

United We Stand Encampment at Richmond Beach Cong UCC

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is this group? United We Stand is a small encampment of no more than 35 people. They are an organization of homeless helping the homeless in transition. The group includes families with children. Most of the adults are working. They have formed this encampment in order to focus on finding housing, keeping their jobs, and getting the support they need. They formed last fall. They were in a city park for 2 months and now have been at Haller Lake Methodist Church in Seattle for 3 months.

Do they have the backing of another organization? Yes, they are supported by Greater Seattle Cares. Greater Seattle Cares provides financial assistance, food donations, a medical/dental team as needed, and advice to camp leadership. The organization also coordinates community meals for the camp, as they do for other tent cities. The goal is one hot meal a day, provided by a variety of organizations and churches. Their website is www.greaterseattlecares.org.

Why are we planning to host United We Stand? There are several answers to this question.

- A couple of years ago, we voted to make providing support to those who are homeless as our top priority for outreach. This would extend our support beyond what we are currently doing.
- In the fall of 2013, we voted to focus on hospitality. Here's a great way to be radically hospitable!
- Many other churches have hosted encampments over and over. It's our turn to step up to the plate.

Where will the encampment be placed? We are currently the encampment on the property between our two transitional houses. Access to and from the encampment will be directly onto 15th NW. The encampment will be sufficiently back from the road so as not to be extremely visible. There will be a tarped fence, giving them privacy from the road. The site will accommodate their tents, covered shelter for cooking and meetings, portable toilets, and dumpster.

When would the group move onto our site? March 21st.

How long would they be here? The city grants a permit for 90 days. During that time, the group is expected to be seeking their next host. If there is difficulty in finding a new location, sometimes there is an extension for 30 days. Haller Lake has graciously done that to give us time to make our decision and get the permit from the city of Shoreline.

What do we have to provide the encampment besides a site? The basics include:

- Full time access to a potable fresh water outlet for drinking, cooking, and sanitation. Water would be brought by hose from the Troyer House.

- Electrical power connection for common area lighting, use of microwave and other support equipment, and personal device charging stations. Mike Curley has offered to set this up. It also would be connected to the power at Troyer House.
- Access to a waste-water dumping drain.
- Interior space and utilities as support as needed for scheduled medical/dental team visits or for counseling.

How will the camp be regulated?

- The camp provides their own security detail, which is on duty 24/7. The security team makes sure that all of the UWS rules are adhered to. They patrol the perimeter of the property. If needed, the police and/or our own contact person are called. Neighborhoods hosting encampments have found that there are fewer problems in the area when there is an encampment!
- The residents are screened. No sex offenders are permitted.
- No weapons are permitted in the camp.
- The camp is 100% drug and alcohol free.
- Loitering and disturbing neighbors or camp residents will not be tolerated.
- The rules for the encampment are strictly enforced. Those who violate them are given a bus ticket and escorted to the nearest bus stop to ensure they leave the area. People may be barred for 7 to 30 days or permanently, depending on the severity of the infraction.
- Residents are not permitted to enter the church without permission, other than for Sunday services to which they are as welcome as anyone else.
- We will have a team that will rotate the responsibility of being contact person on behalf of the church. We will have a rotating cell phone, so that the school and encampment will have one phone number to call if there is a need for assistance.

What do city ordinances require?

- A temporary use permit, which costs \$317.
- A neighborhood meeting prior to permit being issued. We have to provide a mailed notice of the meeting, postmarked at least 10-14 days before the meeting. It must be mailed to all neighbors within a 500 foot radius of the church. The meeting will be on Monday, March 9th at 7pm in the fellowship hall.
- We have to provide the city a written summary of the neighborhood meeting, including mailing list of who was notified, who attended, summary of concerns, issues, and problems and a summary of proposed modifications to plan, addressing concerns.

What costs will we incur?

- Temporary use permit
- Cost of electricity and water
- Mailing costs for the community meeting

- A temporary cell phone for our team so that we can be contacted as needed by the encampment outside of office hours, without having to give out our home phone numbers.
- Insurance rider

Will this decrease the number of parking spaces available? The encampment will not impact our parking. Only one resident of United We Stand has a vehicle and it will be parked at Troyer House.

When will the community meeting happen? March 9th at 7pm. There will also be a meeting for parents of Horizon School (date TBD)

Have we asked Compass Housing Alliance about use of this property? Yes, and they are in full support. (Compass Housing Alliance manages the rental of our transitional houses)

Have we asked Horizon School? Yes, and we are working with them to develop a plan that will meet their needs.

What measures are proposed to handle refuse and human waste on proposed sites?

A dumpster would be provided for the handling of refuse and would be regularly collected. Residents are forbidden to litter the camp or the surrounding neighborhood. Regular patrols are conducted to ensure property is kept clean. Anecdotal reports from other cities indicate that previous neighbors have commented on the cleanliness of their streets during an encampment. Well maintained, portable toilets are provided sufficient to the needs of the number of residents. Hand washing stations would be available adjacent to these toilets. Public Health staff members will monitor these conditions.

Will showers be available on site? No. In the past, when Calvin Presbyterian Church has hosted, the city of Shoreline allowed residents to use the showers at Spartan gym. We plan to approach the city about this. In talking with members of the group at Haller Lake, they have said they already are using our city showers!

Are open fires be allowed? Is fire prevention equipment available on site?

No open fires are allowed. It plans to have fire extinguishers on site and posted according to the directives of the local fire department. Local fire departments are welcome to visit at any time.