

"Our relationship with Heritage Bank is focused, transparent and open." - Brandi Tuck, Executive Director of Portland Homeless Family Solutions

CUSTOMER

Brandi Tuck

Sunshine State native

Vinyl aficionado

Driven to erase homelessness

SUMMARY

Brandi Tuck first started helping people while attending college at the University of Florida. After she finished her degree and moved to Portland, Oregon in 2005, Brandi volunteered in the community from the get-go. When the executive director at a small volunteer organization left in 2007, Brandi stepped up. "I had a vision to make the organization into a bigger project and to serve more people," said Brandi.

Changing the organization to a nonprofit was vital for the fundraising efforts. "Becoming a nonprofit was key to our mission, which in turn made it easier to obtain funding for our future," added Brandi. Once established as a nonprofit, the Portland Homeless Family Solutions (PHFS) grew quickly, offering day shelter and programs aimed to empower homeless families with children to get back into long-term housing.

"We don't have enough housing for everyone who needs a place to live. In the Portland area alone, we are approximately 29,000 units short of what is needed for every person and family who needs a home." There is a waitlist for families to get into a shelter, with the average wait time at least one year. This puts an extra strain and trauma on families with children.

What differentiates PHFS from other shelters is they provide a temporary place to live that is more than the traditional cots and mats. They provide rent assistance, temporary shelter, evidence-based skills classes and case management for up to one year to help families remain in housing.



Brandi Tuck, Executive Director of Portland Homeless Family Solutions

PHFS's new shelter model is built on research-based trauma-informed architecture and design—using space design and color palette to build dignity, restore power and promote autonomy to help people heal through the crisis and trauma of homelessness and actually improve their lives for the better. However, the model required a permanent location instead of operating out of church basements around the city, as PHFS had done for 24 years.

Brandi reached out to her long-term Heritage Bank team to discuss the purchase of a property that would offer a permanent campus for the shelter and their programs. The bank initially declined a multimillion-dollar loan knowing it would paralyze the financial health of organization. Instead, Heritage Bank offered a smaller loan and supported PHFS in fundraising a large chunk of the purchase price. Heritage Bank, along with over 800 individuals, foundations and businesses, donated enough money so PHFS could purchase and remodel their dream campus and still have enough cash flow left over to operate their programs.

"Heritage Bank guided us throughout the whole process by directing us to other sources of raising funds and events as well as offering us a reasonable loan to make this all happen. It's the reason we've been with our team at Heritage Bank from the beginning. They are relationship focused, transparent and collaborative," added Brandi.

PHFS opened its permanent campus, Family Village, in December of 2019. Family Village will provide shelter to 25 homeless families at a time and is the first shelter in Oregon featuring trauma-informed design and architecture.

"The Heritage Bank team are great partners for us, there's a real kindness and spirit of true collaboration."