

ATTAIN NEWS

WINTER/SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER



SIP & MIX! SPRING FUNDRAISER

THE BLEND,
DOWNTOWN KIRKLAND
6:30 PM - APRIL 28, 2022

AFTER MORE THAN 2 YEARS APART, WE WILL
RAISE OUR GLASSES & RAISE FUNDS FOR
VULNERABLE EASTSIDE FAMILIES!

REGISTRATION OPENS ONLINE MARCH 10

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

You are cordially invited to “Sip & Mix” at our Spring Fundraiser!

An in-person fundraising event? Could it be? We sure hope so!

We are very excited to announce our Sip & Mix Spring Fundraiser on Thursday, April 28 at The Blend by Chateau Ste

Michelle in downtown Kirkland. Registration will open online on March 10. Tickets will be limited, so make sure to register early!

Doors will open at 6:30 PM and we'll have wine tasting flights available, plus heavy appetizers and dessert. The event will be largely a social gathering, but we'll feature a short program and message from our Executive Director Natalie Reber. We will also feature several raffle items from local businesses and wineries with proceeds going directly to Attain Housing.

We can't wait to see familiar faces again and meet new friends and supporters in person, too. Our fundraising goal is \$25,000 and we know our Caring Community can get us there!

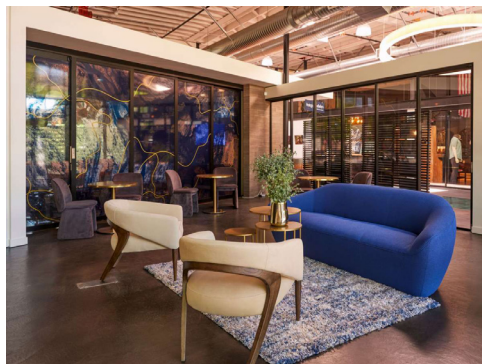


Photo credit: Seattle PI

Our event will adhere to all current King County Public Health guidelines for dining and gathering. The space at The Blend has plenty of fresh air ventilation and folks will be able to spread out inside.

In the event that conditions change and it becomes unsafe to gather in-person, we will pivot to a virtual

wine tasting fundraiser. We will notify attendees well in advance if we have to make this change.

See you April 28 at The Blend!



Inside this issue

Sip & Mix Spring Fundraiser	p1
Holiday Giving Recap	p2
Message from the Director	p3
7 Hills Update	p4
New Staff Spotlight	p5
Donor Spotlight: The Durhams	p6
Donor Spotlight: KCF	p7
Rental Assistance Update	p8

Holiday Giving Drive Recap

Gratitude for an incredibly strong finish to 2021!

We are consistently blown away by the generosity of our donors when it comes to the holidays, but our Holiday Giving Drive finished off 2021 with a huge bang as donors nearly tripled our fundraising goal.

Our Holiday Giving Drive raised over \$145,000 to support our transitional housing program and our Stable Home rental assistance program. Also, thanks to our amazing donors, our Holiday Gift Card program for our transitional housing client families was fully funded well

before Christmas and each family received a \$500 pre-paid credit card so that they could make sure they got exactly what they wanted and needed to ensure their family had a lovely holiday season.

We are so thankful for our Caring Community! Your support guarantees 2022 will be another busy year of helping families recover from homelessness and making positive changes for a more stable future for their family and future generations.



Several local Eastside businesses organized Giving Trees to gather donations for Attain Housing in December 2021, including (left) Kirkland Community Fitness and (top right) Columbia Athletic Club. Also, Kitty Ballard (bottom right) dropped off her annual collections of holiday donations from her real estate clients, and those of her colleague, Susan Jones. Thank you, Kitty and Susan!



Message from our Executive Director

To say things have been hectic since I joined Attain at the end of May 2021 would be an understatement. We've been navigating waves of COVID variants and the cumulative stressful impacts the pandemic has had on our clients and staff. We've said goodbye to a few staff and board members and we've also welcomed aboard new staff and new board members. We even had a fire at one of our housing units. Thankfully, no one was hurt and we were able to place our tenant in another unit on site, but wow, it's been quite the first eight months on the job to say the least!

Through it all, I've been continually blown away by the support of this community and the generosity of our donors. When we had the fire, folks stepped in right away to donate cash funds and household items (beds, tables, chairs, etc.) so the family could get settled into their new unit right away. Donors, like you, create opportunities for our client families to thrive.

Looking ahead, I want to make sure all our supporters know about our Sip & Mix Spring Fundraiser on April 28 at The Blend in downtown Kirkland. I cannot wait to meet more folks in person

at long last! It will be a lovely evening of socializing with wine tasting, delicious appetizers, exciting raffle prizes from local businesses, celebrating the successes of our programs, and lots more. See you there!



In closing, I am feeling hopeful that soon we will enter a new phase of the pandemic. One where we can re-establish community and connection. One where we can help each other recover. But, for families struggling with housing instability, a new normal might not make a real difference for them. That's why our transitional housing program and Stable Home eviction prevention program remain ready to serve as a safety net for families who are struggling during these uncertain and in-between times. Our case managers are here to guide families as they establish stability for themselves and for future generations.

I want to thank you all for your support and I hope to talk with you soon.

Find us on social media!



Facebook.com/AttainHousing



@AttainHousing



IG: @AttainHousing



7 Hills of Kirkland: Taking a Break in 2022

Passionate cyclists wanted to help plan future rides!

Attain Housing will be taking a year off from the 7 Hills of Kirkland fundraiser in 2022. We'd like to give a big thanks to everyone who joined us virtually and tracked their miles in May 2020 and 2021!

We are recruiting for the planning committee for a 2023 ride. If you're interested, please email Carol@attainhousing.org or fill out the interest form at attainhousing.org/7hills-taking-a-break. We're looking for some passionate cyclists who are looking to take a major role with this legacy fundraiser and organize a fantastic event to help support homeless families on the Eastside.



New Staff Spotlight: Chandana Gowda

We've had a few new folks join our team at Attain Housing in the last year and we'd like to tell you all about them.

Our longtime bookkeeper Nita Lindsey retired in August 2021 and while we were sad to see her go, we were fortunate to find another fantastic bookkeeper in Chandana Gowda, who came on board in September 2021.

Get to know Chandana a bit, in her own words:

Tell us about your background in bookkeeping and accounting.

Accounting and bookkeeping was part of my childhood. Both my dad and grand-dad were accounting lecturers in India. I used to see my dad preparing for a class and assessing test papers. I used to go through the assessment sheets and was curious about it. I always wanted to get into the same field, so I took accounting & finance as my main elective in college and graduated with a MBA in finance.



What drew you to Attain Housing's mission?

When I was in sixth grade, my parents asked me to teach three kids younger than me who could not afford tuition and that continued until I moved to the United States. I am part of three NGOs in India that help kids get necessary education and nutritious food. In college, I helped organize events to gather funds for many NGOs. I believe every human is entitled to basic needs, food, clothing, and shelter. When I moved to US in 2014, it was so different from what I was used to. I took me two years to understand how things worked. Last year, I was volunteering for a church donation drive and I saw the Attain job opportunity and I knew this was the right choice.

What are your favorite things to do outside of work? What are some of your favorite things about living in the Northwest?

Gardening and giving extra produce to friends and neighbors. I also like organizing kids party for my friends, watching food tasting and review shows, and hiking.

New Staff Spotlight: Bill Smith

Being a facilities manager for a small housing nonprofit like ours is no small task. We've been lucky to have some real hard workers with lots of vision and creativity fill that role for us in the past, and thankfully we've found another such person in Bill Smith, who joined our team in January 2022.

Get to know Bill a bit, in his own words:

Tell us about your background in facilities management.

I have been involved in construction and remodeling most of my adult life. I spent years working in multifamily property management, worked as a general contractor, and for a few years was responsible for the remodel and repair of 7-Eleven stores throughout the Northwest.

What drew you to Attain Housing's mission?

I was drawn to Attain because my own background



included years where I was the one in need of housing and support. I got the help I needed and for many years, I have looked for ways to give back in my personal and professional life.

What are your favorite things to do outside of work? What are some of your favorite things about living in the Northwest?

My favorite activities outside of work include hiking, boating, and taking the boat to places that I can hike. I love to explore, especially in the woods! My other favorite activity is playing with my grandkids, which keeps me young and keeps them busy.

Those are also reasons I love the Pacific Northwest because my favorite things to do are right outside my front door. My highlight of my life in the Northwest was boating to Sucia Island and getting married at sunset.

Donor Spotlight

Janelle & Peter Durham

The Durham family made their first donation to Attain Housing in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and have continued since then to give generously in support of our Stable Home program. We reached out to ask them what motivated them to give and to tell us a bit more about themselves. Janelle Durham gave us their story.

Tell us about your history in the Kirkland area. What are some of your favorite things about living here and about being a part of the community?

Janelle Durham: We have lived on the Eastside since 1989, and like many Eastsiders, whenever it was a beautiful sunny day, we'd think "it's a great day, let's go to downtown Kirkland." In 2013, we found a new home just a short walking distance from downtown Kirkland and realized "if we lived in Kirkland, we could be there on all the beautiful days!"

By our eighth year here, we're still loving Kirkland. It has a small town vibe to it, where when we walk around town, we run into folks from school, or church, or we see the barista walking to work, or the "slow dog" ambling by with his owner. But, it's a "small town" with so many resources—the pool, the library, Kirkland Performance Center, and so many restaurants! During the pandemic, we got takeout dinner one night a week, and our goal was to get something from a different downtown restaurant each week—turns out there are 60 of them! So, we have a few more still to go.

What motivated your family to make a first donation to Attain Housing in 2020? Was there a particular aspect of our services or our mission that appealed to you?

JD: We attend Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church in Kirkland, which has a "Share the Plate" program where each month, the first \$1000 from the offering is

donated to a local nonprofit. Attain Housing has been an annual recipient. So we were aware of Attain, and especially respected their Stable Home program, which helps people avoid eviction and avoid becoming homeless in the first place.

When the pandemic began and many people were out of work, we thought about our situation. Peter's income (as a software engineer) is enough for us—if I lost my job as a parent educator, we would be okay financially. We know that this is not true of many families. Once we acknowledged that, we decided we would make some significant donations. We donated to Attain to help people keep their homes, and we also

supported the Kirkland Chamber of Commerce to help keep local businesses afloat, and also food banks for those who were struggling.

As the homeless and at-risk families we serve, along with our community in general, continues to mend, heal, and emerge from the pandemic, what are some values you believe our community at large should continue to prioritize and focus on in 2022 and beyond?

JD: We are a community with so many strengths and so many resources. We need to embrace all the beauty and abundance here, and at the same time acknowledge that access to those resources is not equitable. The income inequality is tremendous, the housing is quite simply not affordable, and racism is real and is affecting our neighbors.

We appreciate the commitments the City of Kirkland and many organizations in the city have made to diversity and to anti-oppression work. As individuals, we also need to acknowledge our roles in working toward a better, more just future.





Donor Spotlight

Kirkland Community Fitness

In a year full of uncertainty and fear, Attain Housing was fortunate to gain many first-time donors in 2020. Few made a bigger impact than the folks at Kirkland Community Fitness, which is owned and operated by Jamie and Rick Cantu. We reached out to Jamie to ask her more about KCF and why they chose to help out homeless families in their community by supporting Attain Housing.

Tell us about Kirkland Community Fitness and its background/history in the area, or your own personal connection to the community.

Jamie Cantu: Kirkland Community Fitness, previously Kirkland Cross-Fit, is a gym located in downtown Kirkland and we've been there for more than 10 years now. The gym focuses on encouraging people to enrich their lifestyle through fitness and health. I have been a part of the community here for over seven years, and the owner of the gym coming up on four years this July. I love this group of members who support one another every day and proud that I can say I know every single member at the gym!

What motivated the KCF crew to make a first donation to Attain Housing in 2020? Was there a particular aspect of our services or our mission that appealed to you?

JC: Everyone was dealing with their own struggles in

2020 and when we started discussing our yearly holiday drive benefactor, we knew we wanted to help an organization located in our backyard, Kirkland, who was helping families in dire need. I found Attain Housing and it was a perfect fit—an awesome non-profit helping families with housing, food, other services to keep families together, safe, and off the streets.

As the families we serve, along with our community in general, continues to mend, heal, and emerge from the pandemic, what are some values you believe we should continue to prioritize and focus on for 2021 and beyond?

JC: Each individual and each family is struggling in a different way, and I

was drawn to your Case Management program at the root of your organization. I found this to be most beneficial for helping families in positive change through improving credit, employment, and job skills. Empowering individuals with skills helps break the cycle of homelessness, and also gives them confidence.

We're very happy and honored to have people like Jamie, Rick, and the whole KCF crew in our corner. If your local business or organization is looking for a way to get more involved in the Eastside community, please don't hesitate to reach out and join us in our approach to helping families recover from and avoid the trauma of homelessness.



Rental Assistance Update

Stable Home continues to provide a safety net for families in need

Our Stable Home eviction prevention program has rolled with the punches during the pandemic and has continued to evolve along with the rest of the post-eviction moratorium landscape. Stable Home advocate Jesse Perrell says providing information and clearing up confusion is a large part of the service provided to families who are at risk of losing their housing.

“Landlords are starting to give out lots of 14-day notices and we’re talking to a lot of tenants who have never been in this situation before and aren’t really sure what that means and what their legal protections are,” Jesse said.

“Many landlords and property management companies have had a lot staff turnover and chaos internally, which can lead to further confusion between tenants and landlords.”

A key part of Stable Home’s holistic approach to helping families avoid homelessness is simply clear communication and connecting families with the correct resources.

“There’s a lot of need for tenants and landlords to obtain the knowledge of how to proceed legally and what services and protections are available to them,” Jesse said. “So our staff is spending a lot of quality time on the phone and in email with clients to help them figure out how they can move forward and calming their fears about losing their home.”



During this strange, in-between time for tenants, Stable Home’s flexibility to evolve as a program is a major strength.

“It’s a weird time, but we’re just starting to figure out this feast or famine cycle we’ve been in,” Director of Programs Greg McLeod said. “All the moratoriums have ended and there are no proposals for new ones.”

Greg said that Stable Home has assisted 22 families in 2022 so far.

We’d like to share a recent story of a client named Doug, a single dad with two kids, who received guidance and funding from our Stable Home program.

Doug’s work stopped giving him hours entirely after two incidents of his kids having COVID exposure at their preschool and Doug needing to stay home with them. He wasn’t able to work during January and February. We connected him with DSHS to get childcare arranged, which will allow him to return to normal work hours at his existing job. He was panicked having received a 14-day pay or vacate notice, but our team talked him through it, prompted him to call the Bellevue Resolution Center, and are providing assistance with his February rent.

As anyone with small kids these last two years of the pandemic can relate to, it’s a thin line between staying afloat and drowning. When tragedy strikes and your safety net fails or runs out, that’s when Stable Home is there to help families out.



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