

LIFE *at* NORTHAVEN

SENIOR HOUSING *with a heart*

FALL 2019

HEARTS OF NORTHAVEN 10th annual *Gala*



2019 GALA RAISES \$95,000 FOR RESIDENT HOUSING AND SERVICES

Northaven supporters gathered at Shoreline Community College on October 4 for the 10th Annual Hearts of Northaven Gala.



Jana Helmuth, past chair of the Board of Directors of Northaven Foundation, receives the Bob & Joyce Mays Award for outstanding service to Northaven's mission from **Theresa Peloso** (right), President, Board of Trustees, and **Darlene Storti**, Executive Director.



With 175 people in attendance, this year's gala was the largest and raised more money than ever before. The room was full of energy all evening long. Thank you to **Premera Blue Cross** and **VIA Architecture**, our event sponsors.



Dessert Dash



Happy Dining Services crew after serving all the attendees. By catering the food from our Northaven kitchen with our own staff we cut costs and make sure more of the money raised goes to resident services and housing.



Mari Rodriguez supported by her husband, Michael Ragsdale, gave an impassioned account of what it means for her to be able to live at Northaven.

RESIDENT MARI RODRIGUEZ SHARED HER POWERFUL STORY AT THE GALA

Good evening everyone.
Thank you for being here.

This year I aimed to achieve two main goals: 1) to obtain a safe, affordable place that I could truly call home; and 2) to find meaningful paid work.

I have not yet found my ideal employment, but I have found an amazing place to live. It is called Northaven.

I was allotted only three minutes to speak so I will have to skip the stories about the dog who lives on my floor, who is like a rock star. His owner cannot always walk him, so some residents take turns doing so. The love and healing that takes place daily among them is unbelievable.

And I will have to skip the stories about one of the cooks who has a natural gift of subtly, quietly and graciously enveloping the dining room with warmth, safety and love.

And I will have to skip the stories about how I have to exit my apartment early for my appointments because it takes me at least 20 minutes to just get out of the building and off the Northaven campus due to staff and residents saying hello and genuinely asking how I am doing.

When I was growing up, I lived in dangerous housing projects in New York City, where I experienced and witnessed atrocities. I fled gun shots, was mugged with a carpet cutter to my throat, and was sexually abused.

WE, the residents of the housing projects, were reminded daily that the housing project did not belong to us—that because WE were poor, WE were less than, with no say in anything that pertained to keeping us safe, or pertained to our apartments, which were supposed to be home. These apartments were not a home to any of

us. They were a roof over our heads that sometimes leaked during cold, snowy, and rainy winter nights, and walls that never kept out the sounds of our neighbors' cries, pain and despair.

My master's degree is in sociology, and my past work history includes serving diverse populations. Too frequently, well-meaning individuals design housing and other programs for those who are poor but never include them in the decision making process. Often these housing endeavors and programs are unsuccessful and the poor get blamed for it.

The poor are labeled ungrateful, uncooperative, irresponsible, incapable, limited and dysfunctional. Their voices are ignored.

At Northaven, the staff members treat the residents with respect and dignity, and make sure our voices are always heard. There is no US and THEM, but instead, WE. WE, the staff and residents, work as a team, as human beings, all together on this journey called life, on this planet called Mother Earth.

I want to conclude with a quote from Nelson Mandela:

"Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity, it is an act of justice. Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be GREAT. YOU can be that GREAT generation. Let your GREATNESS blossom."

Thank you.



NORTHAVEN GATHERS NEIGHBORS

More than 100 residents and neighbors gathered for **Seattle Night Out**, enjoying free hot dogs and ice pops on a beautiful August night in our Northaven garden, while the North Seattle Jazz Orchestra played until well past 8:00 pm. So many lingered, just sitting and enjoying, that the band just kept on playing! It was an oasis in time and space for the 8th Avenue neighborhood... a great way to share our lives.



ANNUAL RESIDENT PICNIC

The Northaven residents and their families gathered for an Annual Picnic on Saturday, August 24. The weather cooperated, with a gentle breeze and just the right amount of sunshine. There was room for everyone and chatter around the tables, great food, spinning pinwheels, balloon crowns and animals for young and old...and all with the West Seattle Big Band's music floating in and around us. Everything came together for a delightful afternoon.





RABBITS EVERYWHERE

For the last year, volunteer Tess Bull has been bringing soft bunnies to Northaven Assisted Living from their small farm. The rabbits lower the blood pressure and anxiety some of our residents experience as part of their memory loss. Residents get engaged and open up and just have fun. The minute you place a rabbit in their laps, it's like a warm blanket. Favorites seem to be the youngsters, just 6 weeks old. "Rock Star" with his fabulous hair delights even our most quiet residents.



INTERESTED IN BEING A VOLUNTEER?



Northaven Assisted Living needs **reading buddies**. Come and read to a single resident or a small group of them together.

Be a walker cleaner. Walkers get dirty. Our residents spill things on them. Come and clean a walker and, most importantly, **visit with the resident** while you are doing it. It is a great way to connect.

Contact Life Enrichment Coordinator **Kat Green** at KGreen@northavenseniiorliving.org or 206-362-8077.



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