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Home-sharing program mutually benefits homeowners and individuals who seek affordable housing

Clackamas County is working with Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) to provide an innovative approach and solution to affordable housing through EMO's Metro HomeShare program. Launched one year ago, this program follows EMO's successful Shared Housing program that matched thousands of homeowners and renters over a 30-year period in the Portland metro region.

Metro HomeShare facilitates home-sharing arrangements between home providers and home seekers to provide mutually beneficial relationships and stable living spaces. A successful home provider must be an individual with a spare bedroom or extra living space, who can legally rent the space, and is willing to live with a housemate and share common areas of their home. This individual may be seeking assistance in the form of rent or services or a combination of both.

Homeowners who may benefit from a home-sharing arrangement could be experiencing one or more of the following:

- An available room in home.
- "Empty nester" with a big empty house.
- Hope to age in home and maintain independence.
- Lives on a fixed income.
- Needs help with daily tasks like grocery shopping, transportation or desires companionship.

"Most people in our region are well aware of the housing crisis that is impacting so many of our neighbors. Clackamas County is looking at many different ways to address the housing crisis and support our growing number of older adult residents," said Brenda Durbin, Clackamas County's director of Social

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Services. “An issue that has received less attention is the reality that some older adults need support in order to remain living in their family homes.”

“The Metro HomeShare program has the potential of having a very positive impact on the lives of many people living in our county and around the region,” said Durbin. “There are two program components that will be most beneficial to older adult home providers. The first is the ability to create flexible and customized rental agreements that include cash payments as well as in-kind work that might include yardwork or meal preparation. The second component is the support provided by the program to ensure that matches work for all involved by including ongoing support for the matched clients.”

The comprehensive process to participate includes a pre-match screening, home visit, reference checks and intake. Clients are then involved in a self-match process. Once matched, the program supports the homeowner and home-seeker relationship over a period of two years.

For more information about EMO’s Metro HomeShare program, the public and members of the media may email metrohomeshare@omoregon.org or call (971) 271-5195. For more information about Clackamas County’s affordable housing programs and initiatives, members of the media and public may contact Tim Heider at theider@clackamas.us or (503) 742-5911.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, creation justice and public policy advocacy.