



## Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Project

Karen & Viktor

It's called the Northwest Human Services' Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Project (HOAP) and hundreds of people from all walks of life visit every month. They come because their circumstances have led them here – a place of safety and compassion. **With support from Oregon's State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP), HOAP is better equipped to manage the needs of people in our community.**

A young couple, Karen and Viktor,\* finally got their housing voucher after living in a tent. They didn't know exactly what to do or where to start, but they knew to come to HOAP. They were finding it difficult to make progress toward obtaining housing because they were continually working to meet their basic needs and remain safe. As difficult as it may seem, the couple was surviving on the streets with a combined income of just over \$300.00 per month. They needed help; HOAP staff knew the best way to work with them and assigned them a Case Manager.

Through case management, they created an Individual Support Plan and identified their needs. These plans maximize wellbeing and offer a step-by-step approach to address complex issues. This couple received personal advocacy, basic needs support, long overdue medical and mental health care, and transportation while they worked to obtain housing.

With the support of their Case Manager, Karen and Viktor stayed motivated, met their support plan goals, and within 30 days secured stable, affordable, safe housing – their own apartment. They've since had a few hiccups along the way, needing energy assistance and support accessing food, but they continue to meet with their Case Manager each month to re-evaluate their needs. Karen got a part-time job and Viktor continues to actively look with dignity and the tools he needs to succeed. Finding and maintaining work while homeless is not impossible, but finding and keeping a job when you have a safe place to sleep, a shower, and clean clothes is a whole lot easier.

*Community Action Agencies support low-income individuals and families, both directly and through partnerships with community organizations. Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency is proud to work with partner HOAP.*

**Read more about how Community Action Agencies are helping Oregonians find safe, stable, and affordable housing at [www.caporegon.org](http://www.caporegon.org).**

\* All names changed to protect privacy.

*The availability of affordable housing shapes families' choices about where they live, often relegating lower income families to substandard housing in neighborhoods with higher rates of poverty and crime and fewer health-promoting resources.*

*Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Issue Brief: EXPLORING THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH, May 2011.*