



From the Desk of Our Executive Director

As we close out 2025 and our year end appeal, I want to begin with my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who support the work of OHRA with your time, donations, and advocacy. Your generosity sustains our work, making a tangible difference for our neighbors facing crisis. We truly could not do this without you.

As I mentioned in our previous newsletter, your donations have kept OHRA in a position of strength, ready to expand our services to meet the community's changing needs. This year, that need was to offer a winter shelter for those staying on the Ashland night lawn. Because of your support, we were able to leverage resources to partner with the City of Ashland to open the Winter Shelter at 2200 Ashland Street.

The shelter will operate for four months through our partnership with the City, and will allow OHRA to increase access to resources for community members who have nowhere else to turn in the coldest months of the year. The shelter officially opened its doors on Friday, December 5, and will remain in operation through April 1, 2026.

At the same time, we continue to be out in the community connecting with individuals who are unhoused, assessing needs, and helping secure shelter placements. We are also coordinating with local organizations and are actively recruiting volunteers to help prepare meals and support daily shelter operations. The first weeks were very successful. Thanks to supporters like you, we are able to shelter up to 30 people each night and have the capacity to add another 20 beds when the temperatures dip below freezing.

As we move into the heart of winter, I hope you will continue to stand with us. Together, we are creating a community where every person has the chance to find safety, stability, and hope.

With gratitude,



Dan Cano

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Save the Date: OHRA Community Cleanup — April 18, 2026

In celebration of Earth Day 2026, OHRA and our community partners will host a neighborhood cleanup focused on caring for the places we share. Volunteers will come together to remove litter from local streets and bike trails of Ashland, helping to create a cleaner, more welcoming community.

Following the cleanup, all participants are invited to a community celebration and lunch at the OHRA Center.

Sign up below to join us.

[Sign Up Here](#)

La Cita de el Invitado - Guest Quote

"Este lugar es muy eficiente lo atienden a uno muy bien son muy buenas personas la señora Martha me atendio muy bien y el señor Andy tambien. Este lugar le toma el tiempo necesario para pode servir a nuestra comunidad."
- *Isaias, a guest of OHRA.*

"This place is very efficient, they serve you very well, they are good people, Martha took care of me very well and Andy too. This place takes the time necessary to be able to serve our community."

Partner Highlight: Rogue Valley Street Dogs

At OHRA, we know that for many people experiencing homelessness, a pet is not just an animal—it is family, emotional support, and often the reason someone keeps going. Allowing pets in our shelter and at the winter shelter is not an extra accommodation; it is a critical way we remove barriers and ensure people can access safety, care, and stability without being forced to leave their companions behind.



“Allowing animals is huge!” Laurie Cuddy, President of Rogue Valley Street Dogs, shared. “If people can’t bring their animals, it’s such a barrier to getting help and getting shelter. It truly makes all the difference.”

Rogue Valley Street Dogs (RVSD) was founded in 2011 after Nancy and JW Lions moved to Ashland and noticed many people living outside with their dogs—many of whom were not spayed or neutered. What began with paying for just two surgeries has grown into a robust outreach program providing spay and neuter services, high-quality food, leashes, harnesses, and ongoing support for both unhoused and housed community members struggling to care for their pets.

OHRA was RVSD’s very first formal partner. From our early days, RVSD supplied pet food at the OHRA Resource Center and responded directly to referrals from our staff. That collaboration set the foundation for a model that recognizes a simple truth: when people are forced to choose between shelter and their pets, many will choose their pets—and remain outside.

Bear and Kota (pictured right), who are currently staying at the OHRA Center with their owner, Steve, demonstrate why pet-friendly shelter matters. RVSD has worked with Bear for more than a decade. While Steve and his dogs were staying at the 2200 Ashland Winter Shelter, Bear developed a large tumor that affected his ability to walk. Thanks to a grant specifically to support animal medical care, OHRA was able to cover the cost of Bear’s surgery. An RVSD volunteer transported him, and a 2200 shelter volunteer fostered Bear during his recovery. The tumor was benign, and Bear healed safely.

“Just to see them recently, since they have been at OHRA, they all just seem like they are in such a good place,” said Laurie. “It’s really wonderful to see.”

Stories like this are possible because OHRA intentionally removes barriers to care. By allowing pets in both shelter and emergency shelter settings, OHRA ensures that people do not have to abandon their animals in order to access safety, medical care, housing navigation, or case management. This approach reflects a broader philosophy shared by RVSD: while the immediate focus may be on the animal, helping the animal is often the most direct way to help the person.

“What distinguishes us,” Laurie explains, “These pets have people. There is always a person on the other end of that leash. While our focus is on the animals, we are helping the people by helping the animals.”

By keeping people and their pets together, OHRA and RVSD affirm dignity, build trust, and create compassionate pathways to stability—for the entire family.

Staff Highlight: Yesenia Quirarte

Yesenia is a Bilingual Resource Navigator at OHRA, where she plays a vital role in helping neighbors move from crisis toward stability. Before joining OHRA, Yesenia worked as a front desk receptionist at La Clinica. When Katie, OHRA’s Direct Services Manager, invited her to apply for a position, Yesenia immediately said yes.



“I feel like I can do more here for the community,” she shared. “I love helping people.”

At OHRA, Yesenia assists guests with a wide range of needs—applying for housing, jobs, and rental assistance; securing licenses, IDs, and birth certificates; and navigating bills and deposits. Much of her work centers on housing, and one of the most rewarding parts of her role is seeing people move indoors.

“It’s a huge difference,” she said. “I’ve helped guests move, and they’re so happy and excited to have a place. Going from being homeless to saying, ‘this is my house’—that’s a big thing.”

Equally meaningful are the moments when guests simply need someone to listen. Yesenia recalls a guest who, while waiting for shelter, shared how hard life had become and began to cry. “He thanked me just for listening and apologized for taking up my time,” she said. “I told him, ‘You don’t need to apologize—I’m here.’”

For Yesenia, this work has deepened her understanding of homelessness and reinforced the importance of dignity and human connection. She also credits OHRA’s supportive culture for making the work sustainable and fulfilling.

“Being happy at work is hard to find,” she said. At OHRA, she truly is—happy. Outside of work, Yesenia enjoys spending time with her husband and three sons, working out, and listening to music.

Volunteer Highlight: Nora Honkomp

Nora is a bird biologist with the Klamath Bird Observatory and a dedicated OHRA volunteer. After moving to Ashland in January, she began looking for meaningful ways to support her new community. When she learned about OHRA, she immediately felt drawn to get involved because of our holistic approach to care. “The broad array of services provided, and how it covers both immediate needs and long-term impact—those things are so important to go hand in hand,” she says.



Supporting local causes has always mattered to her. Growing up as an avid Girl Scout, she learned early about the importance of looking out for your “troop” and understanding how each small action contributes to the larger community. Volunteering at OHRA, she says, feels like a natural extension of that value.

Since joining the Mail Room team, where she helps sort and organize mail for guests, Nora has found her perspective on the unhoused community shifting in meaningful ways. “I come across tons of names all day, and then when I’m in

town and come across people who may be unhoused, I think about how I probably know their name. It emphasizes the fact that we are all part of the same community.”

Her experience as a volunteer has been overwhelmingly positive. “OHRA is so welcoming, and I always feel included, even though I’m only there for a short time. It’s really easy to see that what I’m doing is making a positive impact.”

When asked what she would tell someone considering volunteering at OHRA, her answer is simple: “Definitely do it.”



Development Corner

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From the Development Corner

As we close our year-end appeal, I want to offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to everyone who has already given. Your generosity has brought us to within just a few thousand dollars of our goal, and that is a powerful reflection of a community that truly cares—and shows it through action.

At OHRA, we are sustained by people who volunteer their time, give financial support, and speak up for neighbors experiencing crisis. This collective commitment makes real, tangible impact every day. Because of you, lights stay on in safe spaces, essential staff are present, and basic needs are met with dignity and compassion.

Your support also ensures we can respond to immediate and urgent needs: providing sleeping bags and tents to people with no shelter, operating Ashland’s winter shelter every night December- April 1, and providing six-month shelter and stabilization services that help individuals move toward safety and stability. These resources are not abstract—they are life-changing, and often life-saving.

If you are still looking to make a tax-deductible gift in 2025, I invite you to consider supporting OHRA. Every contribution, at any level, helps close the remaining gap and strengthens our ability to serve neighbors when they need it most, today and throughout the coming year.

Thank you for standing with our community and for making hope possible.

Warmly,

Brandy MacDonald
Development Director



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We love showing people where their support does its magic. Call or [email](#) us anytime to schedule a personal or group tour!

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