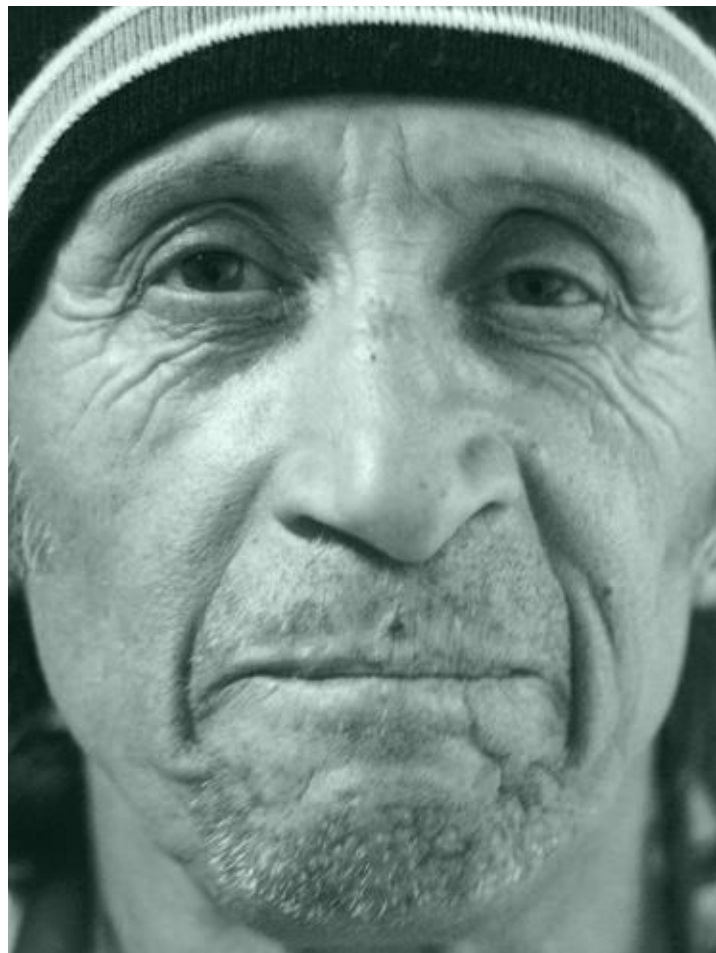




Interfaith Works  
2021-2022  
Strategic Plan



A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots spreading across the ground in a forest setting. The tree's trunk is thick and textured, with roots that are as wide as the trunk itself, spreading out in all directions. The leaves are green and dense, filling the upper part of the frame. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and dirt. In the background, other trees and a stone wall are visible.

# ROOTED

**We are rooted in our mission, vision, and values.**

# Our Mission

Social justice and peace through interfaith understanding and cooperation.

# Our Vision

Rooted in the interfaith commitment to the sacredness of life, we envision a world in which every person is safe, housed, free to be their authentic self, deeply loved, and engaged in community.

Interfaith Works has a legacy of promoting interfaith understanding and collaboration in the community through social justice, community, and educational endeavors.

We create and support the intersection between the values of the world's wisdom traditions and the public square through diverse programming and ongoing nurturing of relationships across and between faiths. Thus, our work in Interfaith Relations exists to strengthen regional, interfaith communities and as a resource and support for social justice and peace in the wider community.

Homelessness, steep rents, low vacancy rates, domestic and interpersonal violence, substance use, mental illness, and chronic physical health problems have left thousands in our community vulnerable and unsafe.

Through the Homeless Services Program, Interfaith Works offers emergency services and support to our most vulnerable and stigmatized neighbors, not as charity but as an act of social justice. Interfaith Works Homeless Services is rooted in empowerment, social inclusion, and community education to end the unnecessary stigmatization of the most vulnerable. Our ongoing commitment is born out of a rich history of care to those enduring homelessness from the 30+ faith and spiritual communities over the decades.



# Our Values

We center the following values in our work.

## Dignity

We recognize that there is inherent worthiness of all persons regardless of circumstance.

## Equity

We recognize the legacy of social, political, and class disparity that expresses itself as racism and commit ourselves to work that promotes the dismantling of racism and all systems of discrimination and oppression.

## Interdependence

We recognize and honor the interconnectedness of all life and our responsibility to care for the planet and all persons regardless of circumstances.

## Inclusivity

We welcome all. We listen, and our table always has another seat. We embrace a shared obligation to one another and recognize that inclusivity does not always equal harmony. We are committed to lifelong learning, interrogation of oppression in all forms, and continuous self and community healing.

## Compassion

We are committed to sitting with the suffering of our community and within ourselves. We see it, believe it, feel it, and take action for the betterment of us all.

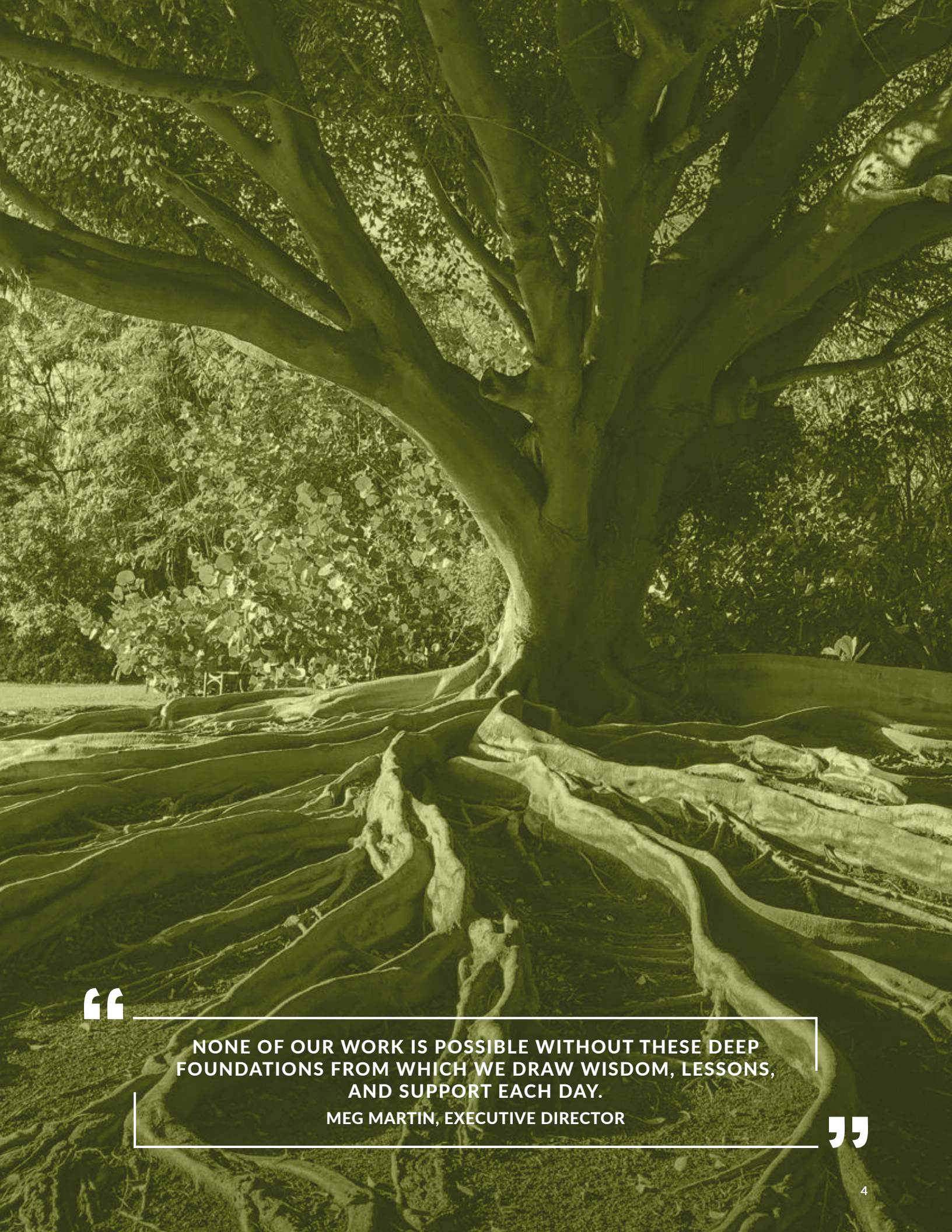
## Integrity

Commitment to seeking the highest ethical standards in all we do, rooted in justice to build a safer community for all.

## Transparency

Openness, honesty, and accessible communication in all organizational decisions. Commitment to fostering a culture of feedback, education, and accountability working throughout all levels of our structure.





“

NONE OF OUR WORK IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT THESE DEEP FOUNDATIONS FROM WHICH WE DRAW WISDOM, LESSONS, AND SUPPORT EACH DAY.

MEG MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

”



# NOURISH

We nourish the communities we serve.

# The Communities We Serve

## Interfaith Relations

Interfaith Works nourishes a rich tradition of programming that brings diverse communities together through celebrating and honoring religious and spiritual diversity in Thurston County. Interfaith Relations programming seeks to promote interfaith understanding and cooperation through projects that advance social justice issues. Together with our member faith and spiritual communities, we convene diverse coalitions to address the ever-evolving needs of our community.


We do not promote, advance, or engage in religious messaging or recruitment with any of our services. Interfaith Works will not discriminate on the basis of ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, race, physical ability, religion or religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to actively participate in a religious practice.







## IN 2020

**3,106 people** entered into the homeless response system in Thurston County.


**79%**  of people entering the homeless response system were single adult.

- **68%** are over the age of 25
- **27%** are over the age of 45
- **13%** are over the age of 55

**40%**  of people entering the homeless response system have a disability.

**\$871/month**  is the average monthly income of a person entering the system.

**\$1,162/month**  is the average housing costs for a one-bedroom apartment in Thurston County.

**3.4%**  is the vacancy rate for available housing in Thurston County.





Former Interfaith Works Shelter Guests

## Homeless Services

Every night in our community, more than 1,000 people sleep in doorways, on cold concrete sidewalks, and in wooded areas around Thurston County. This public health emergency is challenging especially for those needing shelter and for our entire community.

We are addressing that challenge through our dedication to a continuum of services that meet both emergency shelter needs and permanent long-term solutions to resolve homelessness. Our programs are designed to serve people in our community who are routinely and historically screened out of opportunities due to the complexities of the challenges they face related to their physical and mental health. We screen them in. Interfaith Works is a primary services provider for seniors and adults with the most complex challenges experiencing homelessness in our area. We will always prioritize those with the most barriers to service connection and opportunities for a higher quality of life.



On January 28, 2021, 34 degrees outside, in the midst of a global pandemic, 1,145 people were experiencing homelessness in Thurston County.

**639** People stayed in encampments, cars, RVs, doorways, and other places not meant for human habitation

**337** stayed in emergency shelters

**169** stayed in transitional housing

**121** stayed at local jails or hospitals with no permanent address



# Our Strategic Efforts and Outcomes

## Current Works

### Equity, Inclusivity, and Centering Initiatives

Interfaith Works is committed to ongoing reflection and taking action-oriented steps towards centering racial justice in all of our work. Guided by the leadership of our staff and guests of color, we have taken many concrete steps over the past four years to promote racial justice, make our spaces more inclusive, and center the safety of those most impacted by structural racism. As an organization, we must continue to listen, take responsibility for our actions, challenge our defensiveness, and believe that we can, and will, do better. Every day we take small steps within our organization to better support one another. Some more significant steps we have taken to address racism within our community explicitly are;

- BIPOC people disproportionately represent 35% of all people experiencing homelessness while representing just 18% of the general population in Thurston County. In 2017 we formed an ongoing workgroup to design a new tool that will shift the prioritization of all housing and shelter resources for adults in our county towards a more equitable process for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people experiencing homelessness.
- The 2019 development of a Community Response Team plan to offer support and aid to congregations in Thurston County that experience acts of aggression or discriminatory crimes.
- The 2020 commitment to dedicated space on every Board of Directors meeting agenda for intentional reflection, anti-oppression, and anti-racist education.

### Interfaith Relations

We serve our community through;

- **Multi-Denominational Events**—including an interfaith celebration of Earth Day and recognition of the United Nations Peace Day.
- **Acts of Sacred Service**—a memorial and litany for the unclaimed remains in Thurston County held in October at Mills & Mills Funeral Home.
- **Moments of Blessing**—brief interfaith gatherings at the locations of death by homicide to reclaim the place of violence as a place of life and peace.
- **Lean in Olympia (Livestream Show)**—Community education and engagement to increase understanding through interfaith social justice efforts.
- **Special Events:**
  - The February 2021 convening of meaningful public spaces for processing grief on the one-year anniversary of the first recorded COVID-19 death in the United States.
  - The May 2021 co-sponsoring of a ceremony held by the carvers of the Lummi nation as they stopped in Olympia to share a sacred totem pole that is on a national tour to Washington D.C.



## Homeless Services

Our guests receive 24/7 shelter, two meals daily, peer advocacy, connection to permanent housing, connections to primary care, mental health, and substance use treatment, as well as access to basic hygiene services, including laundry and showers.

- 24/7 supportive shelter space for 60 vulnerable, homeless adults currently hosted by two member faith communities, First Christian Church (host since 2014) and First United Methodist Church (host during the pandemic)
- Community Meals Program, which coordinates the donation of meals to our shelters for the social inclusion and increased understanding of our guests
- The Navigation Team peer support-based case management and outreach program that works to support individuals in achieving their goals
- Advocacy and education amongst community members, businesses, service providers, and government partners to destigmatize the experiences of our most vulnerable neighbors

Interfaith Works has been regularly recognized as a regional leader in Housing First, Harm Reduction, Peer Support, and Trauma-Informed Care. We further this by consistently providing training to our staff and education to the broader community.

Our Homeless Services staff provides the best possible care for those who are most vulnerable in our community. Many of our staff team draw upon their lived experience with recovery from homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse recovery and are uniquely qualified to do this work.

## IN 2021-2022

Interfaith Works will provide more than:



**43,000** Bednights



**65,700** Meals



**10,000** Pairs of socks



**500** Replaced vital identification documents



**3,832** REST bednights for medically fragile individuals



# BLOOM

So that our community may bloom.

# Our Commitment

Every day we recenter the interfaith commitment to the sacredness of life and continuously work toward measurable outcomes for a safer and more loving community for us all. We measure success in both concrete and organic ways.

## Advance as Community Leaders

Now more than ever, our communities need to pull together to address issues that affect all of us. We want to help set the tone of community conversation to center social justice and peace through understanding.

In 2021 and 2022, Interfaith Works will:

- **Be the bridge** by engaging in ongoing, transformational dialogue and actions with faith and spiritual communities to deepen resolve and understanding that peace and love fall short without justice at the center.
- Bring diverse viewpoints together to increase understanding and respond to the growing and changing needs of our community.
- Expand community presence, multimedia outreach strategies, and community education programming to reframe the community conversation about homelessness; it's not charity, it's justice.
- Center racial justice in every budget, program and organizational decision to the best of our ability. Accept that we will get it wrong at times and need to be accountable when we do.





### NAVIGATION TEAM

Outreach  
Advocacy  
REST



### 3444 MARTIN WAY

Day Center  
Hygiene Services



### UNITY COMMONS

Supportive  
Shelter



### UNITY COMMONS

Permanent  
Supportive  
Housing



# RAISE THE HOUSE

For the  of our Community

## Implement a Continuum of Care

For too long our region's response to homelessness in our community has been through siloed acts of charity. We want to respond to homelessness in our community as a coordinated act of justice.

In 2021 and 2022, Interfaith Works will:

- Raise the standard of community response to homelessness.
- Organize, implement, and achieve the \$2 million Raise The House Campaign in the 2021/22 program years to ensure the longevity and growth of services beyond the pandemic crisis.
- Center on meeting individuals wherever they are through the implementation of our comprehensive Continuum of Support.



## Restorative Experience for a Safer Transition (REST)

In August 2021, the innovative REST program launched in partnership with Providence St. Peter Hospital, Multicare Health System, and Thurston County Public Health and Social Services. REST provides a safe and supportive place for individuals experiencing homelessness to recover after a hospital discharge. REST strengthens the homeless response system in our area and relieves strain on hospital resources.



## 3444 Martin Way

In September 2021, we will open a new shelter and hygiene center at 3444 Martin Way to respond to the COVID 19 pandemic. This innovative building will offer shelter, hygiene services, and connection to vital support services once the pandemic response is no longer necessary.





Interfaith Works Staff Team

## Unity Commons

In December 2021, Interfaith Works, in partnership with the Low Income Housing Institute, and many public and private partners, will provide all support services at a new facility at 2828 Martin Way that will provide a 60 bed, 24/7 shelter and 65 units of permanent supportive housing.





## SHELTER AMENITIES

Showers and Laundry

Personal Secured Storage, Pets Allowed

Community Kitchen

Designated Courtyard Space

Phone, Mail, Internet Services

Specific Sleeping Areas for all Genders and Couples

## PERMANENT HOUSING AMENITIES

12 Studio and 53 One-Bedroom Apartments

Kitchenettes and Personal Bathrooms in Each Unit

Designated Common Space and Rooftop Garden Area

Subsidized Rents Below 50% of the Area Median Income

Targeted to Seniors, People with Disabilities, Veterans

Tailored Case Management

## UNITY COMMONS IN DECEMBER 2021



EVERY DESIGN CHOICE WAS MADE FROM YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, AND FEEDBACK FROM OUR GUESTS AND STAFF TO BETTER SUPPORT EVERYONE'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

MEG MARTIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



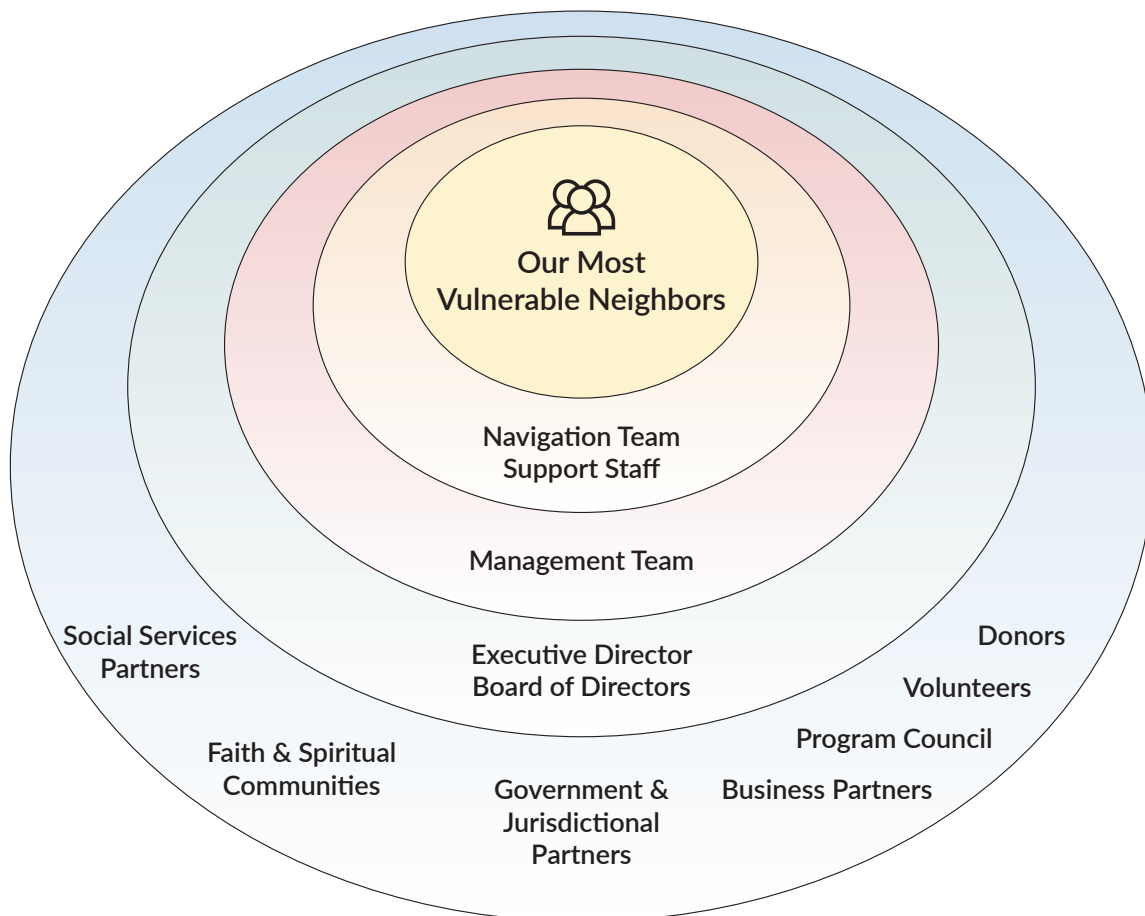
## Sustain and Stabilize Growth

While we strive to serve the needs of our community today, we also look toward the needs of tomorrow. We want to ensure that we can continue to provide solid and relevant support to our community for years to come.

In 2021 and 2022 Interfaith Works will:

- **Strengthen our network** by expanding and maturing our collaborative partnerships amongst community members, government officials, businesses and organizations, and other service providers to strengthen the services and resources for our most vulnerable neighbors. These are community issues. The solutions must be community led.
- Continue developing and implementing employee benefits to ensure the best trained, most qualified staff by offering health insurance, education stipends, training programs, and retirement accounts. Our staff enhances our position as a premier authority on Housing First, Harm Reduction, Peer Support, and Trauma-Informed Care to best serve the most vulnerable neighbors in our community.
- Form and implement a dedicated development team that will continue our strong IW commitment to values-based, non-exploitive budgeting and fundraising with Community Centric Fundraising tenets.

## Centering Those Most Impacted As We Grow





“

INTERFAITH WORKS HAS REPRESENTATIVES FROM 31 FAITH COMMUNITIES, I APPRECIATE THIS GREATLY BECAUSE ANYTHING WE CAN DO TOGETHER, TO MEET EACH OTHER WITH GREATER COMPASSION AND ACCEPTANCE, ASSUREDLY EXPANDS JUSTICE MORE BROADLY.

INTERFAITH WORKS PROGRAM COUNCIL DELEGATE

”



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www.Interfaith-Works.org



I do this work because people deserve to be met where they are at and have compassionate support. Everyone deserves to be seen as full, nuanced individuals who are worthy of love.

When I was in one of the most painful and terrifying periods of my life, the care and unconditional positive regard of others kept me going. I want to give that back, and I feel like every person deserves that.

NAVIGATION TEAM  
STAFF MEMBER

Interfaith Works has made life better for me one day at a time.

INTERFAITH WORKS  
SHELTER GUEST



ROOTED IN OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES, WE NOURISH THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE THROUGH STRATEGIC EFFORTS AND OUTCOMES, SO THAT OUR COMMUNITY MAY BLOOM.