

SUNNYSIDE

Neighborhood News

April 2023

SUNNYSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SunnysidePortland.org

board@sunnysideportland.org

News from the President

By Chris Waldmann, SNA President

Happy Spring, neighbors! Flowers blooming, some sun high in the sky and longer days welcoming us all outside into the neighborhood. Count me as a YAY!

Our March meeting featured an interesting presentation from the Metro Climate Action Team about their efforts to turn Portlanders towards more sustainable methods of cooking our food, and heating our homes and water. We learned about the benefits of installing heat pumps and induction cooktops – such as greatly improved in-home air quality, the potential for reduced utility bills and knowing that we are doing our part to reach our community's climate goals. The federal government, through the Inflation Reduction Act, is offering tax credits and rebates for the purchase of heat pumps, energy efficient windows and induction stoves. Efforts are also proceeding to ensure that all new construction doesn't utilize gas hookups. There's going to be a lot of new construction in and around Portland over the next decade, and I'm hoping that we can use this opportunity to improve the environment rather than locking in new neighbors to dirty, unhealthy energy. To learn more about the Metro Climate Action Team visit www.olcv.org/metro-climate-action-team. The IRS has an FAQ page up about the available credits and rebates at www.irs.gov/pub/txprofs/fs-2022-40.pdf.

The April board meeting will be a busy one! We will be discussing the new committee charter that the Land Use and Transportation Committee has been working on as well as planning our May elections. With that in mind, I am taking this space to officially announce that our elections will be held at our May

11th meeting at 7 p.m. You will be able to participate in-person or on-line, but you must be at the meeting to vote! We have four board seats on the ballot this year and officers will be elected by the board over the summer. If you are interested in learning more about being a member of the SNA board or any of the officer positions, please reach out to us at board@sunnysideneighborhood.org. Any of us would be happy to discuss the roles and our experiences working for the community.

If we don't see you in April, then I look forward to seeing many of you in May and around the neighborhood in between! If you have anything that you would like the SNA to tackle, please reach out to us at any time.

Annual Meeting and Board Elections May 11th

*By Matt Lembo,
SNA Director-at-Large*

We hope you will join us for our annual election and consider running for one of our open Board positions on May 11th, 7 p.m. at SE Uplift (3534 SE Main Street). No experience is required, and our fun and friendly Board will help you figure things out right. It's a great way to get involved in your community and have a voice.

If you live or work in the Sunnyside neighborhood you are eligible to run. This year we are looking to fill one- and two-year terms. Meetings are on the second Thursday of each month. Commitments vary depending on your interests and passions.

Serving on the neighborhood association board can be rewarding and very educational. You will be among the first to know when things are changing in the

neighborhood. If you would like to send in a brief candidate's statement to post to our website and be made available at the election, please email us at board@sunnysideportland.org.

Sunnyside Neighborhood Community Cares Updates

*By Hannah Wallace, SNACC
Member, SNA Vice President*

Instead of our SNACC meeting this month, a few of us from the Sunnyside Shower Project participated in a lively policy conversation on houselessness and public safety sponsored by Portland Forward, an intergenerational organization that envisions a Portland that works for all. Leaders from Street Roots, H4All, and other organizations were present, as were the D.A., a former mayoral candidate, and several singers (one of whom has a singing telegram company). We came up with some big ideas that included increasing pay for social workers, ending the commodification of housing stock, and using Neighborhood Associations as a way to build community amongst unhoused and housed neighbors. Our next SNACC meeting will be on April 20th at 6:30 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings

Check sunnysideportland.org in advance for location details and agenda.

April Meetings

April 13: 7:00 - 8:00 pm SNA Board
April 20: 6:30 - 8:00 pm SNACC

May Meetings

May 11: 7:00 - 8:30 pm SNA General
May 11: 8:30 - 9:00 pm SNA Board
May 18: 6:30 - 8:00 pm SNACC



Ben Wyatt, Program Coordinator for Multnomah County's STEP Court.

Sunnyside Neighborhood Getting to Know Your Neighbors

*By Matt Lembo,
SNA Director-at-Large*

Q&A with Ben Wyatt

Born in San Diego, Ben Wyatt grew up mostly in Salem and Jefferson, Oregon, before relocating to Dallas, Texas, at the age of 12. He returned to Oregon in his late 20s to be closer to his extended family after the tragic death of his mother and uncle in a plane crash. In 2020, he, his wife Petrina, and their then 11-year old son moved to a house in Sunnyside, where they're happy to be setting down roots. Ben even joined the board of the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association in 2021, where he is serving as Secretary. Trained as a mental health and substance use disorder therapist, he is now the Program Coordinator for Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt's new STEP Court, which helps people convicted of a crime access behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment instead of receiving a lengthy prison sentence.

How long have you been in Sunnyside and what brought you here?

Ben: My wife, son and I moved to Sunnyside in the summer of 2020, right at the height of the pandemic, from the Buckman neighborhood. We had a little condo and with two dogs, a cat and the three of us it just seemed little much for 700 square feet.

You moved to Dallas, Texas when you were 12. Dallas strikes me as stereotypically opposite from Portland. Would you say that's true?

Ben: When I moved to Portland it was during the George W. Bush presidency and there was a lot of political tension. In Portland, whenever I told people I was from Dallas, they didn't really talk to me. It was kind of hard to make friends at first. I was working at REI in Dallas—which is about the most liberal place you can work there. Then I transferred to an REI out here and people would find out I came from Dallas and they would ... um ...

They would judge you.

Ben: Yeah, they would judge me.

How did that manifest?

Ben: Here in Portland we recycle. In Dallas there wasn't as big a focus on it. One time when I was working in an REI bike shop in Portland, I came back from lunch to see that my co-worker had all my garbage from lunch strewn out on the counter where he worked on bikes and he goes, "I know your mother just died, but that's no excuse for not recycling."

Wow ... That is some Portlandia stuff right there.

Ben: I know, I was like, "Welcome to Portland."

So how has it been living in Sunnyside? What's your sense of what makes Sunnyside Sunnyside?

Ben: I know my neighbors much better here. Maybe that's a function of them being more active; it's also possibly a function of me taking forever to break out of my shell. Sunnyside is a place we've decided to make our home. We're finally putting down roots, which I haven't really ever officially done.

What do you consider putting down roots? How do you know when you've done it?

Ben: It's a state of mind. We've decided that this is our neighborhood. We are going to frequent the businesses here, we are going to get involved, we are going to pick up garbage when I see it, we are going to ...

Recycle.

Ben: Ha, yeah. I'm also going to help

people who are struggling, I'm going to hold people accountable when they're being difficult. You know, treat this place like it's our home.

So tell me a bit about your work. What is STEP Court?

Ben: The STEP Court, or "Strategic Treatment and Engagement Program" Court, is a specialty court where you bring together a team of specific people into one room—treatment, supervision, defense counsel, prosecutor and a judge—to help people convicted of a crime progress through long-term treatment instead of being, or remaining, imprisoned. Typically, when you think about specialty court you think about drug court. In the late '80s and early '90s, jails and prisons were filling up with people convicted of small-time possession. There was a judge back in 1991 that worked with the DA's office and the defense bar and a treatment provider to come up with the STOP Court which stands for "Sanctions Treatment Opportunity and Progress." But then a few years ago, ballot Measure 110 ended STOP court after almost thirty years of operation.

How did Measure 110 end drug courts?

Ben: STOP Court was solely for folks with drug possession charges and since Measure 110 decriminalized possessing a personal amount of drugs, there was no more need for it.

And that's different from STEP Court because STEP Court involves a person-to-person crime?

Ben: Right. Robbery, assault, kidnapping, that sort of thing. Crimes that would otherwise carry mandatory sentences of five years or more in prison.

So what is your role in all this?

Ben: As the Program Coordinator my job is to bring all of the team members together and keep them on task and hold them accountable to best practice standards, in a program that is pretty complicated, even for a specialty court.

What motivates these team members to participate? Are they required to by the court or the county, or do they volunteer?

Ben: Ideally they volunteer. There are some folks who are assigned, but for the most part folks that are involved have said, "Yeah, I want to be a part of that" because

it's new and exciting and they've bought into the success of the individuals that come through the program.

And they think it's a good idea.

Ben: Maybe. Not everybody who walks into that courtroom is super excited. Not every Deputy District Attorney is excited to see the person sitting in front of them.

And is it largely the same people? The same attorneys and treatment providers that work on each case?

Ben: Yeah, we aim for consistency and want to avoid turnover. We want our probation officers and our judge to be on the program for a couple years. And the coordinator just makes sure that all of that comes together, not to advise on how the team members do what they do. Even though I'm trained as a treatment provider I'm not telling treatment how to treat, I'm not telling the probation officer how to do her job, and I'm certainly not telling the judge what to do.

The judge, Eric Bloch, seemed really on it when I observed STEP Court a few weeks ago. He knew every single person that came through the room and he had some themes that he kept coming back to when he talked to people. Can you tell me more about him?

Ben: He's been running treatment courts for over 20 years so he's really well-versed in the model. We assemble the team and get together before each court session and discuss how the participant is doing and make recommendations to the judge who then has final say regarding the next steps.

So each defendant is essentially given the choice between participating in this program to the judge's satisfaction or going to prison.

Ben: That's the thing, it's not just to the judge's satisfaction. You have to have a judge who has bought into the model but the model is for the whole team to work together with the participant to make meaningful progress. One way we do that is by using proximal and distal expectations when evaluating progress.

I don't know what that means. Distal?

Ben: Proximal would be our main expectation and distal would be our secondary expectation. Let me give you an example. If you're addicted to heroin, how fair is it if on week one when you come to

court we say that we're going to throw you in jail if you don't quit using? No way, right? You're going to need medicine or treatment to get sober. So our proximal expectation isn't that you are sober on week one, but that you are ready and willing to get into treatment and you getting sober is distal.

But what if treatment isn't available? Does that happen a lot? I hear getting a spot in a residential treatment program is very hard these days.

Ben: Yup. That, unfortunately, is the way it is.

Do you guys, because of your connection to the justice system, get priority?

Ben: We do not get priority.

That seems a little backwards, no?

Ben: You'd have to ask treatment providers why that is, but when I was a treatment provider the reason I'd give is that it wouldn't be fair to prioritize any individual who wants treatment over any other, whether they're coming from a courtroom or the street. Frankly, if they're coming of their own accord the treatment provider would probably say they have more motivation.

Ideally anybody who wants treatment should get it, no? Isn't that the system we're trying to build?

Ben: Yes. That's the system that we'd like to build. If you want to build a system like that you have to be willing to invest in capacity. You can't just build for what you think you're going to need and try to match it just perfectly. You have to be willing to have beds sitting there waiting to be filled and be willing to pay treatment professionals enough money so that they can make a decent living.

So we don't have enough capacity now, right? Does that mean we didn't invest enough in capacity in the past and now we're paying the price?

Ben: That would be my opinion, yes. I don't know what exactly happened in the past, politically or regarding funding, but I do know that going forward one thing we need to fix is we have to have a lot more capacity. We need to build more treatment centers and we need to have providers who are experienced in this field confident they are going to be able to hire and pay people for the long term.

Critic's Corner: Pizza Picks

*By Jonathan Woodworth,
7 years old, Glencoe Elementary*

My favorite pizza place is Straight from New York on Hawthorne. I like it because they make very thin slices and they make them very big. Pepperoni is my favorite. My second favorite is Ranch Pizza. They have all the favorite toppings that I normally like, like pepperoni. I like the square shape and the crust is sooo good. My third favorite is the pizza from my school – Glencoe. On Thursdays, the lunch menu is pizza and I like it because it is greasy and has pepperoni.

Straight from New York, 3701 SE Hawthorne and 3330 SE Belmont.
Happy Hour slice is \$3.25

Ranch Pizza, 2239 SE 11th Ave.
They also have fancier pies like the #4: aged mozzarella, red sauce, sausage, ricotta, with calabrian chilies, pecorino, and basil.

Please submit ideas for Critics Corner to Hannah at hannahmwallace@gmail.com

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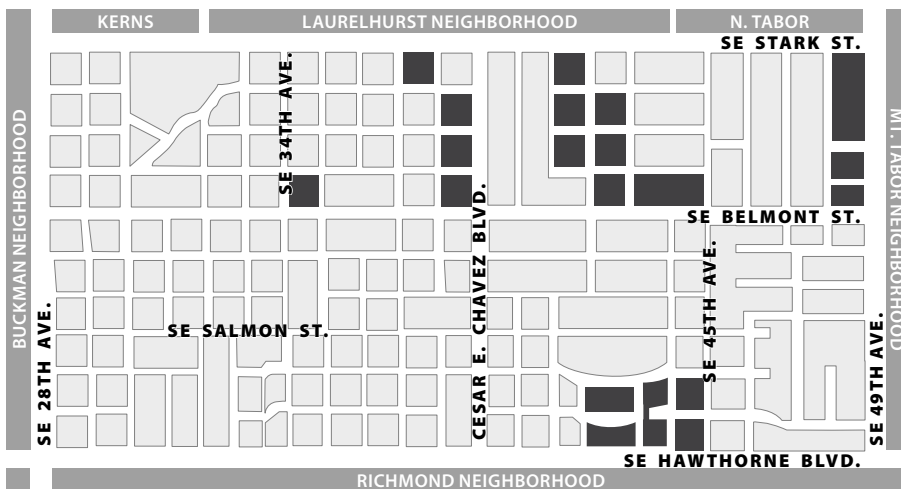
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Sunnyside Neighborhood 'Gap Map'

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