

Our Beginnings

The Dominican Sisters of Peace, as part of their spirituality network, started Women to Women listening circles in 1988. The listening circles are now continuing in their 29th year. All women were welcomed, and the time spent together with volunteer women companions included openness, affirmation, and intense listening, but never good advice, directives, or religion. The program continues in that urban area of a million plus. The challenge ahead is to see if it can be sustainable in a rural county of Western Washington.

Bayside began discussing adopting Women to Women Listening Circles in the fall of 2016. The program in Jefferson County began with women who were in Bayside's transitional housing program. With the help and interest of five dedicated listening companions, the first meeting was held on November 7, 2016. As women leave the group after they find housing, they know they are welcomed to return. With much of the affordable housing being many miles away in a rural area with a limited bus system, returning is not always a possibility. We have received feedback that the women have valued this experience.

Bayside received a \$1,000 grant from St. Cecelia Parish on Bainbridge Island in Kitsap County to expand the program. The Dominican Sisters' website proved to be a valuable contribution to getting the program off the ground. Efforts to expand the program to other areas of Jefferson County are underway. Companions will be recruited and trained to be listeners. Good advice and directives will be left behind. We expect it will be a long, slow process but one worth the effort. Local churches as well as local food banks are now being contacted. All seem interested in hearing about the program. These churches have been monetary supporters of St. Vincent de Paul in the area, so they are used to working together.

310 Hadlock Bay Road, Port Hadlock, WA 98339
www.baysidehousing.org | (360) 385-4637

Foundational Values



Women to Women is founded on important and all-encompassing values that we hold dear in any encounter with people. Five fundamental values that we must hold as companions and participants in the Women to Women program are:

- A non-judgmental presence,
- Listening without "fixing,"
- Respecting and keeping boundaries,
- Sharing equally what is common among us, though our experiences may differ, and
- Accepting the growth that results.

These foundational values become the place of compassion in us that understands, accepts, and companions in the journey of other women, especially those who have yet to discover the value and power of their own unique creation. We need to understand that it is our journey that empowers us and **it is their journey that empowers them**. Then and only then does growth happen. Then and only then do they become whole. Then and only then are they FREE to grow into who they are meant to be. Our role is to continue our journey TOGETHER as companions to one another.

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About Bayside

Mission: To provide transformative services to people in need as they improve their quality of life.

The core way we do that is through **supportive temporary housing** helping our clients transition into permanent living situations.

Through a unique partnership with the Old Alcohol Plant Hotel & Event Center, Bayside offers 10 rooms to low-income singles and couples, serving 10-20 people at a time. Using a sliding scale, residents are asked to pay 30% of their income as a program fee.

Priority is given to seniors, veterans, and underemployed/low-wage workers who need housing in order to retain employment. After careful screening, clients receive personalized case management that includes assistance with filling out housing applications, scheduling and transportation for medical appointments, and navigating other social services that are related to independent living and securing long-term housing.

Waiting lists for housing in Jefferson and neighboring counties are often years long, leaving people on the streets or in other unsafe conditions while they wait. Bayside clients are referred by other service organizations, including the local hospital, who see medical conditions worsen when patients do not have access to safe living arrangements or the ability to make and keep appointments.

Since opening in April 2016, Bayside has housed over 26 individuals, providing over 3000 bednights. **77% of our alumni are now in permanent housing.**

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Testimonials

Comments from Program Volunteers:

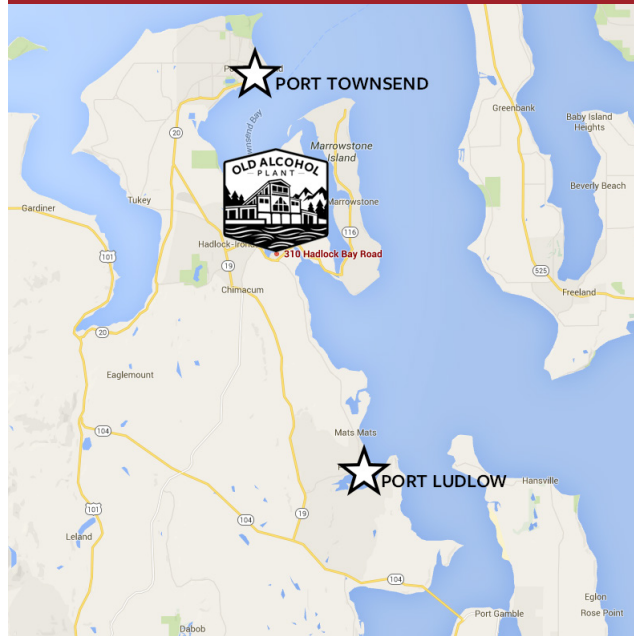
"It is an honor to be present to the women who choose to meet with us. I am always overwhelmed by the multiple challenges they face, their ability to both endure them and work through them, and their continuing positive outlook on life. Our special gift is to laugh with each other."

"I like being person to person with these women, rather than just donating money to this non-profit. Meeting with the women in this project allows me to better understand their unique situations."

"When women are comfortable enough with other women to share their thoughts, concerns, issues openly and freely without fear of being judged, given unsolicited advice, or ridiculed, then the opportunity to feel valued for oneself as a unique person is afforded. I appreciate the gifts the women share with each other in terms of caring, kindness, compassion, and respect. My time spent in volunteering is a gift to me and I treasure it."



Location & Time



Women to Women Listening Circle meets at the Old Alcohol Plant, on the Bayside Housing floor, Room 206. We hope to add additional meetings around the region to meet the needs of women in many communities.

Thursdays, 3pm

310 Hadlock Bay Road
Port Hadlock, WA 98339



Women to Women Listening Circle

Mission

Women to Women provides mentoring and training for women who discover their capacity to be present through the experience of relational listening, so that they may:

- Provide opportunities for women to share their stories in a safe place.
- Empower women to break the cycles of abuse, violence, homelessness, and poverty.
- Mentor and connect women who wish to form volunteer listening teams.
- Help women identify their capacity to be a listening and non-judgmental presence.

We encourage women interested in training to sit in for a few sessions and observe the group. Join us!

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