

Key Dates in the Development of SafePlace:

January 2018: The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition's Housing Action Team (HAT), intrigued by the idea of microshelters (structures the size of a garden shed, with locking doors and electrical heating that can sleep one or two people) tour Eugene's Opportunity Village, a transitional microhousing village for folks experiencing houselessness. HAT begins to explore the idea of a similar facility in Corvallis, in consultation with Square One Villages of Eugene.

June 2018: HAT sponsors a workshop, led by Square One Villages and attended by 23 people representing 10 organizations (local nonprofits and local government), to learn and strategize how to create an Opportunity Village-style community in Corvallis.

November 2018: HAT organizes a public event at the Presbyterian Church featuring presentations by Square One Villages staff and a client. Nearly 100 people attend, many of whom volunteer to help.

January 2019: HAT committees form to work on visioning/outreach, fundraising, land search, and camping in church parking lots.

Spring-Fall 2019: First microshelters are designed and built by volunteer architects and builders.

2019-2021: HAT raises more than \$94,000 to support microshelters and, later, Safe Camp and SafePlace.

July 2019: After a camp for unsheltered people in the tree farm area near the First Congregational United Church of Christ is cleared by deputies at the request of landowner David Lin, more than two dozen uprooted campers seek refuge outside the church. Senior Pastor Jennifer Butler tells deputies not to trespass them from church property and begins work to find a way to let them camp on the property. A week or so later, as the first iteration of Safe Camp takes shape on a portion of church property that (at the time) was in the county – and not within city limits – a stormy first meeting is held at the church with neighbors.

August-September 2019: Partner organizations, including members of the Sustainability Coalition's Housing Action Team, join the Safe Camp effort. Conversations begin with county officials for a conditional use permit for Safe Camp. Conversations are held with law enforcement officials. Work to build an intake process for Safe Camp residents begins.

October 2019: A Safe Camp Steering Committee forms, including First Congregational members, faith leaders in the community, and representatives from local social-service organizations. The committee still meets weekly.

December 2019: A fundraiser generates \$25,000 for Safe Camp.

February 2020: The first microshelters are installed at Safe Camp, supplementing the tents that were sheltering campers. Many of the microshelters are built at less than cost by generous local contractors. One of the microshelters is used as the Safe Camp office. On a rainy weekend, volunteers install a chain-link fence around Safe Camp. Corvallis Housing First, a Corvallis nonprofit, begins to provide case-management services for residents; case management remains an essential part of the Safe Camp approach.

March-April 2020: Five microshelters at Safe Camp are occupied by residents. Because of the COVID pandemic, the microshelters initially are reserved for people who are deemed medically fragile. Four microshelters are installed at the First United Methodist Church and one is placed at the Corvallis Evangelical Church; these

other locations join Safe Camp as part of a broader effort, called SafePlace. A hygiene center for Safe Camp residents to shower and do laundry is set up at the Benton County Fairgrounds.

May-June 2020: Unity Shelter, a Corvallis nonprofit, is formed to serve as an umbrella organization for Safe Camp and SafePlace, along with the Men's Shelter in South Corvallis and the Room at the Inn women's shelter at First United Methodist Church. Shawn Collins is named the executive director of Unity Shelter. A kitchen is installed at Safe Camp.

July 2020: Monthly meetings between the Safe Camp Steering Committee and a committee of the West Hills Neighborhood Association begin; these meetings continue to this day. The city of Corvallis updates ordinances regarding parking on private property. The update allows microshelters to be located on private property; the county introduces a similar ordinance allowing the "parking" of microshelters on property owned by faith organizations.

August 2020: The county Planning Commission approves a conditional use permit for Safe Camp. Among the conditions: Occupancy at Safe Camp cannot exceed 21. Two more microshelters are placed at Corvallis Evangelical Church.

Summer 2020: The Central Park Neighborhood Association organizes a successful effort to raise money to build one microshelter. The group exceeds the roughly \$16,000 required; the surplus is earmarked to help other neighborhood associations with similar efforts.

September 2020: Conversations begin with potential additional sites for microshelters. The Corvallis Fire Department inspects and approves Safe Camp, one of the conditions required by the county permit.

October 2020: CARES Act funding allows the construction of new microshelters.

December 2020: A virtual "Tour of Homes" fundraiser makes \$95,000 for Unity Shelter.

2021: Under the watchful eyes of SafePlace volunteers, shop classes from Crescent Valley High School, College Hill High School and Tualatin High School work to build microshelters.

January 2021: The intake process is overhauled to better reflect equity issues.

Early 2021: Corvallis Housing First uses grant money to purchase the former Budget Inn location in South Corvallis and renovate it for emergency shelter and, eventually, permanent supported housing. Unity Shelter strikes a deal with Housing First to manage the site, dubbed Third Street Commons.

November 2021: SafePlace is honored by the Benton Community Foundation as its 2021 Outstanding Innovative Project or Program.

May 2022: Two more Corvallis faith communities – Life Community and Church of the Good Samaritan – prepare to place microshelters on their property.

June 2022: Three years after Safe Camp first started operation, more than 30 residents have moved on to transitional housing. In all, SafePlace now includes 29 microshelters in six locations.

Summer 2022: The waiting list for placement in SafePlace microshelters and facilities such as Third Street Commons climbs to about 200. The city and private property owners resume clearing camps for the unsheltered, including the tree farm area near First Congregational.