestic violence is not often thought of by most as a cause of homelessness.

"You can't look at someone and say, 'Oh that person has experienced domestic violence,'" said Greg McLeod, our Program Services Manager. "With some drug addiction and mental health issues, it can be more apparent. Single parents are among the unseen homeless rather than the 'seen' homeless because parents tend to be a bit more creative in finding ways to keep themselves and their children out of the public eye."

For mothers who have lost their housing and are suffering in silence from the physical and mental pain inflicted upon them by their abusers, Attain Housing and other low-income housing providers are often the first step in a long road back to stability, and it's not always a linear path.

"The Housing First modality is especially helpful for people dealing with domestic violence and mental health issues," Greg said. "When you and your kids are homeless, you don't have time to worry about counseling or addressing trauma. You're worried about where

you're going to sleep and how you're going to get food for you and your kids."

Once a family has a stable place to live, they can catch their breath, Greg said. And that's when many parents will start to notice the psychological and physiological traumatic effects of domestic violence and abuse.

"That's where our Case Managers play an important role during check-ins and conversations. Whether it's to give recommendations on counseling and treatment, or to just be a confident ear to clients who need to vent."

Our Case Managers also witness how domestic violence impacts the children in our housing. The stability of a safe home gives children the space to thrive, but just like for their parents, it allows for the trauma stemming from the domestic violence they witnessed to bubble to the surface.

"Once the kids are stable and out of survival mode, we tend to see the behavioral issues become more obvious, especially for school-aged kids," said Megan Gililand, one of our Case Managers. "We get them connected with resources at their school or outside sources of therapy, whatever is most accessible for them."

For many families, the healing process is full of setbacks and danger depending on the proximity and persistence of the abuser.

"It can be very frustrating," Megan said. "Sometimes

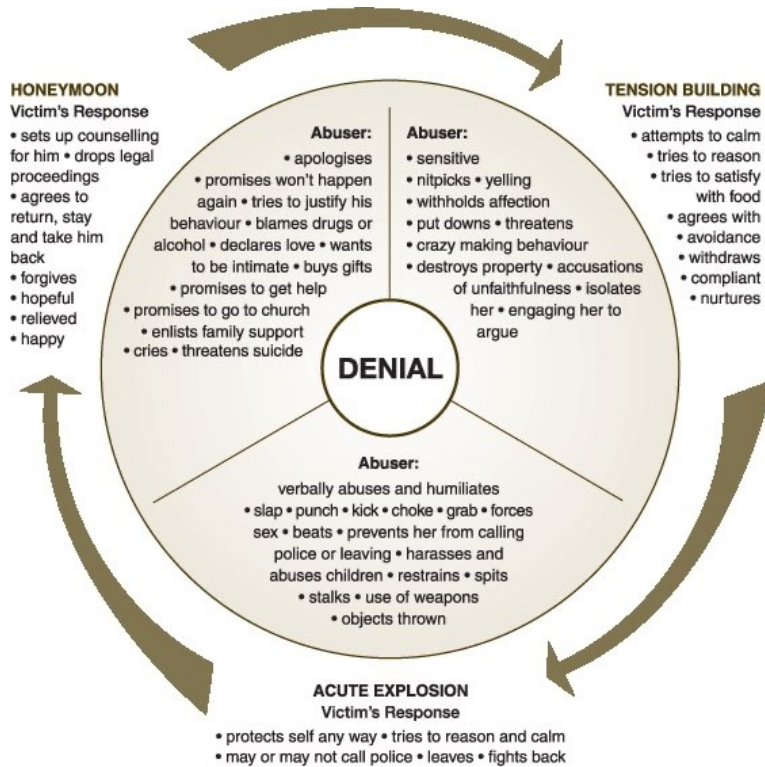
The Cycle of Violence

the abuser just continues to track them down, which ruins the sense of safety they've worked so hard to create. It's also frustrating if the client won't cut off contact with the abuser completely. Megan stated that there are many reasons for that. If the abuser is the father of their children, there is a lot of guilt and shaming that goes along with that so that opens the door again for the abusive partner to re-enter the picture.

"It's our role to have a conversation with the client to help them figure out what kind relationship they want to have with the father in the future and suggest some safer ways to do that," Megan said.

Helping clients with establishing a legal order of protection whenever possible is an important step of the process. It gives the client some power to legally keep their abuser away from them and their kids. But, there are limitations to that system.

"I've had clients who have tried to get a protection order, but the abuser just somehow kept dodging getting served the notice, which is vital to completing the protection order," Megan said.



Greg pointed out that one of the strengths of our transitional housing program is the perspective our Case Managers gain when they regularly meet with clients in their homes (during non-pandemic circumstances, of course).

"We see who comes and goes," Greg said. "If I see someone questionable around our properties, I'm going to ask questions. We strive to hold clients accountable because the judgment of abuse victims can get clouded. We're helping people to develop positive habits and encouraging them to not have contact with their abusers."

The insidious, traumatic affects and consequences of domestic violence make it

one of the greatest challenges we face as transitional housing providers to homeless and at-risk families. Our case managers are here to help abuse victims rebuild their lives and to provide a safe harbor from the storm.

"Safety is the number one concern for our families," Greg said. "Domestic violence, just like homelessness and generational poverty, is cyclical and we're trying to help people break that cycle."

Domestic Violence Community Resources:

- 24-Hour Domestic Violence Helpline: 425-746-1940 or 1-800-827-8840
- LifeWire of Bellevue - Provides a range of services to domestic violence survivors; including advocacy, support group, mental health therapy, legal advocacy, and housing. Crisis Line: 425-746-1940
- King County Sexual Assault Resource Center provides support, tools, and direct services to sexual assault victims and their families. 24-hour Resource Line: 888-99-VOICE
- Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence has a comprehensive listing of services searchable by county and city: <https://wscadv.org>
- Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP) provides legal aid to survivors of domestic violence throughout all of King County and can assist with protection orders: 425-747-7274

The Good Kind of Turnover

A pandemic won't stop us from getting homeless families off the streets

Magic happens when kids coming directly out of homelessness first arrive in an Attain Housing apartment. It happened recently when Carmen and her kids moved from their car to one of our 37 transitional housing apartment homes. On lease-signing day, the kids bounded through the apartment playing hide-n-seek. The joy of that moment is fuel for all of us at Attain Housing, including Facilities Manager Kurt Larson.

Among Kurt's duties is getting apartments ready for families like Carmen's. We call it the "turnover" process and it's something that Kurt takes great pride in continuously refining and improving.

"The goal is to always be thinking of ways to improve the turnover process and find ways to make a better living space while saving money for the organization," Kurt said. "This is accomplished by using more robust materials that will last longer, replacing or eliminating unreliable equipment, and modernizing appliances and fixtures. Money will be saved in the short and long term for both the tenant and for Attain Housing, as well."

The COVID-19 crisis has caused some changes to the turnover process. Trips to Home Depot have been almost entirely eliminated in favor of ordering all supplies and materials online. Any significant projects requiring contractors means ensuring there is only one or two people working in a unit at any given time. Kurt said it's all a matter of careful planning.

The screening and lease signing processes have evolved due to social distancing, as well. Screening interviews are now done via Zoom video conferencing or conference calls with our Case Managers instead of in person at our office. Once a family is approved, the lease signing process and walk-through is done at the apartment. Case Manager Megan Gililand describes her most recent lease signing with a family of five.

"The family went in first to walk around and check it out while I waited outside," Megan said. "I could



hear all three kids yelling and going 'Wow, it's a real place! This is awesome!' Then I had everyone step out. The father waited in the car with the kids and I did the lease signing with the mother via computer, and I handed over the keys. It was actually faster than usual!"

Our Program Services Manager Greg McLeod said he wants our supporters to know that we're working hard during this time to get people off the streets, in spite of COVID-19.



Facilities Manager Kurt Larson poses with a little keepsake given to him by one of the children in our transitional housing program.

"It's not lost on us that lots of families out there still need us, and that's why we're considered essential," Greg said. "Kurt and our whole team have been doing an awesome job getting turn-overs done on time given the circumstances."

The goal of the facilities team is to get a unit ready for a new family in two weeks or less.

"The objective is to provide a fully functional and reliable unit that the client family will feel comfortable in, take pride in, and will be interested in taking care of," Kurt said.

Previously homeless families make these apartments their homes for up to two years while working with our Case Managers on rebuilding their lives and planning out their

next steps to secure long-term, permanent housing when they leave our program. Some families enter our housing program after living in a shelter or, as in Carmen's case, living their car for many months. Others are single mothers with small children fleeing a domestic violence situation. And for immigrant families new to the country, our housing might be the first place they've felt safe in a long time. No matter where a family comes from, the feeling of a new home often results in both excitement and major relief.

"What strikes me the most is how happy the children are for finally having a place with all 'the stuff' they say, like bathrooms, bedrooms, refrigerators, and lights, and knowing they will no longer be living in a car or a shelter," Kurt said. "And also knowing what role the team and I had in helping to make it happen."

ATTAIN HOUSING PRESENTS

SHIFTING
GEARS

7HILLS

OF KIRKLAND

CYCLING TO BENEFIT HOMELESS FAMILIES



JOIN THE CHALLENGE – GET PEDALING – SUPPORT EASTSIDE FAMILIES – MAY 1-30, 2020

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