

Flyer for Neighbors – Changes at Sisters Of The Road
August 27, 2009

Sisters Of The Road is a 30 year-old non-profit organization located at 6th and Davis in Old Town/Chinatown, Portland, Oregon. We have a Cafe that is open M-F, 10 am to 2:45 pm that serves hot, nutritious meals that can be paid for in many ways, including with \$1.25 in cash, 15 minutes of barter work or using an Oregon Trail Card. We also have a Systemic Change Program that works on solutions to the root causes of homelessness and poverty, in an atmosphere of nonviolence and gentle personalism, to end them forever. **www.sistersoftheroad.org**

What has Sisters Of The Road done to address crowding, violence, drug dealing and use, and other problems on the sidewalk outside your Cafe?

Sisters Of The Road will reopen on September 1, 2009. At that time, we will have the following action steps in place.

- The Cafe has been closed since July 27 to create solutions that will address the concerns of our staff, neighbors and customers. We are committed to providing a safe space for all people; this includes our neighbors, passers-by, and commuters as well as our customers and staff.
- Sisters has previously used a system in which people sign their name on a waitlist for a meal, and wait to be called. This system was meant to alleviate crowding and violence inside the Cafe, which was exacerbated by a long line. Unfortunately, because we cannot tell people exactly how long they must wait or what time they will be served, the waitlist has pushed the crowding and violence to our sidewalk where our neighbors must deal with it as well. The goal is to alleviate the crowding entirely, both inside and out; to accomplish this we will be assigning customers specific half-hour timeslots. No more than 15 people will be served each half hour, and customers will know well in advance what time they will be served. We expect this to significantly reduce the number of people crowding outside the Cafe.
- We will use sidewalk chalk to mark the walkspace around our Cafe. We will ensure the walkspace is kept clear for all to use and that people sitting, standing or resting do not infringe on this space.
- We will provide a list of alternative public spaces to our customers.
- We will provide Sisters' customers and neighbors with transparent and consistent policies, procedures, and our mission.
- We will reduce the number of hours we serve from 5 to 4 for our initial weeks of reopening. We will use this extra hour to evaluate all of the changes to our operations and to create new solutions for any problems that continue or arise.

Additionally, we have two tasks in progress.

- We will provide an orientation for our customers, staff, volunteers, and all interested that explains our policies and procedures, our services, and allows time for any questions.
- We are creating new volunteer roles that will allow staff more time to be outside to deal with any violence, drug dealing and use, or other problems that arise.

All solutions will be constantly evaluated using the daily time we have set aside. Any solutions that do not adequately address our concerns and the concerns of our neighbors will be modified or replaced as necessary.

How can I communicate with Sisters Of The Road if I have further concerns or want to give input?

- All our neighbors are invited to participate in a neighborhood meeting hosted by Sisters Of The Road at our Cafe. It will be held from 5:30 to 7:30pm on Wednesday, September 9, 2009. Food and drinks (including vegan and gluten-free items) will be provided. All concerned parties are invited and welcomed. RSVP if possible to Lauren at lauren@sistersoftheroad.org or 503-222-5694 ext. 25. If you forget to RSVP but would like to attend, please come anyway!
- If you are unable to make it to our neighborhood meeting, please feel free to contact us directly. Please call Monica Beemer, Executive Director, at 503-222-5694 ext. 19 or e-mail monica@sistersoftheroad.org.

Sisters Of The Road has been working hard to develop solutions to address problems outside of our Cafe. These problems are not unique to Sisters Of The Road, and have many deeply-rooted causes as well as more concrete and immediate ones. Some of these deeper causes include:

- Sisters Of The Road provides a welcoming environment, as well as infrastructure and services that are hard to come by on the street.
- The major cause of homelessness in America is the lack of affordable housing and resources to acquire affordable housing.
- There are not enough shelter beds or day sites to accommodate the number of homeless people in Portland.
- People crowd outside of Sisters Of The Road because there are few viable alternative public spaces.

*Thank you for your love and support and input in the process! www.sistersoftheroad.org
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