

## **What would have been useful that seemed to be missing in the cold weather response? What was available that was helpful?**

**Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 1.19.24**

### **Weathering Hate**

The way, exposed to weather, a body is worn. Velvet threads begin to wither, rapid ripened beyond the burst bloom. Vibrant strands, cut short, fray, unweaving faded fabric. Sun-struck, rain-warped, storm-blasted, rough-sanded in whipping wind that whittles rock.

Small, torturous fractures opened in stone where water freezes in the pores with grains of salt. Cracks in the surface pried apart by unrelenting pressure. With incessant freezing and thawing, shock and fatigue speed rugged stress to ultimate breakdown. Intemperate weather, abrading edges, gradually disintegrates resolute minerals.

A boulder, even a mountain, will wear down. So will bodies, bent and broken under toilsome burdens, caving beneath unbearable weight, in adverse climate, exposed to harsh elements, caustic rains.

*Copyright © 2023 by Harryette Mullen. Originally published in Poem-a-Day on December 28, 2023, by the Academy of American Poets. Weathering Hate is collected in Regaining Unconsciousness (Graywolf, 2025)*

### **Available and helpful ...**

- DEM's involvement was great.
- Great work to Jan and the team at the DEM.
- The transit center warming space was fantastic; need that in Spanaway.
- The colder it got, the more donations came in.
- How much people shared supplies was great.
- Doorstep distribution was effective this round - offered by small unofficial networking.
- Stockpile supplies - cold weather by August, hot weather by May.
- Radiant propane heat was a problem for Ccity warming tent, but is not for Richard.
- The number of unpaid volunteers engaged in this work is a real blessing. When the weather gets bad, staffing is difficult. Our paid staff are burned out and don't have the resilience to deal with additional challenges.
- Thank you for the hot meals that were provided (Paula, Jan, Theresa).
- Hypothermia kits, water, blankets, hand warmers were provided.

- Every action y'all take is for the benefit of the whole community.
- Things to stabilize tents in high wind are helpful.
- Having the warming centers refer clients to was very helpful.
- Was able to post things on facebook about the needs and shares list as well as warming centers.
- Look for nontraditional circles to ask for supply donations, like your pickleball group.
- The daily check in calls were useful.
- The quality of cold weather outreach meetings and resource set up are really helpful.
- The importance of the daily weather briefings was critical and that Rob put so much info on the inclement weather page made it so useful. Is a good model for other committees we might create that have a clear action focus for immediate needs. Harder to do for long range planning.
- Warming stations also can be used by folks who have no wood for their fireplace.
- Libraries can be used by single moms who have no money to pay the energy bill for their baseboard heating.

### **Useful and maybe missing ...**

- Homeless folks' phones need charging.
- Refresher on using NARCAN would be helpful.
- Sweeps during the cold weather do not work.
- Partner new people with those who have gone out before.
- A planning and strategy meeting around Labor Day to prepare would really help. Doing this in real time makes it a challenge.
- How to reach the libraries when they were closed? (As they are a huge resource for unhoused folks.)
- Can we get more folks from the library system to this meeting?
- Signage needed to be better for the sites – farther out to bring people in.
- Want a bus map to warming centers. Increasing Pierce Transit's involvement is underway and will be helpful.
- It would have been great if the transit drivers had been universally aware of the opportunity to provide transport to warming centers and where the warming centers were.
- Suggest a symbol on the outside of Pierce Transit buses indicating routes for inclement weather escape.
- DEM did not plan food/snacks – should we coordinate this next time?
- DEM trying to get plan/cohesion together with cities (Puyallup, Lakewood, Tacoma) – taking longer than hoped.
- Hats, coats needed at the warming sites as well.
- Some buildings need rehab before being fully suitable for shelter, some sheltered anyway, 5 families.

- 2 churches in Puyallup were ready to go but not activated – how work better together to create a more cohesive plan? Puyallup EOC wouldn't open sites because power was still on (only open when power out?) – difference between PC DEM and city policies.
- Pierce Transit needs to put it on the buses somehow to get the word out.
- Response amazing, esp. seeing outreach teams in outlying areas.
- Need to blur the lines between parts of pierce and king counties where if you are close but not in the actual county.
- As new person hoping to be more involved, it was difficult to witness the boulders with freezing people having only a blanket.
- What do we want next year? No city actions; no NIMBY rocks.
- If no evictions during cold weather, should be no sweeps.
- We need better systems to connect people to where they need to go and access what's available.
- Self-care tip: Cold weather is hard for outreach workers too; prepare for frozen fingers that fumble.
- When you hand out foot warmers people need instructions on how to use without burning themselves.
- Expropriation of storage unit from each private storage unit providers or tax break for "donation" of space.
- How do we continue to help fill each others cup so we retain the energy and optimism to continue the important work being done?
- We need to continually recruit folks to this work. Worried about the amazing volunteers that are aging out.
- Sweeps are really disrupting this work and making multiple, duplicative efforts necessary. This work is already grossly under-resourced.
- What limitations do organizations who have funding from the city/county need to observe?
- Lived Experience centered volunteer organizing/training preps good hearts for the real work and can distribute trained volunteers from a central network to needed sites/spaces
- Quynza Ochoa, BHA Pierce asked, "Is anyone interested in doing a meeting/healing circle to process the grief and other feelings that we hold as people working in these fields?" Dwight Avery offered contact to coordinate interest: [dwrightavery@gmail.com](mailto:dwrightavery@gmail.com) 253-278-1369

## Notes and Resources List

### *New and Notable*

**Family Promise** is actively looking for overnight volunteers for the family shelter.

<https://www.familypromisepiercecounty.org/get-involved>

**The SvdP's go to page for outreach folks.** You have a problem, leave a message with your local chapter: <https://www.svdptacoma.org/svdp-helpline-zip-codes>

**Sign up to receive Action Alerts:** <https://secure.everyaction.com/-gZPY8k0qkaHQyrUqmpC5g2>

**One pager on Housing Alliance priorities:** <https://www.wliha.org/advocacy/2024-public-policy-priorities>

**Key Peninsula Community Services** in Home , KP Civic Center in Vaughn and GHP Fish Food Bank in GH will have PIT trained volunteers at to meet with our homeless residents, provide resources and PIT sign up. All locations will be manned 12-4:00 pm. on 1/25/26. As well, we'll be providing transportation on the KP to/fm KPCS/KPCC during these times. Phone to call for a ride is 206-930-7754

**FOB Hope fundraiser** is January 20th, 5pm-9:30 pm at the Puyallup Elks Lodge. Theresa Power-Drutis is coordinating a coalition table. [tpdrutis@nctacoma.org](mailto:tpdrutis@nctacoma.org)

**No more testing kits available from DOH to LHJs** (local health jurisdictions) as of end of January. If you need testing kits or other testing support, please email our team: [epitesting@tpchd.org](mailto:epitesting@tpchd.org)

**Sign up for Housing and Homeless Adocacy Day January 30<sup>th</sup>.**  
<https://secure.everyaction.com/RwWmyBVnCEm4vThBztxSg2>

**Interested in spearheading a local Laundry Love?**  
Contact Theresa Power-Drutis. <https://laundrylove.org>

**Community Spotlight Opportunity:** Tell the coalition about your organization's good work. Contact [tpdrutis@nctacoma.org](mailto:tpdrutis@nctacoma.org) to schedule a brief presentation. 🙄

### ***Recent press***

**Should Seattle remove encampments: Advocates debate.**  
<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/should-seattle-remove-encampments-advocates-answer/>

### ***Ongoing Resources and Needs***

**SVdP is willing to store any** items for sharing- including massive amounts of socks. We have systems in place so outreach workers can pick up supplies every day between 10am-5pm. Just text Dionne. 253-355-5868

**Link for the Coalition's cold weather resources page:** [www.craft.me/s/f0GVFmAubX8YUg](http://www.craft.me/s/f0GVFmAubX8YUg)

**Outreach and Supply Need/Share Form:**  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Kh2OBOLT-SXN8cq7L7Z1Bb04iXxCf6Nfv\\_RBP-F0SZk/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Kh2OBOLT-SXN8cq7L7Z1Bb04iXxCf6Nfv_RBP-F0SZk/edit?usp=sharing)

**Free wound care clinic every Friday afternoon,** TNE clinic at the STD room at T-PCHD on S 37th & Pacific. Spread the word.

**Safe Sites**  
<https://ss4a.pchomeless.org>

**Outreach Supply Need and Share form:** <https://forms.gle/2zfK8Y5JvC1K5eXLA>

**Please sign up to the inclement weather listserv at**  
<https://www.pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>

**Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness** can be found here:  
<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7309/Comprehensive-Plan-to-End-Homelessness>