

OUR JEWISH TRADITION

commands us to provide help to the poor and disadvantaged. Many of our Temple Beth Am programs stem from that tradition, assisting both our Jewish neighbors and the larger community.

In 2003, we took a major step toward “living the teaching” by hosting Tent City on our grounds for a stay of six weeks. That experience gave us the opportunity to see the faces of homelessness and poverty. We learned that although Tent City allows couples to stay together, most shelters in our area do not. Many shelters do not allow children; often homeless parents must accept temporary separation from their children. We also learned that many homeless citizens have part- or fulltime jobs.

Our experience with Tent City and further research in our area led a group of Temple members to develop the Homeless to Renter Program (H2R). The Temple Board approved the proposal unanimously in February 2004.

WHY IS H2R NEEDED? There are many reasons why families fall into homelessness: the loss of a job, a divorce, domestic violence, overwhelming medical bills, substance addiction. The first step up is immediate assistance: temporary shelter, food, and medical care, and other services.

The second step is to help these families move up out of homelessness. Some already have jobs, but they are the “working poor.” They have sufficient income to pay monthly rent on a small apartment, but can’t save enough to pay the move-in costs: first and last months’ rent and security deposit.

Thus, they are stuck in homelessness or temporary housing, because they can't take that next step. We decided to help these families take that second step by arranging to help pay for their move-in costs.

HOW DOES H2R WORK? The H2R program partners with Jewish Family Service, a social service

agency which works with Jewish families and families from the broader community in need of help. Here's how H2R works:

1. Jewish Family Service identifies and qualifies a family ready to move up out of homelessness.
2. The family locates an apartment with rent they can afford if they receive help for move-in costs.
3. H2R fund pays move-in costs, up to a total of \$1,000 per family. We also provide household supplies, special afghans made by our Knitzvah Knitters, and, if necessary, help the family with the costs of apartment supplies.
4. Jewish Family Service manages the H2R fund and provides us with progress reports.

HOW IS H2R DOING? It's a great success! **As of Dec. 31, 2014, 249 families--including 573 children--** have their own apartments. Families were referred from more than 30 agencies. Let's keep up the momentum!

YOU CAN HELP!

- We invite everyone to support H2R. Your tax-deductible contribution, regardless of the amount, is a wonderful opportunity to help hardworking families.
- Make your check payable to Temple Beth Am--H2R, and mail it to **Temple Beth Am, 2632 NE 80th Street, Seattle 98115**. Or, use your credit card to donate online through your member account or by calling Beth Am at 205-525-0915.
- Beth Am members: Your H2R contribution may be a tribute to a friend or loved one. You can do this by calling the office at 206-525-0915, or donate directly online.

We invite you to join our H2R Committee to plan events and educational outreach. Contact Fred Diamondstone at 206-634-3570 or fdiamondstone@seanet.com

“There are eight levels of Tzedakah, each one higher than the other.

The highest one of all is when one takes the hand of one...and gives him a gift or loan, or engages him in a partnership...

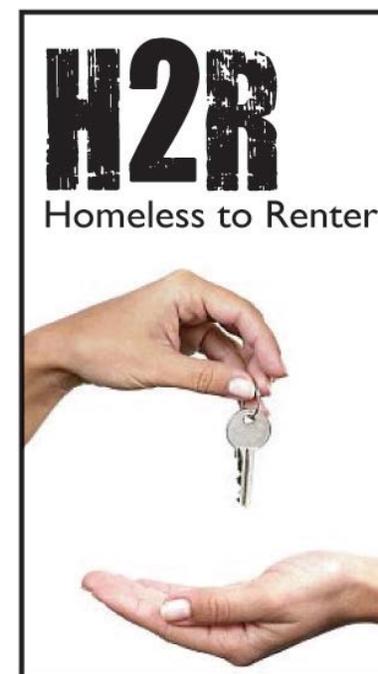
Thus it is written: ‘And you strengthened the stranger...’”

Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Laws of Contributions to the Poor, Chapter 10:7

“Nothing felt so good as the first time I walked into my new apartment and locked the door behind me. I didn’t know what a relief that would be.”

**Formerly homeless
Seattle resident**

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**A Tikkun Olam Program of
Temple Beth Am, Seattle WA**

10 YEARS & GOING STRONG