



POM closes capital campaign with functional facility and grateful hearts

If the staff and board of directors' smiles at Plateau Outreach Ministries seem brighter and broader it's because they are celebrating the completion of a successful capital campaign – ahead of schedule, under budget and with the ability now to provide more services to the community.

“Through the generosity of community donors, grants and financial stewardship the goal to have an accessible, comfortable and functional space to meet the needs of the plateau has been achieved,” POM Executive Director Britt Nelson said on behalf of the board and staff. “We look forward to the opportunities to grow into meeting the changing needs of those that POM serves and are so thankful that our building makes this possible. We are thankful to our community for supporting our service, and to our staff and volunteers who care for our neighbors in need.”

Thoughtful and Intentional Board Goal

In 2008, the Plateau Outreach Ministries board of directors set a goal to move our services into “an efficient and hospitable facility” by July of 2010. This came out of years in rented spaces that never truly met the needs of those we served.

The decision to find a new home was clear, a 50-pound bag of potatoes should not serve as a chair for staff, regardless of shared space with the food bank. Upstairs office space was an unacceptable alternative for the elderly or people with disabilities – so was racing up and down the stairs and meeting people in their cars.

The new building had to be accessible and safe for handicapped clients, to be friendly and welcoming, and to be flexible and affordable, but purchasing a building was a big step for the tiny nonprofit.

POM Board Past President Montye Male remembers it was a debated and difficult decision. “It was one of those life experiences, which is both terrifying, but gratifying,” she said.

Successful Fundraising

The purchase of the 1806 Cole St. building became



Plateau
Outreach
Ministries

possible through the generosity of a donor who provided a private mortgage, making monthly payments 33 percent less than rent at the time. The rest was made possible through private donors, churches, foundations, grants, in-kind donations, volunteers and events like Bite & Boogie and giveBIG. Because of grants, in-kind work, donations, and frugal financial decisions by the board, more was accomplished at less than the original projection.

The original capital campaign goal was \$850,000. The final costs came in at \$837,431.

Goals

After the building was selected, the capital campaign was launched with six clear goals that transformed the building and POM services.

- Purchase and make structural and safety improvements and increase the thrift store size. Completed 2010
- Make exterior and foundation repairs, install energy efficient windows and doors, replace awnings for signage and visibility. Completed 2011
- Remodel food bank and Samaritan office space; add shower, washer and dryer. Completed 2012
- Purchase furniture and technology. Completed 2014
- Pay off the outstanding mortgage. Balloon payment reduced to zero in 2014 – early pay off – 2019
- Establish a building maintenance fund. Completed 2014

In addition, through the generosity of several major grants, POM leaders were able to replace the roof, add air conditioning to the thrift store, and upgrade the food bank refrigeration units.

“God answers prayers when you ask for the right thing,” Male said. “He surely was at work during the entire purchase, fundraising and completion of our capital campaign.”

Bringing More Services

The hopes for the renovated building were to increase thrift store capacity, create an accessible food bank and service area, and increase the number of private interview rooms for case management.

The thrift store doubled in size, which in turn has doubled its income, which supports POM's ministry.

The food bank area is now open and accessible for those with walkers or scooters. The flexibility of the room also makes it possible to host classes and engage youth groups in service.

Private interview rooms have increased from one to three, allowing counselors to increase the number of people who can be seen during emergency assistance services.

The renovations have opened the doors for outside agencies to bring more services to local families.

A team from the Multi-Service Center in Federal Way comes during winter months to process federal energy assistance. They serve up to 80 families in each visit. King County Public Health comes weekly to assist with food cards and health insurance. Valley Cities Mental Health uses the facility weekly to offer counseling to local residents. DSHS brings its mobile unit every quarter to serve local families.

In the past two years, POM has partnered with area churches to offer an evening winter shelter from December through February for the area's homeless. The POM building provides a common place for registering, case management, and laundry and shower facilities.

Through the support of the community POM has become the primary location for social service assistance and referrals on the plateau.

“What started as a humble partnership between local churches of the Plateau Ministerial Association to serve families in need in a Christ-like manner has grown, providing comprehensive services in a safe and welcoming atmosphere,” Nelson said. “We are proud of the cooperative efforts between churches, community and civic agencies that help our neighbors in their times of crisis.”