



@bicksmith

SISTERS OF THE ROAD

Sisters Voice • Winter 2020



**TOGETHER
AT THE TABLE**

THANK YOU ALL FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN!

This past November and
December we raised
\$458,610!

*Special thanks to the
Larson Legacy Foundation,
the Ed Cauduro Fund and the
Willamette Week Give Guide!*



40 YEARS OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE, NONVIOLENCE, DINING WITH DIGNITY, GENTLE PERSONALISM AND ANTI-OPPRESSION

Since 1979, Sisters of the Road has worked to address the needs of the communities of Portland's Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood—particularly members of the community who are currently unhoused. We built relationships and listened to understand peoples' needs and in response opened a nonprofit cafe with the founding goals of:

- ▶ Providing a safe, welcoming place for everyone—especially women and children.
- ▶ Offering nourishing meals at little cost and/or in exchange for labor.
- ▶ Offering job training and employment experience.

For forty years, these goals have shaped our work and continue to anchor our pursuit to fulfill our mission—one relationship at a time.

STAFF:

Allysa Gonzalez
Benjamin Donlon
Carmen Duran-Ramirez
Toni Egner
Deborah Sturm
Fenix Kibodeaux
Jessica Feinman
Karen Katigbak
Keegan Murray
Leanne Falzon
Lucas Grzybowski
Lauren Gerich
Melissa Lang
Migyoung Won

Pepe Espinoza
Sammy Lawrence
Shorty Dado
Travis Smith

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Art Rios Sr.
Bekah Watkins
Jess Heman
Julia Nielsen
Kacy McKinney
Linda Senn
Scarlet Vildibill

SISTERS OF THE ROAD

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MISSION: Sisters of the Road exists to build authentic relationships and alleviate the hunger of isolation in an atmosphere of nonviolence and gentle personalism that nurtures the whole individual, while seeking systemic solutions that reach the roots of homelessness and poverty to end them forever.

ROAD MAP TO WHATS HAPPENING:

ADMIN

In this Together	3
Story of Sisters' Three 'X' Logo	4

CAFE / KITCHEN

It's for Them and It's for Me.	
Sobriety at Sisters Cafe	5
Shorty's Salmon Chowder	6

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

More than a Bathroom, It's about Dignity	7-8
--	-----

DEVELOPMENT

Why We Do This Work	9
Loving Moments	10

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	11
------------------------------------	----

SISTERS EVENTS	12
--------------------------------	----

COMMUNITY VOICE	13
---------------------------------	----

WAYS TO SUPPORT SISTERS	14
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Cover "window treatment" by Michael James Schneider: [@@blcksmth](#)

SISTERS OF THE ROAD CAFE

[133 NW Sixth Ave.](#) Tuesday–Saturday
[Portland, OR 97209](#) 10:00am–2:30pm

SISTERS ADMIN OFFICE

[618 NW Davis St.](#) Tuesday–Saturday
[Portland, OR 97209](#) 9:00am–5:00pm

[sistersoftheroad.org](#) [f](#) [@](#)

WHO WE ARE

Sisters of the Road is a nonprofit cafe in Portland's Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood working to create systemic change that will end poverty and homelessness by providing nourishing meals in a safe, dignified space.

We work to build community one relationship at a time, with nonviolence and gentle personalism, believing everyone has a piece of the truth and that we are all more than the sum of our current situation or past experiences.

We interrupt violence and oppression in all forms and our Cafe is a Safer Space where everyone is welcome.

At Sisters we believe that care and dignity are at the heart of food justice. Therefore, we offer many ways for folks to gain access to hot, fresh meals:

Barter Work Program allows folks to earn four full meals & beverages for every hour long shift in the Cafe. By bartering work, our community members are treated with dignity, meanwhile gaining applicable skills in the food industry that they can take elsewhere.

For Purchase: We also accept cash and SNAP benefits/EBT cards. All meals are served to order and in a welcoming environment for only \$1.50, the same price Sisters has offered since 1979!

For Free: First time guests, families, and customers who for medical reasons are unable to do Cafe work receive a hot and nutritious meal at no charge.

Blue Meal Coupons: These coupons are designed to allow supporters like you to gift meals to our community members. For the price of \$2.00, coupons are redeemable for a full meal. We believe our coupons are an innovative way to share a meal and start a conversation while responding to a need in our community.

If you'd like to purchase meal cards please visit our website: [sistersoftheroad.org](#) or call us at: 503-222-5694



IN THIS TOGETHER

By Melissa Lang, Development Manager

Thank you! This past year we had a chance to celebrate our 40th year with the support of all of our community including, YOU!

From Board members to community members, elected officials to current and past staff, you all reminded us that the work we are doing is intrinsically woven into the character of our much-loved city. You reminded us of where we have been, the work ahead of us and that, while we have come a long way working towards our mission every day, there is always room to grow and improve.

At our 40th Anniversary Fundraiser, we were challenged and inspired when Cowlitz Tribal Council Member Dr. Christine Dupres reminded us that reconciliation with our local tribes isn't complete, but only begins when we announce an indigenous land acknowledgment.

At our 40th Reunion, co-founder Genny Nelson reminded us of Sisters' radical origins and how we were modeled after Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, and that we, above all, are profoundly about love.

Board Member Kacy McKinney shared her incredible talent as a comic artist with the following risograph print telling the story of Sisters' three 'X' logo. This poster brings to life part of our origin story and centers us in our mission and beginnings.

The Kitchen and Cafe crew, made up of Shorty, Lucas,

Keegan, Fenix, Leanne, Lauren, Deborah, Pepe, Ben, Allysa, Carmen and Toni, cohesively, through hard times and joy, worked to keep our doors open to serve delicious meals, reminding us that we are all in this together.

Darcelle XV brought us all to tears at the fundraiser when she reached out with arms open and full of gratitude to co-founder Genny Nelson, reminding us that we at Sisters stand on many shoulders of caretakers who have a long history of uplifting those most oppressed in our city.

Lou McLemore, down at the Billy Webb Elks Lodge, embraced us for our 40th Fundraiser and allowed us to celebrate our mission to end poverty forever in a space enriched by the whispers of decades of civil rights activism.

Community members from decades past recentered the development team's frenzy during event planning by reminding us why we are here and why we do this work—for more on this check out our new Donor Relations Manager, Karen Katigbak's piece on page 9.

And last, but never least, all of you showed us that we are a community supported. Forty years strong and grounded in the collective joy that are our volunteers, advocates and donors, we thank you. Thank you for keeping us going through hard times and fun. And cheers to another 40 years serving the best cup of coffee in town—always served up with dignity and a dash of love.

SISTERS OF THE ROAD CAFE

SINCE 1979



WE HADN'T BEEN OPEN LONG—PERHAPS A FEW WEEKS—WHEN A CUSTOMER DREW A CIRCLE AND THREE XS IN CHALK OUT FRONT.

WE KNEW WHAT IT MEANT, FROM THE HOBO LEGEND, A SIGN TO OTHERS WHO MIGHT PASS THROUGH: YOU'LL FIND GOOD FOOD, NICE HOSPITALITY IN THIS PLACE.

I WAS REALLY TAKEN BY THAT. IT MEANT PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD THAT SISTERS WAS DIFFERENT.

OUR CUSTOMERS GAVE US THIS SIGN AS A MEANS TO MARK IT: THIS IS THE PLACE.

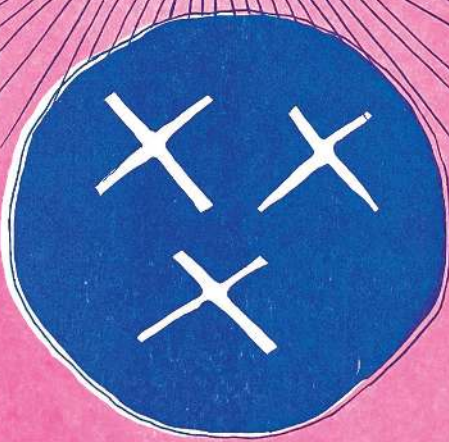
PEOPLE OFTEN ASK WHAT OUR LOGO MEANS. IT'S PART OF OUR HISTORY, OUR PRESENT, AND OUR FUTURE.

celebrating forty years
133

TRANS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE
WHITE SUPREMACY IS NOT

SWEEPS KILL
@bleksmth



Kacy McKinney, 2019



IT'S FOR THEM AND IT'S FOR ME: SOBRIETY AT SISTERS CAFE

*By Carmen Duran-Ramirez,
Cafe Scheduling Coordinator*

I arrived at Sisters on my first day of sobriety, coming from Salem. I left for Portland to get sober; I was trying to start a new life. I was screaming for help. In Salem, if you are transgender you can't always get help. Here in Portland you can go to a women's shelter, but in Salem they put you in a room by yourself. I only had money to get transportation to Wilsonville. I was stuck, and I slept on the streets outside of a church. Finally someone helped me and I travelled here. Years ago someone told me about this place, Sisters, a place you can go to volunteer and they give you nourishing meals.

When I first walked in, there was Allysa, she welcomed me. She just said "Hi, how are you?" with a big smile. Then she came to my table after she was off the

register. This is why I call her my adopted daughter and she calls me "mom;" we have a real connection. After that I put on the Sisters bulletin board a little note that read, "Thank you for your smile." After that first day at Sisters, I thought "maybe this is going to be a new start." I asked them if I could do some work for them and they asked me to volunteer and I said, "Great!" Now, nearly a year later, I am a full-time employee as the Cafe Scheduling Coordinator. Sisters is the base of my sobriety because they support me.

Even though I was homeless and trying to get sober, I used to have a different point of view. Before I could be really judgmental, but here I learned so much from the community and the staff. During my addiction, I used to steal from stores. I would get away with it, but now I think, "look at these folks who don't have nothing, but they will come here with 25 cents and buy a coffee when we would give it for free." They want a home; they want a place where they can be respected and accepted.

One of the many reasons I work here is to support my fellow folks in sobriety so that they can see me. I tell them, "You can do it!" And we can check in with one another. When they are so many days sober we celebrate and we can do it together.

I felt uncomfortable in the beginning because my addiction and past abusive relationships made me think negative comments about myself, so I had no confidence. But getting sober here at Sisters, people would say they loved my smile, and that mattered to me. I used to have a wall and a barrier up, but now I am open and can receive that love.

If you are struggling with sobriety I encourage you to find support, stay away from the circles who don't support you, and know that if you want to be sober it is possible. When you feel that trigger, do something. Ask for help and don't feel ashamed. Society now sees me with different eyes without knowing that I am an addict, and that helps me reconnect. Don't try to just be strong. Addiction is a big monster; you need support. I would recommend Sisters of the Road for those trying to get sober because there is love here, acceptance, nonviolence.

Allysa greeted me with a smile and care, and that simple act brightened my day and made me volunteer and give back to others. I can see that when I sing and dance and all the crazy stuff that I do here, all the people dance with me, even if they can't stand up or are depressed, they dance with me. Can you imagine? Sisters helps me give light to people.

It's for them and it's for me.



A SISTERS' FAVORITE: SHORTY'S SALMON CHOWDER

By Shorty Dado, Kitchen Coordinator

A warm and creamy Pacific Northwest delight

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- ▶ 2 salmon fillets
- ▶ Your favorites seafood additions, like pan cooked scallops, precooked shrimp or clams!
- ▶ 2 cups half-and-half cream
- ▶ 1 tablespoon of parsley
- ▶ 1 ½ tablespoons of dill
- ▶ ½ teaspoon of thyme
- ▶ 1 ½ teaspoons of paprika
- ▶ Salt & pepper, to your taste
- ▶ 4 ½ cups water or vegetable broth
- ▶ 1 large onion chopped
- ▶ 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- ▶ ½ cup of flour
- ▶ 1 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into little cubes
- ▶ 1 can of cream-style corn
- ▶ Optional toppings: Fresh chives, cilantro or green onions chopped, bacon cooked and diced

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven at 375 degrees
2. Drizzle some olive oil on a baking sheet, add salmon fillets and salt and pepper each side and sprinkle dill on top. Cook until the albumin begins to seep out, remove salmon skin and discard or keep to chop and add to soup.
3. In a big ol' pot, get your butter melting over medium heat. Sweat the onions and garlic, then add the flour, stirring to coat evenly, then add the potatoes, to make a roux. Then add the corn and liquids.
4. After 10min, add thyme, parsley and paprika. Bring to a boil then turn heat to medium low so its not boiling anymore.
5. Add salmon and other seafood of your choice to the chowder. Add garlic powder and pepper and salt to taste. Mix periodically, making sure potatoes and salmon are not burning on the bottom. Cook until potatoes are cooked through. Serve, adding optional cilantro, bacon, green onions and/or chives.



Sisters' Hygiene Huddle members, from left to right, Mona Robinson, Bekah Watkins, Christine, (not shown: Enya), Merük, Benjamin Donlon and Pepe

IT'S MORE THAN A BATHROOM. IT'S ABOUT DIGNITY

INSIDE SISTERS' FIGHT FOR GREATER HYGIENE ACCESS

By Mona Robinson, Administrative Intern and Operations Supervisor at Hygiene4All

In the city of Portland, there are nine public restrooms that are open year-round; most of these close by 10 p.m. More than half a million people live in Portland. More than 2,000 are unsheltered—and

THERE ARE ONLY NINE BATHROOMS

Let that sink in. I get annoyed when I can't use the bathroom in my home and there are only four of us!

Why are we so passionate about hygiene access at Sisters of the Road? It is not something that housed people think about very often. Take a moment and think about your morning routine. How many steps do you have to take to get to a toilet? How many people ask you to buy something before you can use the toilet? How long is the line you must stand in to take a shower? When you are living on the streets this is not just a morning routine question, it is a multiple-times-a-day question.

Hygiene access is more than just a place to take a shower, go to the bathroom, or do your laundry. Hygiene access is about dignity and health care. Lack of hygiene access contributes to increased health risks and increased mental health struggles. The connection between homelessness, hygiene, and healthcare is undeniable.

According to the Hygiene Project Report, published by PSU School of Social Work in 2016, 40 percent of our unhoused community report having experienced a medical problem due to the inability to adequately meet their hygiene needs. The World Health Organization reports that lack of proper hygiene access leads to the spread of disease, including MRSA (antibiotic-resistant staph), fungal, strep, and other staph-like infections, as well as skin infections such as scabies and head and body lice. It also includes the spread of Hepatitis A, B, and C!

Sisters of the Road hosts a weekly meeting, Hygiene Huddle, to discuss what is happening in our city and to partner with other organizations to create change. The Hygiene Huddle is open to anyone who would like to join and happens every Wednesday at 2 p.m. Hygiene Huddle, together with the Roadies, educate community partners about the hygiene needs and the rights of the unhoused community in Portland to allow for informed decision making while increasing access and removing barriers to hygiene access.

In 2019, the Hygiene Huddle:

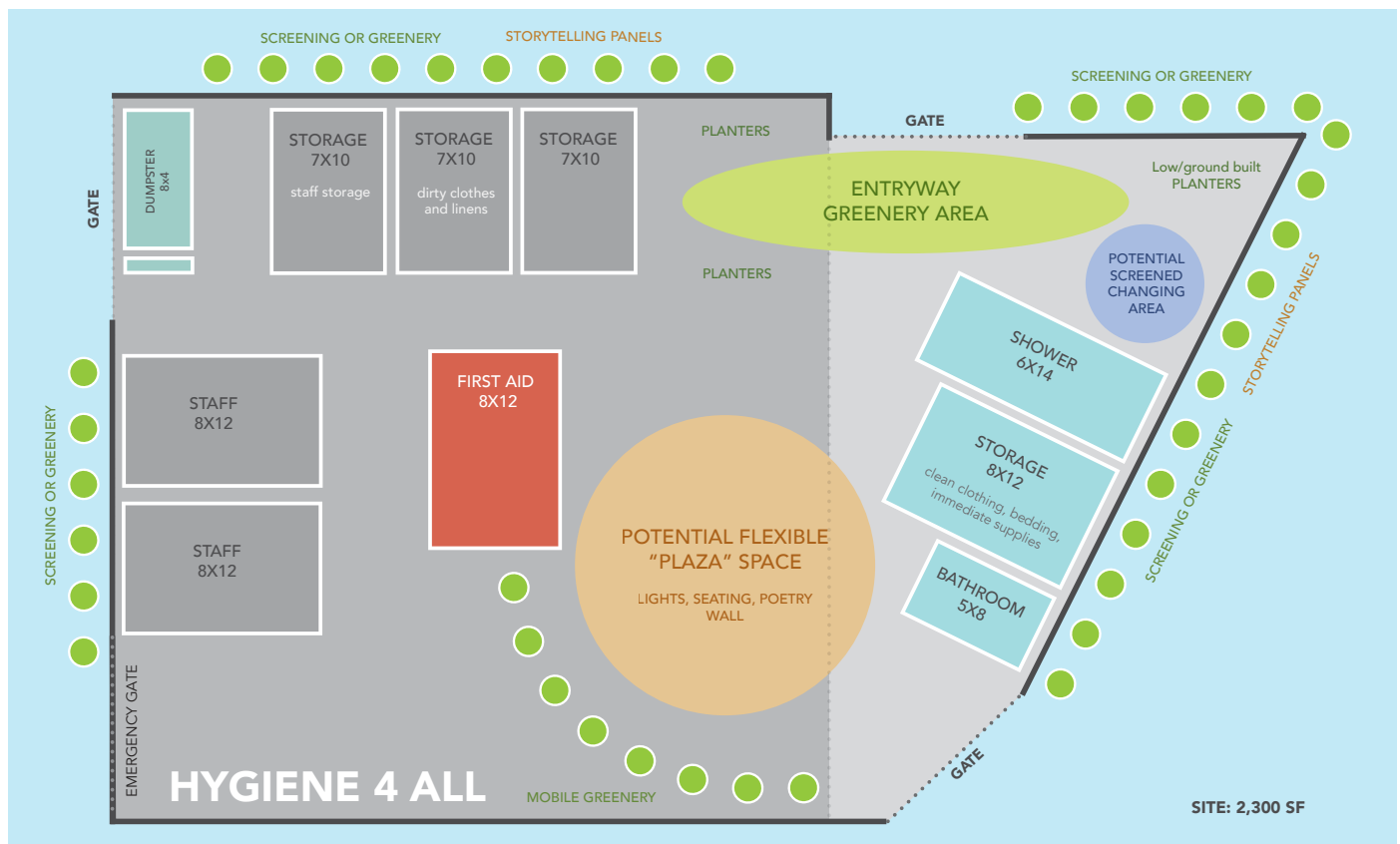
- ▶ Collaborated with the Compassionate Change District to fight for a better alternative to enhanced service districts in Portland
- ▶ Collaborated with community organizers in the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood to increase awareness and bring more hygiene access to the area
- ▶ Collaborated with Hygiene4All to do research, focus groups, and develop a safer alternative to hygiene access
- ▶ Hygiene4All was borne out of organizing at

Hygiene Huddles, Roadies Meetings, and Compassionate Change District meetings. Hygiene Huddle is proud to have hosted the first focus group discussion that has to lead to the formation of Hygiene4All

What is happening in 2020:

Hygiene Huddle is proud of the work that is being done by Hygiene4All, and proud to have been a part of its creation. Hygiene4All will be opening a houseless led and run hygiene, sanitation, and safety hub promoting community dignity, health, and connection across the housing divide. Hygiene4All is a bathroom, washing, bedding and clothing exchange, and trash removal hospitality hub. It is designed, led, and run by members of the houseless community. Attendants are trained in de-escalation, trauma-informed harm reduction, and fostering a culture of respect, acceptance, and welcome of all community members regardless of housing status, race, gender, and sexual orientation.

We at the Hygiene Huddle invite you to learn more about Hygiene4All at their website, h4apdx.org



Hygiene4All • Hospitality Hub Site Plan



at Sisters. But, like I said, I was tired and running around getting little things done.

But, then there was this moment, I was running up the spiral staircases in the cafe to turn up the music for the party and the holiday lights caught my eye. The laughter caught my ears and I zeroed in on my friends in the cafe embracing. Their clothes were sopping wet, but that embrace seemed like the only thing that mattered.

There are moments here at Sisters when tears well up in my eyes and I am overcome with grace and humility.

There are moments here at Sisters when tears well up in my eyes and I am overcome with grace and humility. This is why I work here, and this is why the work we do is so important. Because we celebrate, even when it is wet and cold outside. We give each other our presence and our authentic selves when there are countless distractions. We celebrate even when the world constantly tells us not to.

I have lived in Portland most of my life. My family set roots into our Northeast Portland home more than 25 years ago. I attended Jesuit High School, and witnessed first hand the drastic changes in our city over the past decade. This city is more to me than where I reside. It's home. So, not only am I thrilled to join the team here at such a significant organization that is quintessentially Portland, but I also have been moved by seeing how many of my fellow Portlanders, like you, came together to support Sisters' work this past Together at the Table campaign.

On behalf of the Development Team we would like to thank you for helping us raise \$458,610. Thank you for celebrating with us for all these years. Thank you for your donations that help us keep our doors open to more shared meals and wet embraces. And thank you for affirming that all those who are surviving on the streets deserve love, dignity and friendship.

SHARED MEALS & WET EMBRACES: WHY WE DO THIS WORK

By Karen Katigbak, Donor Relations Manager

On December 7th, the day of Sisters' much anticipated Community Reunion, I walked into work feeling tired. Tired from the systemic oppression that impacts our unhoused neighbors, tired of money, tired of the suffering, tired from my own personal challenges. As my coworker Keegan likes to say, tired of the "troll between my ears." I wasn't sure how much space I had in my body and mind to grind through another day. Yet, by that evening, I was still standing because of who knows how.

On this particular night of our Community Reunion we were to celebrate forty years of people creating relationships, family, and history together. The significance and importance was obvious to me, even being fresh to the development team here



LOVING MOMENTS BETWEEN OLD STAFF AND NEW AND SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU





WHAT BEING ON THE BOARD MEANS TO ME

By Art Rios Sr., Board Member

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SISTERS DURING OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR!

This past fall I was humbled to partake in Sisters' 40th anniversary events and witness what the staff, and board and community have built these past four decades. Sisters offers a multiverse of nutritious options of food, including rice and beans, and a space to dine with dignity for the community. Members of the board supported Sisters family at these 40th anniversary events in many ways. It was so awesome to see so many people coming together and respecting the work that Sisters has been doing within the community. From staff, donors, board members, and foundations, for all these years, past and present,




all came together and that was a delight.

At the 40th Community Reunion in December, we carved out space for our community members to celebrate along with all of us. My son Jr. and I came and volunteered. I love that Sisters provides a way for all of us to contribute. That's what brings us back; it's generational for me and my son to be able to come in and volunteer for our community. As a board member, I loved being able to come together for compassion and build authentic relationships with all who walk through our doors. That's what being a board member is for me.



SISTERS EVENTS—WINTER 2019

ONGOING EVENTS:

-  Every **First Friday**: 10:00-1:00pm— Women’s Care Day in the Cafe
-  Every **Third Wednesday**: 6:00-7:30pm— Food for Thought
-  Every **Third Thursday**: 6:00-8:00pm— Sisters Volunteer Orientation

SUPPORT SISTERS THROUGH OUR DINING WITH DIGNITY EVENTS



VISIT OUR DINING WITH DIGNITY RESTAURANT PARTNERS, WHO WILL DONATE A PERCENTAGE OF THEIR PROCEEDS FROM THEIR EVENT DAY TO SISTERS!

DINING WITH DIGNITY



FRIDAY MARCH 20TH:
Addy's Sandwich Bar
 911 SW 10th Ave, Portland
addyssandwichbar.com



FRIDAY APRIL 24TH:
Jam on Hawthorne
 2239 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland
jamonhawthorne.com



WEDNESDAY MAY 27TH:
FOR QUIZ-ISSIPPI PIZZA
Mississippi Pizza Pub
 3552 N Mississippi Ave, Portland
mississippipizza.com




Drawing by Phoenix Oaks, 2017

DONATE TO SISTERS


← Your donation to Sisters of the Road today makes a difference in our community.




MORE WAYS TO SUPPORT SISTERS

 **Ensure the sustainability of Sisters through Planned Giving.** Please contact Karen to learn more, at (503) 222-5694, ext.112 or karen@sistersoftheroad.org. Our legal name is Sisters of the Road, and our tax ID number is 93-0748169.

 **Turn your care into action!** You can dedicate monthly donations from your checking account or credit card and your gift keeps working each month to support an organization you believe in. Please contact Travis at 503-222-5694 x136 or travis@sistersoftheroad.org to join.

 **Your donations of shares of stock are always valued!** Karen would love to talk to you about your donation of stock! You can reach her at at (503) 222-5694, ext.112 or karen@sistersoftheroad.org

 **Buy Meal Coupons!** Good for one meal and a drink, \$2 Blue Meal Coupons can be purchased at the following locations:

- ▶ Alberta Food Co-op, 1500 NE Alberta St.
- ▶ Food Front Co-op 2375 NW Thurman St.
- ▶ New Seasons Arbor Lodge 6400 N. Interstate Ave.
- ▶ People's Food Co-op 3029 SE 21st Ave.
- ▶ The 2020 Chinook Book
- ▶ Village Merchants 3360 SE Division St.
- ▶ At Sisters' office 618 NW Davis (503-222-5694)
- ▶ Online at sistersoftheroad.org

**SISTERS
OF THE
ROAD**



[133 NW Sixth Ave, Portland, OR 97209](https://www.sistersoftheroad.org)

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DONATE TO SISTERS

Your donation to Sisters of the Road today makes a difference in our community. Sisters thrives because of the work that we do together, side by side, in solidarity.

JOIN US FOR A NOURISHING MEAL IN THE CAFE!



Sisters of the Road is open Tuesday thru Saturday at 9:15am for reservations, and service from 10:00am to 2:30pm. **All are welcome!**

[sistersoftheroad.org](https://www.sistersoftheroad.org)  