

## January 2025

House of Charity has proudly offered respite services to people experiencing homelessness with significant medical need for over ten years. Tammy Ness, the respite care coordinator recently shared this story with me, highlighting the impact this program can have for those we serve.

Chris is a 67-year-old man referred to HOC respite on a few different occasions for minor acute illnesses. Chris lived and worked in Idaho but when his rent doubled, he was evicted. He came to Spokane to sell a car to a friend for some money to rent a hotel but when he arrived, he became ill and had to get to the hospital.

Once he was referred to respite, he was able to get the rest he needed and meet with CHAS Street medicine where he finally was diagnosed with the very rare autoimmune disorder that had long gone undiagnosed, finally getting the medication needed to help relieve his symptoms.

He was eager to engage with respite staff and set goals. The team then worked to get his new state ID, birth certificate and health insurance figured out. We also connected him to social security for his disability.

Chris had a lot of health-related anxiety and depression with all that he had been dealing with as well as having to leave behind friends when he was displaced. He had lost 75 pounds that year and was suffering a great deal, but also shared he was extremely anxious to see a medical provider. His anxiety was helped by discussing and brainstorming with our peer support and the rest of our respite team. He formed a support group with other patrons struggling with similar issues, taking turns

visiting each other's bedsides and helping one another through the day, checking in and holding each other accountable.

When Chris' respite time was coming to an end we helped make an exit plan. He let us know he was excited to get back to work but unsure if he would be able to handle a job at that point. We had him start volunteering a few hours a day to see how he felt. Chris demonstrated a superior work ethic and was feeling ready to take the next step and move into our resident client program where he works 20 hours a week on chores at the shelter and is turning in applications for jobs. He hopes to get back to work and into housing very soon.

Chris tells me all the HOC staff made him feel comfortable, safe and heard. We took care of him mentally and physically and he doesn't know what he would have done without us. Chris describes his last few years as disasters met with guardian angels that have saved him.

In gratitude,

Dena Carr  
HOC Director