



For Immediate Release
January 5, 2018

Contact:
Lois Smith, Community Advocate
(360) 326-3970

Pocket Guide Winter 2017-18 Version Released
Updated Version Builds on Successes from Fall 2017

A Pocket Guide for people living outside in Clark County released in August of 2017, received national attention and led to local positive outcomes. The **Winter 2017-18 Pocket Guide** is now available from multiple distribution sites countywide and on the Council for the Homeless website at www.councilforthehomeless.org where it is formatted for easy smart phone viewing.

Led by community advocate Lois Smith, she and other volunteer advocates and persons experiencing homelessness, worked together to develop the Pocket Guide, which is made of waterproof and tear proof material and features essential tips for navigating living outside. Smith reports that from August-October 2017, 2000 Pocket Guides were shared with people in need through 22 distribution points, including social service providers such as Council for the Homeless Housing Solutions Center, the Share Day Center, law enforcement partners including the Clark County Jail Reentry Program, local libraries, schools and many faith community sites.

Fall 2017 Successes:

The Pocket Guide prompted conversations with people looking for survival tips and resources. "They were often relieved to have the information and to know that, while their situation can't be fixed in an instant, they had support and information in that moment," shares Smith. Knowing local laws and ordinances has been very important for people to learn.

Awareness of services has been a key success of the Pocket Guide. Janus Youth reports more homeless youth are aware of their program known as The Perch. Recipients of the guide have indicated its helpfulness in obtaining a variety of resources, such as finding tarps, tents, meals, clothing, cell phones, haircuts and housing. One such person was a single mom living outside with her children who connected with an outreach worker who helped the family navigate the steps to finding housing.

Winter 2017-18 Updates:

Community member donations will make it possible to continue updating and printing the Pocket Guide. Content updates include clarifying services provider information, adding the Suicide Prevention Lifeline number as well as The Salvation Army of Camas-Washougal.

Smith has received numerous calls and emails regarding the Pocket Guide in various communities throughout the country. Smith comments, "The interest sparked by this resource is a reminder that homelessness is a national issue. I am thankful our community continues to find ways to help in urgent situations like living outside, while also working for longer terms solutions to homelessness. The Pocket Guide project inspired me to believe in *Community Involvement, Community Investment*. When people become involved in a meaningful effort, it leads to more investment in solutions to community needs."

###

Council for the Homeless is a non-profit organization that provides community leadership, compelling advocacy, and practical solutions to prevent and end homelessness in Clark County, WA.