

Hello,

I'm Celeste Goulding. I first moved to Forest Grove OR in 2006 as a recruit to Pacific University, where I graduated in 2010 with a degree in social work. I had moved into my car in a friend's driveway 1 week prior due to being unable to secure a rental agreement without a full time job in place. I couch-surfed for the next 3 months before eventually moving back in with my parents. Ultimately I obtained income-restricted housing in downtown Seattle along with a full time position at a homeless youth drop in center. Technically, I qualified for their services. Graduating with my Masters in Social Work from University of Washington in 2015, I returned to visit Forest Grove and began a 5 year period of working to coordinate local Severe Weather Shelters. I have seen countless individuals on fixed incomes, or with thousands in the bank but an eviction, bad credit, too big of a family, all acting as insurmountable barriers to accessing the current rental market. I can no longer keep count of the number of people I've met over the years who became houseless for the first time in their lives due to the rising rents. I currently work for a small program of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Second Home, coordinating host homes for unaccompanied youth. The only conversation on the table at any provider meeting I attend is the upcoming end to the rent moratorium. The impending crisis that the moratorium end would trigger is utterly impossible to fathom in measurable human suffering. We know more families and individuals are doubled up than we are able to capture in Point in Time or other available metrics. Also we know that small landlords are struggling, if we want to maintain any measure of locally controlled housing, we must step in now to allow landlords an avenue to access their back-owed rent, we know their renters don't have it. If they did, they'd have been paying. We already are going to have to work hard to overcome the collective trauma we've all been going through. For those living on the economic edge, the possession of their housing is THE DIFFERENCE between spiraling further and being able to regain balance. Please pass relief bills allowing landlords and renters to access funds to bring renters back up to even.

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[Take a Minute to Learn about the impact of Rural Host Homes](#)

Peace,
Celeste Goulding MSW

Regional Coordinator for Western Washington County

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