

## **THE DELORES PROJECT HISTORY**

In the winter of 1999, Brothers Redevelopment, Inc. offered use of a building to the homeless service provider community. Recognizing the shortage of emergency shelter space for adult unaccompanied women who are homeless, a collaborative effort of service providers including Denver Human Services, The Empowerment Program, The Gathering Place, and St. Francis Center, organized to open the building as a shelter for this vulnerable population. The Delores Project opened its doors to women experiencing homelessness on January 10, 2000. For six years the shelter operated seasonally, housing 34 women each night, October through April. During that time, we also began serving transgender individuals, consistent with our model of hospitality and our intention to provide shelter with as few barriers as possible, for those with the fewest resources.

In response to ongoing need for The Delores Project program, the organization secured its own facility from which to operate an expanded year-round shelter. With significant support from the local foundation community and Denver's Road Home, The Delores Project officially opened its new doors in December of 2006. In 2015, The Delores Project entered into a partnership with its neighbor, affordable housing provider Rocky Mountain Communities (RMC), in order to redevelop both properties together in order to help address Denver's low-income and affordable housing crisis. In May 2016 the project, Arroyo Village, was awarded state and federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits. In June 2017, The Delores Project temporarily moved its shelter to leased spaces, and construction of Arroyo Village commenced in September 2017. Arroyo Village was completed with trauma-informed design and fully occupied in August 2019 and offers a full continuum of housing options under one roof, with a 50 bed shelter (operated by TDP), 35 units of permanent supportive housing (TDP provides the supportive services and RMC are the property managers) and 95 units of affordable housing (operated by RMC).

## **THE STORY OF DELORES**

The Delores Project is named for Delores Big Boy, a Lakota woman who frequently lived on the streets of Denver. Her situation was complicated by health, developmental and substance abuse issues, as well as physical and sexual violence. When Delores was housed, she often opened her doors for many who had no warm place to sleep. Although Delores sought aid from various Denver agencies, sadly, she fell through the cracks in the system and died while living on the streets on June 8, 1999.

In establishing the shelter in 2000, we chose to honor the memory of Delores Big Boy with the commitment to continue our work of ensuring safe shelter for every person housed at the shelter and to support those in transition in the spirit of hospitality and dignity.

## **OUR CURRENT SERVICES**

### **24-7 Housing-Focused Shelter**

What began in the year 2000 as a winter-only, overnight shelter for women has morphed into a robust, 24-7 low-barrier, housing –focused shelter serving 50 women and transgender individuals year-round. While with us, each shelter guest is provided an assigned bed, locked storage for their belongings, 24-7 access to showers and hygiene, on-site laundry facilities, transportation assistance, and three meals and two snacks each day. We have at least two staff members working at all times to help maintain a safe, inclusive, and trauma-informed shelter environment and, all guests are offered on-site housing-focused case management and behavioral healthcare which includes 1-on-1 counseling as well as processing and art therapy groups. As a low-barrier shelter, we believe housing is a primary intervention to homelessness and that individuals are better able to find stability and achieve their goals when their basic needs are being met.

### **Rehousing and Continued Care**

While the shelter team manages day-to-day shelter operations and works to maintain a physically and psychologically safe environment for all guests, the Rehousing team helps guests find safe, appropriate, and affordable housing. This team has on-site Rehousing Case Managers who assist guests in identifying and working towards their housing goals, a Housing Navigator who serves as the intermediary between guests and landlords and who regularly provides available housing resources to guests, and Continued Care Case Managers, one of whom is a Peer, to provide community-based case management for shelter guests who have transitioned into housing. This team embraces a Housing-First model of care, working to get individuals out of the shelter system and into housing as quickly and safely as possible while providing the necessary support before, during, and after the transition into housing.

### **Supportive Housing**

Directly above our 24-7 shelter at Arroyo Village sits The Delores Apartments (TDA), a 35-unit Supportive Housing building serving those who were previously chronically homeless and living with a disabling condition (i.e. physical, developmental, psychological, or substance use). All units at The Delores Apartments come fully furnished and all residents are offered on-site case management and behavioral healthcare, as well as life skills programming and ongoing community engagement events and activities. Individuals in Supportive Housing pay 30% of their income is for rent (or a minimum of \$50/month for no-income residents) and the remainder is paid for by a housing voucher attached to the unit. At TDA there is Housing Assistant staff on-site 24-7 to provide a sense of safety and community for residents and a team of TDA Case Managers dedicated to connecting residents to benefits and community-based resources.

### **Behavioral Health**

Our Behavioral Health Counselor works collaboratively with all other program team staff members, offering on-site individual and group counseling to shelter guests and supportive housing residents. Behavioral Health also assists in managing our relationship with Colorado Access, helping guests and residents enroll in tele-therapy and psychiatry, and facilitates Mental Health 101 in the shelter Life SkillsWorkshop Series.

## **OUR MISSION**

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.

## **OUR VISION**

All individuals have the community of support and housing stability they need to reach their potential.

## **OUR VALUES**

Our model of service is one of respect, hospitality and dignity for each guest.

We support those we serve without judgement

We believe in the potential of each individual and their right to self-determination

We are good stewards of our financial and human resources

We value the diversity of our guests, staff, board, and volunteers, and we are a model of inclusiveness.

We believe the community is strengthened when it cares for those with the fewest resources.