

Media Contact:
Robin Wood-Mason
Director of Development & Communications
rwood-mason@thedeloresproject.org
303-550-3758



The Delores Project
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH
CREATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

PRESS RELEASE
July 30, 2020

The Delores Project Calls for Services, Not Sweeps

The morning of Wednesday, July 29, 2020 at Denver's Lincoln Park, residents of the temporary encampment were forced to vacate the park by the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment with support provided by law enforcement agencies. No prior notice to vacate was provided to residents at the park, nor were alternative spaces provided for the individuals experiencing homelessness camping there. Several months ago, as part of what city officials say is an ongoing effort to clean streets and reduce risks of infectious diseases, sweeps of homeless camps in Denver displaced hundreds of people. Everyone has a fundamental human right to housing and to live in security, peace, and dignity. Continuing sweeps of homeless encampments without immediate alternative resources and safe locations for the displaced individuals is unacceptable and undignified. We recognize that homeless encampments do not constitute the type of housing that human beings deserve. We need more housing solutions, rather than persecute our unhoused neighbors for seeking their own solutions to their immediate need of survival and shelter.

"Every neighborhood has outdoor spaces that could be reserved for supported camping, including the large central spaces at and around Civic Center Park. We know all too well that people experiencing homelessness also experience significant stigma relating to their circumstances and using public spaces for managed camping sites may not be popular, yet it is the right thing to do. Rather than conducting sweeps and closing off parks, those resources should be allocated to managing those spaces with sanitation services and clean water supplies. We can and must do better during this crisis."

- Stephanie Miller, CEO

Denver continues to see growing numbers of people without housing, as demonstrated by the January 2020 Point-in-Time Survey and by less formal counts conducted by Denver Homeless Out Loud that show a significantly larger population than are officially reported. Communities throughout the City and County of Denver are struggling with camp sites popping up, like the one at Morey Middle School in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, and conflict arising between homeowners and their unhoused neighbors. The situation is going to become even more challenging when the auxiliary men's shelter operations at the National Western Complex cease and are relocated to the Coliseum and pre-existing men's shelters that will operate with less than half the bed capacity.

Earlier this month, The Delores Project commended Mayor Hancock's decision to change course and allow safe outdoor spaces for camping. Since then, the identification of spaces has been slow and implementation of the first identified site is opposed by the residents of District 9 who have already hosted the shelter operations at the Coliseum and National Western Complex. As we continue to navigate together through the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more imperative for the State of Colorado to provide state owned land to establish temporary safe outdoors spaces with supportive services for our unsheltered neighbors.

The Delores Project provides safe, comfortable shelter and personalized services for unaccompanied women and transgender individuals experiencing homelessness. We also work to end homelessness by advocating for housing solutions.

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