

NICKELSVILLE OPEN HOUSE 1:00 PM TO 5:00 PM
Friday November 26, 2010 – the day after Thanksgiving!
Presently located at former Fire Station 39 – 12705 30th Avenue NE

On Friday November 26th you are invited to drop by the Old Lake City Fire Station and visit the temporary site of Nickelsville, a homeless encampment of up to 100 men, women and children. The Open House will be from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM and will include tours and treats.

On Monday at Noon Mayor Mike McGinn made the old Fire House available to us for up to 6 months. No private property owner had invited us to use their land, and the camp was at great risk. Our permit had expired where we had stay for the previous 3 months – University Congregational United Church of Christ in the University District - and we had to leave.

We are sorry that this emergency prevented us from giving advance public notice.

WHY NICKELSVILLE IS NEEDED

26 homeless people have died outdoors or by violence already this year in King County. Even after every shelter bed is in use, there are thousands sleeping in alleys, under bushes, in cars, and other unsafe outdoor places like the jungle. We need to survive, and being together and safe increases our chances.

It is our hope to move to the Sunny Jim site in Seattle's SoDo district in the spring, but there are no guarantees or private understandings that this will happen. It would be a good long term site, where we can live in individual sturdy structures with privacy, 24 hours access, and storage.

People get back on their feet and into the mainstream when daily life is bearable and humane. Being able to stay with our partners and pets, and having a place to return according to our work schedule, makes our chances of success better.

HOW NICKELSVILLE OPERATES

The residents of Nickelsville are responsible for running Nickelsville, much like in a regular home. Our capacity is usually one hundred people, but it will take us awhile to determine if that number – or less – is a good fit for the Old Firehouse.

Nickelsville has strict rules. Sobriety is required on site. Alcohol, non prescription drugs, weapons and violence are not allowed. Loitering is strictly prohibited – you will see we are purposeful in our movements. Convicted sex offenders are not permitted at Nickelsville.

Our community is democratic. We have regular meetings, and elect all our leaders at them. Everyone has to do a fair share of the work.

At least two people are on security duty at all times. We take an active interest in our neighborhood, and do regular security patrols. Security Workers wear florescent orange vests that say Nickelsville on them. Neighborhood crime we observe is reported to the police, and we also do neighborhood litter patrols.

NICKELSVILLE's HISTORY

Nickelsville began in September of 2008. It is an alternative for those who were swept out of their encampments by former Mayor Nickels sweeps. Since then our goal has been to create an eco village of small sturdy structures for up to 1,000 homeless people. With stability and services on site fewer homeless people would die too early in Seattle (the average death of a homeless person in King County is 48.)

Mayor Nickels never supported our goals, and in fact threatened our hosts with fines for allowing us to stay together and safe. He also had us arrested on public land.

When Mayor McGinn took office we didn't know what to expect. In April he asked us to have a conversation with the Mayor's Office about homelessness instead of moving to a public site without permission. In August he appointed a panel of experts to consider new approaches to how homelessness is dealt with in Seattle, and to report to him before winter.

We are profoundly grateful to Mayor McGinn and Deputy Mayor Smith. They had the vision to take unused public property – the former Lake City Fire Station #39 – and use it as shelter against the winter cold. There are few public goods more important and basic than shelter, food and clothing. It is our opinion that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have acted like leaders should in an emergency – with compassion and decisiveness.

YOU ARE INVITED TO VISIT, ASK QUESTIONS OR MAKE SUGGESTIONS

We hope to see you next Friday, but if you can't make it, please drop by for a tour at another time. Nickelsville is a project of Veterans for Peace, Chapter 92. They support us for many reasons; including the terrible need many Vets have for homes and shelter.

If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns about Nickelsville, please contact our staff person directly. His phone number is (206) 450-9136. The mailing address is P.O. Box 2548, Seattle, WA 98111. Our email address is Scott@nickelsvilleseattle.org and our website is nickelsvilleseattle.org.

Thank you for your interest!