

Wilsonville Community Sharing

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02/23/26

Re: Letter of Support for Peer Support Specialist Denyell Cruise

To,

As Executive Director of Wilsonville Community Sharing (WCS), I am writing to express my strong support for Denyell Cruise, Peer Support Specialist, whose partnership has been essential in stabilizing high-need residents within Clackamas County. Her work consistently strengthens the county's behavioral health and homelessness response systems, and her collaboration with WCS has resulted in measurable, positive outcomes for individuals who would otherwise remain at significant risk.

Denyell's approach is grounded in lived experience, and a deep understanding of the complex barriers faced by individuals experiencing homelessness, addiction, and mental illness. Her ability to build trust with clients who are often disconnected from traditional services makes her an indispensable partner in our shared work.

Below are four recent examples that demonstrate the impact of Denyell's involvement:

Stabilizing Employment and Housing for a Working Homeless Neighbors

CS, a homeless man actively seeking employment, came to WCS during a period of acute instability. Despite living outdoors, he remained committed to reconnecting with the workforce, remaining sober, and was already engaged with Peer Support services through Denyell. With Denyell's guidance and WCS's support, CS received a 14-night hotel stay that provided safety, warmth, and the stability needed to prepare for job interviews. This coordinated intervention—rooted in strong cross-agency collaboration—helped him shift from crisis management to long-term planning. He is now on a clearer path toward employment and housing. Denyell also supported CS in pursuing higher education, he applied and was awarded a grant at PCC and starts college in the Spring.

Preventing Crisis and Relapse for a Houseless Couple with Behavioral Health Needs

KH and her partner, a houseless couple with a long history of addiction and mental illness, faced a serious setback when their only vehicle broke down. Without transportation, they were at immediate risk of losing income and stability. Denyell worked closely with them, brought them to WCS, and helped ensure they received a short hotel stay while urgent car repairs were completed. Her presence and expertise prevented relapse during a highly vulnerable moment and protected their employment stability. This intervention prevented the couple from falling deeper into crisis and preserved the progress they had worked hard to achieve.

Post-Surgery Respite Care for a Medically Vulnerable Community Member

RH, a homeless man recovering from surgery, was discharged from the hospital without a safe place to heal. Recognizing the medical risk, the hospital and Denyell referred him to WCS for emergency respite. WCS provided a fourteen-night hotel stay, giving him a clean, quiet environment essential for recovery. This intervention reduced the likelihood of complications or readmission and offered a compassionate bridge between hospitalization and longer-term stabilization efforts. With Denyell's support, RH is now connected to ongoing services that will help him regain stability.

Mental health and addiction support

Denyell worked tirelessly with a woman with severe mental health and addiction. Due to her situation the client became homeless and after meeting with Denyell and working together she is now in a residential treatment facility getting the help she needs.

These cases reflect the critical role Denyell plays in Wilsonville's continuum of care. Her work directly supports county priorities, including:

- reducing hospital readmissions
- preventing behavioral health crises
- supporting employment retention
- stabilizing individuals at risk of homelessness
- strengthening cross-system coordination

Denyell's professionalism, dedication, and lived experience make her a highly effective Peer Support Specialist and a trusted partner to WCS. Her contributions significantly enhance our ability to respond to complex community needs and improve outcomes for residents who often fall through the gaps of traditional systems.

I strongly encourage Clackamas County to continue supporting and investing in the work of Peer Support Specialists like Denyell Cruise. Her impact is both immediate and long-lasting, and her partnership is essential to the health and stability of our community.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like additional information or wish to discuss her contributions further.

Sincerely,

Leigh Crosby

Executive Director

Wilsonville Community Sharing