



## Vision House Jacob's Well Fact Sheet

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### Contacts:

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**Vision House Executive Director:** Susan Camerer  
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### Agency Operating Budget:

**FY 2005**

\$542,000

**FY 2006**

\$1.2 million

**FY 2007**

\$1.4 million

### Project History:

In a precedent-setting movement beginning in late 2002, local north-end clergy of many Christian denominations came together at the invitation of local business owners, Kurt and Craig Campbell. The purpose of the meetings was to build relationships, pray and begin to investigate community needs. The group developed a plan to mobilize area churches to help support their neighbors in need and to bring church congregations collectively and individually into the helping services arena. Today, this group is comprised of dedicated individuals from a variety of backgrounds who share this vision of churches, social service agencies and ministries working together.

Kurt's original vision was for a Christian Community Center called Jacob's Well. At the time, the group focused on the community need for supportive, transitional housing for homeless mothers and their children. The group identified Vision House as an appropriate model of faith-based transitional housing and services for homeless families.

***"The Vision House Children's Village is an extraordinary model for our country."  
Philip Mangano, executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on  
Homelessness appointed by President George Bush.***



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### **Vision House History:**

Motivated by their strong Christian convictions, John and Susan Camerer founded Vision House (VH) in 1990. The couple was moved to help the homeless after seeing a heartbreaking television portrayal of a single mother who becomes homeless and is forced to place her daughter in the care of the state while she is living on the streets. Soon after, the couple wrote a personal check for \$800 to establish the agency.

The primary goal of Vision House is to promote self-sufficiency. VH first provides residents with a stable, safe living environment. Secondly VH provides counseling and support services enabling residents to pursue further education, training, or a job. Once a family becomes self-sufficient, VH's goal is to transition the family to permanent housing making sure the family has adequate income, health care coverage and child care that will ensure the family will remain self-sufficient in the future. VH is committed to serving the homeless whose income falls below 30% of the median income. Residents are invited to live in our facilities for 18 months to 2 years, but may stay longer when they pursue a four-year degree. VH charges no more than 30% of a person's monthly income for rent, however, residents are welcomed with the inability to pay any rent.

### **Vision Statement:**

- *Our vision is to make a significant contribution to the community by reducing the number of homeless men, women, and children in Washington State.*
- *Our Vision is to dramatically change the lives of the homeless by providing housing and services, enabling our residents to avoid homelessness, poverty and abuse in the future.*

***"We see Vision House as an appropriate model of transitional housing that we would like to see widely adopted." Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation***

### **Project Information:**

Vision House proposes to build a complex to provide a structured, safe environment to support homeless single mothers and their children within North King and Snohomish Counties. The facility will fall under the Vision House 501 (c) 3 and will house the Jacob's Well Service Center to link the project to local area churches, businesses, and community groups and thereby enable them to mobilize volunteers to assist the professional staff.

The Jacob's Well Service Center consists of 6,300 square feet of space dedicated to servicing the families living on the campus. The purpose of the center will be to support at risk families in developing job skills, living skills, and ongoing recovery from chemical dependency and abuse through the use of counseling offices, a computer lab, open common area for events, community meals and children's programming such as tutoring clubs, peer



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groups, movie nights and other activities. It also includes space for a food, clothing and resource bank for families moving in with very little .

We aim to carry out this mission through programs that rebuild self-esteem, teach personal discipline, and faith. We seek to help our clients realize their full potential to become productive, responsible, self-sufficient members of society.

### Project Cost Estimate:

Property Acquisition Costs	\$ 450,000.00
Vertical Construction *	\$ 6,200,000.00
Development Costs: Professional	\$ 870,000.00
Development Costs: Other	\$ 470,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,990,000.00</b>

\* The vertical construction cost estimate is based on \$95 per square foot.

Of the \$7.9 million needed for the project, approximately \$5 million will come from public sources, \$1.9 million from private foundations and \$1 million from individuals, local businesses and community groups. As of September 7, 2006 the project has raised just of \$320,000 from individuals and businesses.

### Project Status:

Under the volunteer leadership of real estate attorney, Gretchen Valentine, the building and site selection committee identified property in Shoreline suitable for the complex. Vision House purchased the property and the design and permitting process is currently underway. The complex will be located near grocery shopping and public transportation and will include 21 transitional housing units for families, a childcare center for 60 children and the Jacob's Well Service Center.

### Current Supporters of the Vision House Jacob's Well Project:

#### Businesses:

Campbell Nelson Volkswagen and Nissan  
 Weinand Financial  
 James G. Murphy Co.  
 Land America  
 Sundquist Homes  
 Lithocraft  
 Microsoft Matching Gifts  
 Crista Broadcasting/Spirit 105.3  
 Intuitive Integration  
 Pearson Venture Group

Village Yarn and Tea Shop  
 Destination Marketing  
 Coast Real Estate Service  
 Wilcox Construction  
 S.L. Larsen Construction  
 Chico's

#### Foundations:

Mustard See Foundation  
 Washington Mutual Foundation  
 Natan Foundation  
 Windermere Foundation



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### Churches:

Westgate Chapel  
Eastside Foursquare  
Richmond Beach Congregational  
Greenwood Christian Church

Church of the Good Shepherd  
Greenlake Presbyterian  
North Seattle Church of the Nazarene  
Lynnwood Nazarene  
Crossroads Church

### Previous Supporters of Vision House:

Sound Families Initiative  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Boeing Company  
Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties  
Conner Homes  
PACCAR  
HomeAid Master Builders Care  
Woodinville Lumber  
Meridian Center Electric  
Summit Drywall  
Integrated Concrete Systems  
Lafond Framing  
Employees Community Fund of Boeing  
Windermere Foundation  
The Seattle Foundation  
Microsoft Matching Gifts  
D.V. & Ida McEachern Charitable Trust  
Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation  
The Washington Mutual Foundation

Northwest Children's Fund  
H.R.H. Family Foundation  
Antioch Bible Church  
Highlands Community Church  
Renton Bible Church  
Calvary Chapel South  
Highline Christian Church  
New Life Church @ Renton  
First Evangelical Presbyterian  
Covenant Presbyterian  
Eastside Foursquare  
Mt. Si Lutheran Church  
Renton Lutheran Church  
IKEA  
Renton First Savings Bank  
Renton Rotary  
DR Horton  
Schneider Homes  
Bennett Homes

### The Vision House Jacob's Well Advisory Team:

Sylvia Anderson, Executive Director of the Everett Gospel Mission  
Ray Bakke, Chairman of the Board of Regents at Bakke Graduate University of Ministry,  
Dr. Randy Bridges, Dean of Students, Puget Sound Christian College  
Larry Cooney, Executive Director, Bread of Life Mission  
Gary Fast, Program Director, Union Gospel Mission

Colleen Nordlund, Executive Director, CRISTA Women's Ministries  
Nancy Murphy, Executive Director, Northwest Family Life  
Herb Pfiffner, Executive Director, Union Gospel Mission  
Terry Pollard, Executive Director, Bellevue Family YMCA  
Norm Maleng, King County Prosecuting Attorney



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### Agency Accomplishments:

- Since 2002, 83% of our men and 89% of the parents in our family program have increased their financial stability by proving they can pay rent on time, save money and reduce their existing debt or resolve credit concerns that would preclude them from permanent housing;
- 83% of our men and 68% of the parents in our family program have experienced an increase in their employability by participating in a job training program, receiving higher education or maintaining steady employment;
- 91% of our men and 80% of parents in our family program have increased in their mastery of life skills demonstrated by passing weekly unit inspections, attending required meetings, increasing communication skills or improving skills at setting boundaries for their self and/or their family.
- In 2005, Vision House Children's Village Child Care center celebrated its grand opening, eliminating one of the major obstacles our families face in achieving self-sufficiency. Fifteen new staff members care for the children while their moms attend school, college, seek job training or employment. We are currently at capacity with 88 wonderful and active children!
- More than 400 men, women and children have benefited from Vision House assistance.
- In 2005, we served 88 men, women and children. 88% of those served in our family program and 67% in our single men's program transitioned into permanent housing.
- In March 2001, Vision House reached its \$1,300,000 campaign goal to build Phase II of its complex in Renton to provide housing and services to an additional 12 formerly homeless mothers and their children. Project partners include DR. Horton, the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties, HomeAid Master Builders Care, the Sound Families Program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Employees Community Fund of Boeing, the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, the Medina Foundation and the Hedco Foundation.
- In late 1999 Vision House completed construction (also debt free) of a ten-bedroom home, Phase I of a housing complex for homeless single mothers and their children in Renton.

### The Need for transitional housing and child care in our community:

There is a tremendous need in King and Snohomish Counties for transitional housing for homeless families, especially for families with young children, and also a great need for quality childcare affordable to low-income families. Homelessness among families with children continues to rise at an alarming rate, and such families make up the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population. Last year, in King County alone, men, women and children were refused shelter over 93,000 times because there were not enough beds available – an increase of 30,000 incidents over the previous year.

- According to "A Roof Over Every Bed: Our Community's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness," produced last year by the Committee to End Homelessness in King



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County, King County's continuum of care planning body, on any given night over 8,000 people are homeless, of whom 2,475 are people in families. Actual numbers are likely higher due to the inherent difficulties in finding and accurately counting homeless people.

- The 2005-2009 King County Consolidated Plan estimated based on the 2003 "One-Night Count" of homeless persons that over 7,980 persons are homeless on any given night in King County. The Plan confirmed that the greatest need for affordable housing is for that serving very low income people, and reaffirmed the need to create strong links between affordable housing and service providers as the lack of supportive services is a critical impediment to reducing homelessness. Such linkages and individualized support will be a central component of the Jacob's Well project.
- The King County Committee To End Homelessness reports for 2006 that 8,300 persons are homeless in King County on any given night. 11% of the households reported a last address from North or East King County, which includes Shoreline. 18% of the homeless were families with children. This would mean that approximately 164 families with children are homeless each night in North King County.
- The 10 Year Plan To End Homelessness calls for the development of 475 additional units of housing for families. There are currently only 43 units of transitional housing in North King County
- 38% of the homeless prevention funds distributed by King County went to households from North and East King County.
- New Beginnings Domestic Violence Program, reports that it turns away 17 women for every women (and her children) that it serves in its emergency shelter program. Additionally, for every opening in its transitional housing program, 20 women apply.
- 22% of persons served in homeless programs funded by King County were from North King County
- HopeLink reports that it has seen a 42% increase in families turned away from its Kenmore transitional housing
- In 2004, Vision House received over 400 housing inquiries from single homeless mothers, received 182 housing applications, and worked with over 100 community agencies to combat homelessness. **Vision House currently has 40 families with approximately 115 children on our waiting list, and receives about 60 calls for shelter each month that we are unable to accommodate due to lack of space.**

Vision House recently studied the available affordable childcare in the neighborhoods surrounding the proposed site. Of the 11 centers in the area, none were affordable to the families who would live in the proposed units or there were no openings available. Lack of child care has been a major obstacle to Vision House families gaining employment and becoming self-sufficient. Most of the single parents in Vision House programs are working or going to school and are often forced to commute with their children for up to 2 hours per day by bus just to get to a child care facility outside of the community before going to work or school. The proximity of the proposed daycare will significantly simplify life for the families,



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greatly improving the likelihood of remaining employed or in school or job training. High-quality, affordable child care is a growing need. While not located in Shoreline, the childcare center operated at Children's Village in Renton was fully subscribed within three months of opening. This center serves the same income group as will be served in Shoreline – households with incomes below 30% AMI.

As with Children's Village in Renton, the child care program will be modeled after the successful Adele Maxwell Child care Center in Bellevue, and will address the special needs of homeless children including social, physical and emotional problems such as developmental delays, learning disabilities, behavioral difficulties, asthma and nutritional deficiencies. Studies prepared by both the United Way and the University of Washington emphasize the critical need for such housing and programs; a University of Washington School of Social Work paper strongly suggests that "...strong and integrated services programs offering the right kind of help at the right time can make a world of difference for a family by reducing the insecurity and turmoil children experience, and by making it possible for families to re-stabilize for the long term.

"Homeless preschoolers face difficulty accessing public preschool education. According to a 1997 survey conducted by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, thirty percent of state coordinators estimated that few or no homeless children were enrolled in preschool. In addition, seventy percent of all respondents (state coordinators and service providers) reported that funding was inadequate to meet the needs of preschool-age homeless children." (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1997; published by National Coalition for the Homeless, June 1999) **"Studies have also shown that children from low-income families who participate in high quality preschool programs are significantly less likely to be assigned to special education, retained in a grade, engage in crime or to drop out of school."** (Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993).

### Testimonies:

#### **Suicide Sounded like a Great Option**

I lost my job the week after 9/11. The phones stopped ringing at the motivational/educational consulting company where I worked. Everyone was laid off. When my job went away, so did my husband leaving me to care for the two children ages 10 and 8. Unemployment wouldn't even cover the rent. No one was hiring after 9/11. It was as if time stood still. But the bills just kept piling up.

I felt isolated and alone, depressed and not worthy as a mother. My neighbors would not talk to me any more because I was out of work and they weren't. I was angry with God for letting me get to this point in my life. Suicide sounded like a solution. In fact I was hospitalized because friends thought I might try it.



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Vision House saved me. There is no question in my mind about that. Yes, I had medication now but medicine does not take away the “loser” image I had of myself. I thought I was not ok and everybody else was. I felt totally inept about caring for my children. And at this point I didn't care what happened to me.

Vision House showed me that all of us have problems that can be solved. My friends at Vision House shared their situations with me and I saw for the first time that everyone has to deal with many things in their lives. I was not alone and I was not different. I was not judged and I felt accepted.

Anne Snook (Vision House Program Supervisor) helped me learn to plan for myself, my life and constantly encouraged me to work my plan. Anne taught me the importance of doing something nice for me, to understand that I was one of God's beautiful creatures.

I am stronger now because of Vision House. I know what I have to do and I have a plan to make things work for me and my children. Currently I have two jobs and my kids are situated in a home and neighborhood that they love. I am confident that the Lord is looking over me and has been from the beginning. God led me to Vision House.

### **Carrie and Angela**

Carrie and Angela became homeless through a series of events no fault of their own. Prior to entering Vision House Carrie was sleeping on the couch at a friend's house. Carrie writes,

***“Never, not even in my worst nightmare did I think that my daughter and I would become part of the homeless population. We lived in places that reeked of urine, where there were lice, places that were unhealthy and unclean. I lived in terrible fear that someone would find out and take my daughter away from me. When I was about ready to give up, a friend told me about Vision House. I moved in a few days before Christmas. Only then was I able to release my tears. I felt safe, stable and secure. Vision House gave me a sense of peace.”***

Carrie was able to pursue her education and graduated last year from Northwest College with a degree in Youth and Music Ministry. She graduated in the top five percent of her class receiving the Diligent Christian Leader Award given to only one outstanding student in each department each year. Carrie served on the Vision House board for four years and worked as the agency's administrative assistant before accepting a Youth Pastor position at a church in Enumclaw. On a personal note, February 12, 2000 Carrie was married to a long time friend and engineer for the Boeing Company. The couple recently purchased a home and had a second child.



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### Sandy

When you first meet Sandy, you are struck by her kindness and her sense of humor. It is difficult to think about the pain and struggles she has endured over her lifetime. Sandy is a survivor of domestic violence and overcomes struggles daily with drug and alcohol addiction. Here is her story:

***“My daughter and I moved into Vision House after staying with friends and in shelters for almost two months. Being accepted into the Vision House program has provided us with a stable, safe, caring environment to make life changes and to become responsible for ourselves. I have goals today and currently have full-time employment. My ultimate goal is to continue healing emotionally and spiritually and someday use my life experiences to make a difference in the lives of others. I know from first hand experience that through strength in God you can change your life, escape domestic violence, stay drug free and experience healing.”***

Recently, Vision House staff and residents rejoiced with Sandy as we celebrated her two years of sobriety. Sandy receives support and encouragement from Vision House staff and recently a donor paid for her needed eye exam and glasses.