



Celebrating the Legacy, Building the Future

Bill Hobson announces retirement, Daniel Malone to take seat July 2015

After nearly 30 years as executive director of DESC, Bill Hobson has no qualms about retiring at the end of June and leaving DESC in the hands of Daniel Malone, his successor. None.

“This is a remarkably stellar leadership team,” he says, and adds with a laugh, “I need to get out of their way.”

He can look forward to bicycle-riding, fly fishing and volunteering in retirement, without looking back. “I’m not concerned about this agency one bit in terms of operation and innovation. DESC is not going to miss a beat.”



Bill Hobson and Daniel Malone

In this Issue:

- From the Executive Director
- Housing Opportunities at DESC Increase by 43% in 2015
- Mobile Crisis Team Doubles Role in King County Emergency Response
- Volunteer Spotlight: The Humanity of a Haircut
- DESC Resident Speaks at County Legislative Forum
- Meet Our New Board Members

Asked “why now” for retirement, he laughs again. “I’m 75. Aren’t I entitled?”

Malone, who as deputy director has had a front-row seat watching Hobson’s work, would be the first to say that Hobson has earned his retirement after three decades as a tireless advocate for homeless people and a beacon for the work of DESC.

“He has been a persistent force around getting things done,” Malone says. “It very much comes across to people that he is there on behalf of a bigger purpose: representing the needs and interests of a ‘throwaway’ population. He insists that collectively, as a society, we are not going to throw them away.”

He has learned from Hobson “to see if the needs of the

continued on page 4

DESC

515 THIRD AVENUE, SEATTLE, WA 98104

DESC.ORG / INFO@DESC.ORG

TEL: 206-464-1570 FAX: 206-624-4196

DESC works to end the homelessness of vulnerable people, particularly those living with serious mental or addictive illnesses. Through partnerships and an integrated array of comprehensive services, treatment and housing, we give people the opportunity to reach their highest potential. At DESC, uncommon efforts produce uncommon results that eliminate homelessness, one person at a time.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bryan Friend, Chair	Laura Inveen
Larry J. Smith, Vice Chair	Veronica Kavanagh
Sheryl V. Whitney, Secretary	Clark Kimerer
Katherine Brandt, Treasurer	Richard H. Stevenson
Terrence Carroll	Marc Taylor
Patti Cole-Tindall	Ron Wright, AIA
Nina Maisterra, MD	Sandeep Kaushik
John Hayes	

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bill Hobson

CORNERSTONE EDITOR

Hannah Mandala

CORNERSTONE CONTRIBUTORS

Hannah Mandala	Nicole Macri
Pat Foote	Gina Tucci
Michelle Spencer	Margaret Miille

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

1811 Eastlake	Lyon Building
Aurora House	The Morrison
Canaday House	Rainier House
Cottage Grove Commons	The Union Hotel
Evans House	Scattered Site Housing
Kerner-Scott House	

CLINICAL SERVICES

Chemical Dependency Services
Crisis Respite Program
Crisis Solutions Center
Employment Support
HOST - Outreach and Engagement
PACT - Assertive Community Treatment
HOME - Housing Assistance
SAGE - Case Management

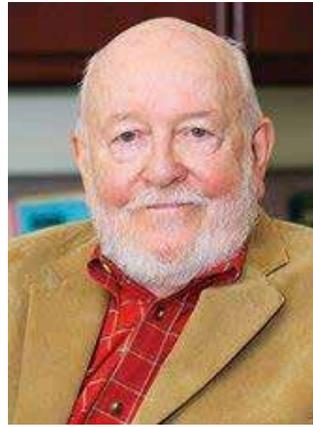
EMERGENCY AND ENTRY SERVICES

Emergency Shelter
Connections
Drop-in Center

PIONEER THRIFT

200 Third Ave S / (206) 748-9080

From the Executive Director



Bill Hobson

I am writing this column with a lot of mixed feelings. It's the last one I'll ever do as executive director. I feel immense pride in what DESC has accomplished on behalf of homeless people in the last 30 years; I feel pride and confidence in the continuing senior leadership team. It has been a remarkably stable

team, which is the principal reason DESC has achieved the success it has, and why I'm convinced this agency will continue to provide the homeless-service world with even bigger and better innovations. However, not working with such smart, creative people on a daily basis will leave a big void in my life.

I am proud of the work DESC has done. We have brought 1,100 supportive-housing units online and have a lot more in our pipeline. DESC was an early pioneer of the Housing First model of permanent supportive housing and we have offered the country two national Housing First conferences in 2012 and 2014; a third is planned for 2016.

Research conducted at 1811 Eastlake has had a significant impact on national and local housing policies and funding priorities. Our Vulnerability Assessment Tool has helped teach the nation how to more thoughtfully manage its short supply of affordable housing in a way that maximizes benefits to the most challenged and vulnerable homeless people.

We have developed successful ways to overcome community reluctance and opposition to housing and service sites and successful service methods to help extremely challenged clients keep their housing. Our clinical programs prove daily that with appropriate care, our clients can function successfully in the community

and stop cycling repeatedly through jails and hospitals. And we share our experiences and insights with governments and service organizations throughout the country.

“...many of our leaders – public and private – seem to think the solution lies in making homeless service providers more efficient. Frankly, they’re reluctant to tackle the real solution – taking the production of affordable housing to scale and managing the large price tag that will come with it.”

The agency will face many challenges in the future. Foremost among them are the acute shortage of appropriate, affordable housing and a broken state behavioral health system. I leave frustrated by the fact that we’re not even close to developing or acquiring enough housing units to dramatically reduce the number of homeless people in our community. As our One Night Counts continue to rise each year and more people are forced to sleep on our streets, many of our leaders – public and private – seem to think the solution lies in making homeless service providers more efficient. Frankly, they’re reluctant to tackle the real solution – taking the production of affordable housing to scale and managing the large price tag that will come with it.

Our behavioral health system will remain in tatters until it is adequately funded by the State Legislature. Our mental health and drug and alcohol treatment systems have had their funding cut in Washington’s last three biennial budgets. As a direct result, our jails and prisons have become psychiatric institutions by default. We should be moving to a system where behaviorally disabled people who commit minor offenses never enter the criminal justice system in the first place. We need more programs like the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program and DESC’s Crisis Solutions Center, which divert disabled people from jails into housing, treatment and service systems.

There will likely be many other challenges that will arise in the future, but I hope you, like me, will rest assured

that DESC is in the right hands to meet those challenges. Our board of directors and senior leadership staff are some of the smartest people I know. And they share another trait – they’re not afraid to try new approaches. So I’m going to go sit on the sidelines and enjoy watching

this agency continue to grow and develop new solutions to the problem of homelessness and feel a bit of pride in the part I played here.

Bill Hobson



Bill Hobson, circa 1988

Celebrating the Legacy... (continued from page 1)

people you care about can be met by existing things and, if not, get in there and do it yourself.”

Malone explains that while Hobson can interact at a personal, friendly level, he will also seize any chance to make sure his point of view is expressed if he feels the people involved need to hear it.

“People need homes. The solution to homelessness is not rocket science. It’s homes.”
-Bill Hobson

“He’s very dogged that something he thinks is important is going to be conveyed,” Malone says. “It’s kind of amazing to behold.”

Case in point: A recent day started with Hobson breathing fire over the discovery that a DESC client had languished weeks in a suburban jail, without treatment for her schizophrenia and naked in isolation for 23 hours a day. A terrible situation was made worse: Jail staff were making fun of the woman.

“Disrespectful to her,” he snaps.

As he explains the finer points of suburban politics, jurisdictional governance and common decency toward a human being, it becomes clear that a day that began badly for Bill Hobson is going to get a lot worse for those responsible.

“I relish challenges like this,” he says.

Starting at DESC in the mid-’80s as a \$5.12/hour swing-shift shelter counselor, Hobson has faced many challenges as he has guided the agency from a small emergency shelter to its current status, providing permanent supportive housing and clinical services at 12 sites across Seattle.

He keeps a black-and-white photo from those early days

over his computer. It shows people in the DESC shelter crowded shoulder to shoulder on mats.

“I was appalled. I’m still appalled by our shelter – that citizens in this community are so impoverished and marginalized that they have to live in a shelter.”



DESC’s humble beginnings; shelter mats on the floor of the Morrison.



Today: Over 1000 units of supportive housing

His vision of something better has materialized over the years into 10 housing projects (another is under construction) with more than 1,000 units and extensive supportive services for formerly homeless people.

DESC's programs have become a model to the nation, as has its Vulnerability Assessment Tool, which was designed to help steer limited resources to those most in need, and its Housing First philosophy.

"Anybody who says they have a good shelter is a liar or a fool," Hobson says, because shelters are not the answer to homelessness. "People need homes. The solution to homelessness is not rocket science. It's homes."

Community-wide, 5,000 housing units have been added for homeless people. It's a real achievement, and it's not enough. "It's not close to approximate the magnitude of the need," Hobson says.

With his retirement, the challenge will become Malone's. He will face it with the guiding framework of a five-year plan for 2015-2019 and a leadership team that Hobson calls "rock stars in their respective areas."

The massive need is daunting, Malone acknowledges, but DESC's relentless advocacy has led to decades of creative solutions to help homeless people.

"Our history has been to stay very close to the mission," Malone says, and that will continue under his watch. "As long as they're out there, we're going to find a way to make sure their needs are met."

From retirement, Hobson says, "I'm eager to watch DESC continue to grow and innovate and develop."

The executive director role "is a pretty grown-up job" and until now, there hasn't been much time in Hobson's life for hobbies. Retirement, he says, will be an opportunity to reinvent himself. The proud father of three (just ask) will spend time with his family, with his recently reacquired love of fly fishing and with bike riding. He's planning a 50-mile ride at the end of August "with a bunch of other geezers."

A self-described political animal, Hobson says he likely will get involved supporting some candidates and combating efforts, such as panhandling ordinances, that criminalize homelessness. He's been approached about

consulting work, but is lukewarm to the idea.

"All my life, I have been" -- he pauses, searching for the word -- "driven. 'Workaholic' would be overstating it, but not by much. Can I force myself to play? I'm going to try to be as self-indulgent as I can tolerate."

Hobson may be matter-of-fact about his retirement, but others mark the opportunity as a time to pay tribute. Says Seattle City Attorney Pete Holmes, "I can think of no retirement more richly deserved or as thoroughly terrifying for those left to carry on in his stead.

"Bill Hobson has been my teacher, a source of inspiration -- even solace -- when times got tough. His depth of knowledge and practical wisdom will be missed. I am proud to call Bill a friend and will remain grateful for his patient leadership."

Asked if there's a single client whose memory he will carry with him, Hobson replies, "So many come to mind." Then he describes a woman he never actually met. A nurse at the shelter came in with her chart: The 26-year-old client was living with schizophrenia, addicted to crack, HIV positive and pregnant.

Already with "a fire in the belly to do housing," Hobson had his epiphany: "If all we did was get her a home, we were not doing much. It was unlikely for her to be able to maintain a home."

She was a whole person, not just a homeless person, and she deserved holistic care. But merely having that vision was not enough. Hobson spent the rest of his career making it reality through DESC.

"You are what you do. I've always believed that," he says.

"It's been an interesting ride. I hope I've been good for the agency."

DESC Housing Opportunities Increase by 43% in 2015

This year, DESC is expanding housing opportunities to homeless men and women by 43%! [see chart] The opportunity to live in a safe, healthy and affordable home is the key to ending homelessness, and DESC works hard to expand access to housing for the people we serve.

Building on local and national priorities to move people quickly to housing and DESC’s successful track record of implementing Housing First approaches, we are adding units in our scattered site program, shifting a successful pilot project in Rapid Rehousing into full gear and increasing the number of DESC-owned permanent supportive housing apartments.

Along with constructing our own housing, DESC subsidizes market rent for homeless people in many other buildings in the area. It’s rare that our clients, many of whom are disabled or have special needs, can obtain or afford market-rate apartments on their own. Our case managers make a strong case to local landlords that although most DESC clients don’t meet typical standards for credit and rental references, our robust and flexible services ensure formerly homeless people successfully maintain stable housing. And, unlike with most tenants, landlords may contact DESC staff 24/7 to help troubleshoot concerns that might arise. In 2015, we will assist up to 200 clients to move into permanently affordable housing and provide them with ongoing supportive care in the community.

We will also be expanding Rapid Rehousing for single adults. This program will provide time-limited services and financial help for up to 150 homeless people in 2015. It follows a pilot DESC conducted last year that assisted 50 men and women, 90% of whom retained market-rate housing for 6 months or longer. Clients of Rapid Rehousing seek living-wage jobs so that they can pay their living expenses after financial assistance ends. Rapid Re-Housing gets people out of homelessness quickly. It also provides a stable living situation so that those who get jobs are more likely to keep them.

We have worked with dozens of property owners over the years, and are optimistic this track record will help bring these efforts to scale. The current rental market – with high rents and low vacancies – certainly presents a major challenge in finding enough apartments in the community. If you are a private landlord, or know one open to partnering with DESC to assist homeless individuals, please contact us at info@desc.org.

Last but not least, our newest Housing First building will open this fall in the Interbay neighborhood, containing 97 apartments and 24-hour staff on-site for the most vulnerable and disabled homeless men and women in the area. All told, we’re adding 447 new housing opportunities that weren’t available last year!

		Units in 2014	New in 2015	Total units	Increase in 2015
Housing First	Buildings owned by DESC	782	97	879	12%
	Scattered site	200	200	400	100%
Rapid Rehousing	Open market subsidies	50	150	150	300%
Totals		1,032	447	1,429	43%

DESC's Mobile Crisis Team Doubles Role in King County Emergency Response

DESC has doubled staffing for its Mobile Crisis Team (MCT). There are now 24 outreach employees on call around the clock to respond to mental health emergencies throughout King County.

The goal is to divert people suffering a psychiatric or addiction crisis from jails and unnecessary hospital emergency-room visits and toward less costly, more therapeutic treatment, says Graydon Andrus, director of clinical programs for DESC.

He describes it as “the right kind of help at the right time.”

They take a client-centered, multi-disciplinary approach to those in crisis. “They hear their point of view and get at practical, meaningful ideas for them,” Andrus says.

Unlike DESC employees in long-term residential facilities, who develop ongoing relationships with clients, the Mobile Crisis teams “had to learn to be useful in a very quick situation. They had to talk to people who were strangers, in a way that would allow them to calm down and be ready to take the next step,” Andrus says.



The police department?

If you were experiencing a mental health crisis, who would you prefer to show up at your doorstep?



... or DESC's Mobile Crisis Team?

The Mobile Crisis Team is part of the Crisis Solutions Center, a three-pronged DESC program started in 2012.

Referrals most often come from police departments (King County has about 30 jurisdictions), hospital emergency rooms and, increasingly, the Crisis Clinic.

Two-person teams respond to calls, assess the person's condition and offer links to resources, such as shelters or DESC case managers. The work requires people who can handle stress, think on their feet and stay calm.

“Sometimes it's just good, quick problem-solving, offering support to people just having a difficult moment in their life,” he says. For people in crisis, “it's hard to think clearly at moments like that. It's a huge thing for a team like this to give them clear, accurate information.”

In more complex cases, MCT workers may refer clients to the two other prongs of the Crisis Solutions Center: the Crisis Diversion Facility, where individuals can get emergency residential treatment, and Crisis Interim Services, where clients may stay up to 14 days.

FIND US ONLINE:   AND [DESC.ORG](https://www.desc.org)

With that breathing room, clients who started in severe crisis “really have a chance to get things done, to make plans to change their lives when they get out,” Andrus says. The “highly integrated” approach is efficient and effective.

Police officers especially appreciate the outreach teams, he says. Before, they lacked places to refer the mentally ill people they encountered. Now, they can turn a person in crisis over to skilled help and return more quickly to their regular jobs.

“They’re starting to learn to use our Mobile Crisis Team very well,” Andrus says, observing that in turn, clients may be more receptive to accepting help if the alternative is dealing with cops. “Police have some leverage,” Andrus says drily.

The recent expansion of outreach staff allows the Mobile Crisis Team to respond to multiple calls at a time and to a wider base of need in the community.

The Crisis Clinic made 86 referrals to the Mobile Crisis Team during the ramp-up stage in 2014, according to

Michael Reading, director of crisis services for the Crisis Clinic. Most involved people who had called the crisis line because of suicidal thoughts or deteriorating mental health.

“My staff is really excited to have this opportunity,” Reading says. The MCT fills the gap between telephone contact and emergency-room treatment that may be unwanted or unnecessary. Callers can be incredulous when asked if they’d like an in-person response, he says: “‘You mean, someone would come and see me?’ ”

While not limited solely to homeless people, the Mobile Crisis Team’s work does align with DESC’s mission because clients’ problems, left untreated, could cascade into homelessness, Andrus says.

More than that, the Mobile Crisis Team fills a gap and contributes to the community by making the mental-health system more robust.

“That’s been the mission of DESC all its life. What’s the next gap we can fill?”

Volunteer Spotlight: The Humanity of a Haircut

Amanda Teicher started volunteering at DESC on Christmas Day 2009, partly as an antidote to modern materialism of the holiday. She offered to give haircuts.



Teicher now gives 100 to 120 haircuts a year to residents at four DESC facilities. “I have regulars,” she says. Most are men, some of whom say, “Just shave it all off.” Others

tell her they want “to look like a regular normal guy” and Teicher plies her scissors to give them a businessman’s cut. Some women can be very particular, says Teicher with a laugh.

“I do my best and really enjoy it.”

Getting a haircut is an act of self care that most of us take for granted, but one that assumes a larger meaning in the lives of our clients. People’s negative self-perceptions are reinforced by the stigma of homelessness and mental illness. A haircut helps to provide them with what everyone else seems to have naturally: a sense of dignity and self-worth.

Teicher, who taught herself as a teen-ager to cut hair,

enjoys working with the residents. She describes one woman, “very bold in her style,” who favors a 1980s mullet. They once agreed to experiment instead with a 1960s Audrey Hepburn look.

“It was a very dramatic, diagonal sweep,” Teicher says. “It looked fabulous on her. She almost jumped for joy.” Alas, the hairdo was hard to grow out, so that was the

end of it. “It was great while it lasted,” Teicher says philosophically.

Teicher, an artist, also volunteers at the Gage Academy of Art (where she is a student) and at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She paints in oils; her work can be seen at www.amandateicher.com

DESC Resident Speaks at County Legislative Forum

For Robin Covington, the logic is clear. If living on the streets wouldn’t make her stop drinking, if losing parental rights to her son wouldn’t make her stop drinking, why would anyone think she’d stop drinking as a prerequisite for getting housing?

Covington didn’t have to. She moved into the DESC’s 1811 Eastlake housing for people with severe alcohol problems. And kept drinking. Until the day, months of sobriety ago, that she quit.

“I retained a spark of faith, a spark of hope,” Covington says. “And I had all the people at DESC who were trying to help me.

I’d be dead or in a ditch if I hadn’t gotten into 1811.”

Her success story is not typical, Covington admits. Many residents of 1811 Eastlake will be chronically addicted to alcohol for the rest of their lives.

But, Covington asks, alcoholic or not, shouldn’t they still have a right to a home? Isn’t it a more cost-effective use of community resources than hospital emergency treatments and jails? And if one person – whether it’s she or any of the other 75 residents of 1811 Eastlake – finds a way out of a personal pit, can you put a price on that?

Covington told her story at the 18th annual King County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Forum in November



photo by Michelle Spencer

DESC’s Housing First and Harm Reduction approach gave Robin the support she needed to reclaim her life.

2014. Her son was in the audience. She was the face of 1811 Eastlake, a DESC facility that opened in 2005 to controversy and skepticism that providing people with alcoholism with a home was good public policy.

Covington defies the stereotype of the homeless woman she once was. On a recent day, oversized blue glasses and a spotless blue sweater complemented her eyes; pink rhinestone earrings sparkled under a fun cropped haircut; jeans were tucked into her boots. She’d look right carrying a Nordstrom bag at Bellevue Square.

After attending college for a while and working at jobs such as TV actress and director of sales and marketing for an assisted-living facility, Covington says, in 2001 she moved with her young son from Florida to be close to a brother in Seattle. Living in apartments first in Capitol

Hill and then Wedgwood, Covington's mental health was gradually declining.

"I spent all my money on booze and not on rent and utilities," Covington says.



1811 is a safe-haven for Robin and 74 other formerly homeless individuals

In 2006, her brother died. Her son was taken into foster care.

"I was a low-bottom chronic alcoholic," Covington says.

"I told myself that I'll sober up and I'll get him back.

When I was sober, I was a great mom. But I was drunk all the time."

She found herself homeless on Third and Pine.

"I thought I was too smart, too pretty, too well-educated" to end up homeless. "That's where alcohol took me. And that's where alcohol took my son."

She was dirty; her bipolar disorder went unmedicated. In 2011, she fell and broke her pelvis. A care team at Harborview Medical Center linked her to DESC and 1811 Eastlake.

There, Covington got a home, meals, counseling and medical treatment both for her mental illness and her worsening alcohol-related balance, memory and vision issues. But she did not get sober. She drank a pint of vodka a day.

She went out, and fell frequently. In keeping with 1811's harm-reduction philosophy, Covington says, staff asked how they could help her. They urged her at least to drink in her bed to minimize falls.

Over several years, she watched as her fellow tenants died. She realized she was on the same path and didn't want to die that way. "I got sick of it and it was killing me."

Finally, Covington says, she became stabilized enough to be capable. She started going to 12-step meetings and found a sponsor. To maintain the tenuous state that is sobriety, Covington tries to have a minute-by-minute plan to fill each day. She has clean and sober women friends, and meets them regularly for coffee. She looks a lot for activities outside 1811 Eastlake.

Her son, 19, visits frequently. He's had a hard life, she says sadly, but he's in a terrific place now. "My son still loves me, through the grace of God," Covington says. "I still have a chance to be a good mother."

Odd as it might seem to others, Covington is motivated by a vision of her death. Not on the streets, not even at 1811 Eastlake. "This is not how I want to die. I want to die sober and in a happy home, my son beside me."

That she can even aspire to that vision is credit to so many people who have helped her and to the acceptance of 1811 Eastlake, Covington says. "If it had been a requirement to stay sober, I'd still be homeless."

You can see a video of Robin Covington's talk at the King County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Forum at <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5011462>. Her presentation begins at about mark 48:20.

Meet Our New Board Members

Patti Cole-Tindall
Director, King County Office of
Labor Relations



Patti Cole-Tindall

Patti Cole-Tindall is the key advisor to the King County Executive and County Council on labor strategic planning, labor policy development, and employment law. She serves as the chief negotiator for the County and is responsible for directing and administering relations with organized labor. She has served four different departments over the past 17 years, previously as Assistant Director of the Community Corrections Division in the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD). Patti Cole-Tindall was formerly responsible for the regional investigative program at the Washington State Employment Security Department which was designed to detect fraud and theft of unemployment insurance benefits.

Marc Taylor
Community Services Director
Seattle Indian Health Board

Marc Taylor grew up (enrolled Lummi) in Bellingham near his reservation. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry from the University of Washington and a Masters in Business Administration from Georgetown University.

Marc spent 6 years at Lummi working as Economic Development Director and Chief Financial Officer. During that time, Lummi built the new Tribal School and the Silver Reef Casino.

Marc currently works as Community Services Director for the Seattle Indian Health Board. There, he oversees social services, which includes; Elders, Youth, Patient Services, Mental Health, Prenatal, Veterans and Domestic Violence.

Katherine Brandt
Vice President & Compliance Manager
Washington Federal

Katherine is currently Vice President and Compliance Manager at Washington Federal. Prior to that position, Katherine was the Corporate Counsel for the Bank. Katherine is admitted to practice law in the State of Washington, and is a graduate of the Gonzaga University School of Law where she received her J.D., and the University of Washington School of Law where she received an LL.M in taxation.

John Hayes
Captain, Special Victims Crime Section
Seattle Police Department



John Hayes

Captain John F. Hayes, Jr. is a 32 year veteran of the Seattle Police Department and currently serves as Captain in the Compliance and Community Outreach Section. Previously, Captain Hayes was a SPD representative on the City of Seattle Racial Profiling Task Force and the Inter Departmental Team (IDT) evaluating all juvenile outreach programs offered by the City of Seattle. In addition to his community outreach efforts, as a Lieutenant he oversaw the SPD Citizens Academy, Youth Outreach Section, the city wide Citizens Advisory Councils and the 10 Community Advisory Councils.

Captain John Hayes has a Bachelor's degree in Social Welfare and Women's Studies and a Master's Degree in Social Work with an emphasis in administration all from the University of Washington.

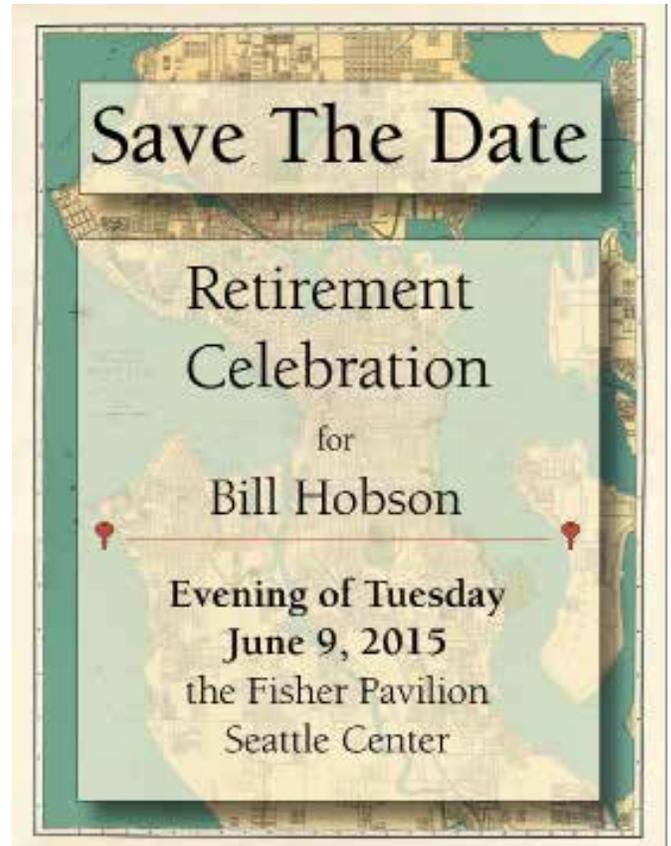


DESC

opening doors to end homelessness
515 Third Avenue Seattle WA 98104

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Seattle, Washington
Permit No. 1830

A Special Shout Out to Our Gimme Shelter Sponsors!



FIND US ONLINE: AND DESC.ORG