

The Blueprint

News from Imagine Housing

July 2017

Celebrating 30 Years with Founder Darcy Johnson

When Darcy Johnson joined St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Bellevue in 1985, she found a faith-based community that matched her motivation to serve people living in homelessness. "St. Andrew's has always been engaged in outreach at a level that has made it stand out in the region, and I've always had a passion for affordable housing. I watched how people struggle and it's just such a fundamental need. You need a place to be able to sleep comfortably at night, and to be able to call home."

After becoming involved in SALC's homelessness ministry, Darcy kept seeing the problem grow. What had been an invisible issue on the Eastside became clearer. "In Bellevue we had felt so lucky that there didn't seem to be the same homelessness issue as in Seattle. But the more we learned, the more we saw it was there, just hidden. The problem was being exported to Seattle because that's where the services were. But the need was an Eastside need."

The desire to make a difference was quickly challenged by a lack of resources. "It was like applying a bandaid to a level 3 wound," Darcy says. SALC dedicated some of their budget to housing solutions. They leased a duplex where people could stay, and bought vouchers for those in need to use at a local hotel. This limited budget couldn't answer the growing need, though, and the church budget couldn't sustain it. The duplex SALC leased was lost to an accidental fire. By 1985, the hotel vouchers were in such demand that the entire budget was spent in the first quarter of the year. Darcy and the rest of the SALC congregation knew they needed a different approach.

"The group really came from that frustration, and the community recognizing that our church needed to respond more proactively and in a more permanent way."

St. Andrew's Housing Group was the answer to SALC's ministry and budget challenges. The nonprofit took off quickly with eager volunteers who brought a variety of skills. It was separate from the church budget, and its efforts were devoted to creating supportive, affordable housing. They had big, passionate early goals and spent several years learning about nonprofits and housing development. "None of us had ever done nonprofit work. We really didn't know anything about affordable housing, either - we just had a passion for trying to help people. Our goal early on was to have 10,000 units. Now we recognize that was a little too lofty! But we're thrilled it's grown as fast as it has."



Breaking ground on Andrew's Arms, our first property.

Despite a steep learning curve and a booming housing market that made finding affordable and available sites difficult, our founders put the organization on a strong and sustainable path. Today, Imagine Housing's 13 affordable apartment communities serve almost 1,200 people yearly. Our supportive services program helps make sure residents who need assistance have the tools for stability and success. Our founders' example has created a community that cares and takes action to make the Eastside a welcoming and affordable place to live.

We are grateful to the members of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, all the volunteers who have provided leadership, knowledge, and passion, and the supporters who have enabled Imagine Housing to spend the past 30 years increasing the availability of affordable housing in East King County. We look forward to continuing to make a difference with your help.

The Founding board members of St Andrew's Housing Group were:

Darcy Johnson
Dean Hobson
Nancy McEachran
Gary Meissner
Gordon McFadden

Summer Lunch Program Returns



Through our continued partnership with the YMCA and United Way of King County, the Summer Food Program started up again for yesterday at our Highland Gardens and Rose Crest properties in Issaquah! This is Imagine Housing's second year hosting the program at our properties. We are grateful for the partnership, which ensures our resident youth, as well as any other children in the nearby community, will have a healthy meal and fun community activities every weekday from July 10th to August 25th.

You can learn more about the Summer Food Program [here](#), and check out our [Facebook post](#) for flyers with all the details on our two sites. The program is free and open - please share!

Check In with Supportive Services!

This summer Imagine Housing is excited to have two interns with our team! Brianna and Nick have jumped right in to a variety of roles, and have been particularly helpful already to our Supportive Services team. Nick, who is a returning intern from last summer, has begun a weekly project to update our staff on activities throughout our apartment communities. His "Warm Hearted Wednesday" emails are already a highlight we all look forward to! Please enjoy this glimpse of the services team's impact, and check out our Facebook page each week to stay informed!

[Read last week's Warm Hearted Wednesday update!](#)

#SeaHomeless: A Day of Media Awareness



On June 28th, Seattle and King County media outlets sought to increase awareness of the area's housing and homelessness crisis by dedicating a majority of their coverage to the problems, stories of people surviving homelessness, and current as well as potential solutions.

Check out [#SeaHomeless](#) on Twitter for articles and commentary from the media day; you can also find a compilation of the day's content [here](#).

Thank you to all our Imagine Housing supporters who constantly raise awareness of the need for more safe, stable, affordable housing in our community - and work to make that housing a reality!

Attend an Imagine Housing Event

Business Breakfast Briefing: Imagine Housing invites Eastside business leaders to join us for breakfast and a lively panel discussion led by Skylar Olsen, Senior Economist from Zillow. We will discuss current challenges in housing development as well as possible business solutions to this serious dilemma.

Thursday, September 7, 2017
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM
Velocity Apartments
Rooftop Terrace Room
10711 NE 37th Ct, Kirkland, WA 98033



There is no cost to attend, but advance [registration](#) is required. Please contact David Shuster at (425) 576-5190 ext. 12 or davids@imaginehousing.org with any questions.

Imagine Housing Lunch & Learn: Join us for lunch (and bring a friend!) to learn about how housing impacts our communities and Imagine Housing's response to the affordable housing crisis.

July 20, 2017 & November 9, 2017
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Velocity Apartments
Rooftop Terrace Room
10711 NE 37th Ct, Kirkland, WA 98033

Please register for your preferred event date [here](#). Contact Marsha Bukofzer at (425) 576-5190 ext. 22 or marshab@imaginehousing.org with any questions.

Join Our Team

Are you inspired by the idea of using your professional skills to directly benefit people? We are looking for highly motivated and high performing people to add to our growing team. Check out the [opportunities](#) on our website and apply today!



Imagine Housing
building eastside communities

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