

Robbi Montoya, Dorothy Day House Executive Director

Robbi has worked in the social services/nonprofit sector for 40+ years.

Her early career and love for program development began with the juvenile justice system, where she had the opportunity to develop the “Citizenship Program”. In addition to traditional education modules in addiction and family dynamics, she included a host of positive influences in art and theatre including martial arts, mural design and spoken word.

Robbi learned quickly that her effectiveness in making the largest impact was her ability to “think outside the box” and find innovative ways to present facts and information that was interesting and digestible to her audience.

As a certified Alcohol and Other Drug Counselor, Robbi developed educational curriculum that brought traditional methodology immersed with Motivational Interviewing to help court-mandated individuals with DUIs regain their driving privileges.

Additional work as a Social Service Director include programs in Family Dynamics, homeless service programs, outreach programs, workforce development and motivational speaking.

Her current work centers on the unsheltered population in Berkeley and developing effective shelter environments (Hospitality Houses) that incorporate the Housing First model and preparing DDH guests for permanent housing success while reducing homeless recidivism.

**“Food for the body is not enough, there MUST be food for the soul”**  
~ Dorothy Day

# Housing First Dorothy Day House

June 19, 2023

---

Ending the Syndemic Symposium

---

Housing First

# Where We Are

**Relatable, non-traditional  
thinking-outside-the-box methods with  
effective service outcomes**

## DDH Programs and Models

All programs are “led by love” and Dorothy Day House CORE VALUES -  
Love for others and the community, Empowerment, Integrity, Service, Teamwork

Dorothy Day House has been given the opportunity by the City of Berkeley to lead the charge in many program “firsts”. Specifically, Horizon Transitional Village (HTV) - An outdoor sanctioned encampment operating inside a warehouse, providing open space and familiarity in its design and, Safe Parking and Respite Kickstart (S.P.A.R.K.) - a safe parking site for 40 RVs, including a road readiness stipend for minor repairs, registration renewal and parking ticket resolution. Programs sunsetted 12/31/2022

Current programs include:

- Beyond the Horizon - Hotel Model
- Dorothy Day Shelter (yr. round) -Case Management, Housing Navigation
- Berkeley Community Resource Center- Daytime drop-in, showers, laundry
- B.E.S.S. / Warming Center - Both seasonal, Nov-April
- Mobile Outreach Service Team (M.O.S.T.) - Non-COB encampment outreach
- DDH Meal Program - Breakfast and lunch, 7 days/365, incl. holidays
- Dorothy’s Closet - Voucher based clothing store for those in need (August)

# Housing First Opportunities

“What we can do, we WILL do. What we cannot, we will find those that can”

## City and county HMIS-Accessing the system

- DDH has prepared to bridge to gap in Crisis Assessments. Our “mini hub” consists of (9) Licensed Housing Assessors to bring brick and mortar services to the encampment population.
- Housing Navigators - Work independently (COB contracts) to offer Landlord Liaison services.
- Wrap Around Services - “Service Calendar” partnerships bringing services to the guests. Developing non-traditional, unique ways to bring services to participants.

## Identifying individuals syndemic factors

- Relationships take time. DDH sees them as 40-40% with 20% for whoever needs it! Once trust *develops*, case managers can provide individualized assistance plans targeted to the guest.
- Offering shelter respite and wraparound service while in shelter can be tricky. Empowering the guest with a voice in their self-governance allows them to be “seen” as more than a homeless statistic
- Providing healthcare and making connections while waiting for housing allows DDH case manager to facilitate the newly-formed relationship and trust baseline

# Merging Modalities

Creating non-traditional  
shelter setting

## Housing First and the Hospitality House (Shelter)

In 2019, Berkeley's PIT count estimated 1,108 unsheltered in Berkeley. That, in addition to the 170+ ppl in DDH shelter(s) *alone*, increases that number substantially. Dorothy Day House believes that removing traditional shelter rules allows those previously resistant to shelter stay indoors to reconsider. By building an environment that works hand and glove with the Housing First Model, we can begin wraparound services (at guest pace) and keep them safe as they respite and wait for permanent housing opportunities.

- Removing curfews - Restoring independence and dignity
- Workforce Development - Hiring within the shelter system
- Leading by example, practicing our "Good Neighbor Policy"
- Restore the right to be individuals
- Offer individuals the opportunity to volunteer and become invested in their community.
- Provide a platform for their life experience as an unsheltered person to share with others
- Freedom to ask questions, respectfully challenge and advocate for themselves
- Provide reasonable guidelines (rules) as a guest of Dorothy Day House

Housing First -

# Merging Modalities

While we wait for the “Golden Ticket”

## Housing First and Hospitality House

Rarely do we see a person assessed and immediately housed. During the waiting time, which can take many months or even years, we often lose them. In order to keep people safe and accessible, it is crucial to break the barriers that prevent them from staying in shelters. DDH believes that messaging is paramount to expectations. Reframing “shelter” to “hospitality houses”, removing “client” to “guests”, allowing pets and removing curfews are examples of how we can better serve those with the greatest needs.

**Horizon Transitional Village** - DDH has created a shelter space that works in tandem with Housing First by removing traditional shelter barriers. While individuals wait for housing, they have an opportunity to acclimate to social settings, respite and joyful activities. Wraparound service begins here concentrating on healthcare, addiction services, income enhancement and workforce development.

**Beyond the Horizon** - Hotel model which bring pre-housing expectations such as housekeeping and good neighbor practices.

**Wraparound Services** - Often referred to as aftercare, DDH puts no expectations or time limits at this stage of case management. Everyone has individual needs and our commitment is to remain available to meet those needs for however long is required.

# What We Can do...

## Workforce Development – Finding the right fit

Everyone has a story. It is our commitment to get to know our guests through talking *with* them. What are their likes and dislikes? What brings them joy? Are they a people person? Do they prefer to work in silence?

Dorothy Day House believes that people with lived experience have a unique perspective that they are able to bring to social services. What they may already possess rarely can be taught.

Dorothy Day offers training in Workforce Development in three key areas; Social Services, Food Industry and Retail/Customer Service. Our “try it for the fit” offers insight in these job industries through volunteerism.

- Opportunity to give back to their community
- Informed decision before commitment
- Allows individual to “bow out gracefully” without a feeling of failure
- Pivot, regroup and change their direction without judgement
- Learn more about self. Leads to discussion on the effects of homelessness

DOROTHY DAY HOUSE

# Housing First

June 26, 2023

---

As seen through the shelter system

---