

BETHLEHEM INN DOUBLES UP

EXPANDED SHELTER CONTINUES TO PROVIDE HELP AND HOPE

The Bethlehem Inn, a community-supported shelter that serves unhoused individuals, is located in a two-building, energy-efficient and ADA-compliant facility in Bend, Oregon. The buildings, which are designed to separately accommodate single residents and families, offer nourishing meals, safe places to sleep and case management services.

The Inn's residents and staff weren't always situated in such a practical environment. The shelter previously housed guests in a former motel built in the 1960s, which was in need of an upgrade to better achieve their goals and serve their residents.

Using community-provided funding and working with Energy Trust of Oregon, their board of directors, and a determined team from BLRB Architects and SunWest Builders, they demolished the motel and built the new Bethlehem Inn, doubling capacity.

Additional upgrades such as a commercial kitchen, children's playground and improved laundry services support the Inn's mission of transforming lives with shelter, help and hope.



PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Equipment installed

- Condensing boiler and furnace
- Energy recovery ventilator
- High-performance envelope
- LED lighting
- Windows
- Solar array (savings not included in the amounts below)

Financial analysis

- \$59,140 Energy Trust cash incentives

Estimated annual energy savings

- 134,880 kWh
- 9,150 therms

ONE GOAL AT A TIME

As a high-barrier shelter designed to get residents back to living independent lives, goal setting was crucial in orchestrating the Inn's new facilities. An emphasis was placed on safety, energy efficiency and ADA compliance—however, putting residents first was a main priority.

"Accommodating a real healing and nurturing environment was on the goal-setting list," said Gwenn Wysling, executive director, Bethlehem Inn. "We wanted a place that provided compassion, safety and security, as well as comfort, giving residents what they needed so that they can be successful in moving on."

A SEAMLESS TRANSITION

Being able to construct the new facility without disrupting the Inn's services to the community posed a unique problem. "That was the number one challenge, for sure," said Seth Anderson, principal architect, BLRB Architects. "We worked really closely with SunWest Builders to think through how the site could be developed to keep their buildings in operation."



The builders, staff members and board of directors all came together to make the transition from the old motel to the new buildings as smooth as possible. Thanks to careful, staged planning, full services continued throughout the construction.

"In collaboration with Bethlehem Inn, we established a work plan that minimized

disruption to their daily operations," said Julie Hyer, project manager, SunWest Builders. "This meant building a temporary kitchen and administration building first, so that meals could continue being served and the Inn could remain open."



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EFFICIENCY FOR THE COMMUNITY

It was important for the Bethlehem Inn to prioritize energy efficiency in order to lower operating costs and keep more funds available for the residents and programs. "We did early design assistance with Energy Trust—that enlightened us on what the project goals were and helped us have a good discussion about what's realistic," said Anderson.

Efficient features that went into the facility include energy recovery ventilators, condensing boiler and furnace, LED lighting and a solar array on the families building.

"We were given some great resources and it is a gift to our community," said Wysling. "Energy Trust is a great steward and does amazing work, and they have helped us create not only an energy-efficient building but a beautiful building and home."

GIVING BACK AND GOING FORWARD

The new buildings' energy-efficient features and commercial kitchen have been worthwhile upgrades, but the ability to double the number of residents in the new Bethlehem Inn is its crowning achievement.

"Before, we could serve about 70 residents, including five families," said Howard Friedman, Bethlehem Inn board of directors president. "Now, we can serve about 130 to 140. We doubled our capacity for the families to 10 rooms, and then our singles make up the rest—about 95 singles."

The community response to the improved Inn has been wholeheartedly positive. The shelter has experienced increased visibility, which has led to more donors and more volunteers stepping forward, all in an effort to help residents reach their goals.

"It's rewarding to see people who are experiencing homelessness be in a facility where they can feel proud of themselves," said Joe Emerson, director of the Zero Energy Project and former Bethlehem Inn board member. "The whole program is designed to get people back into housing, back into a job and to get the medical care they need so they can live independent lives. It's a spectacular success and will continue to be."

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