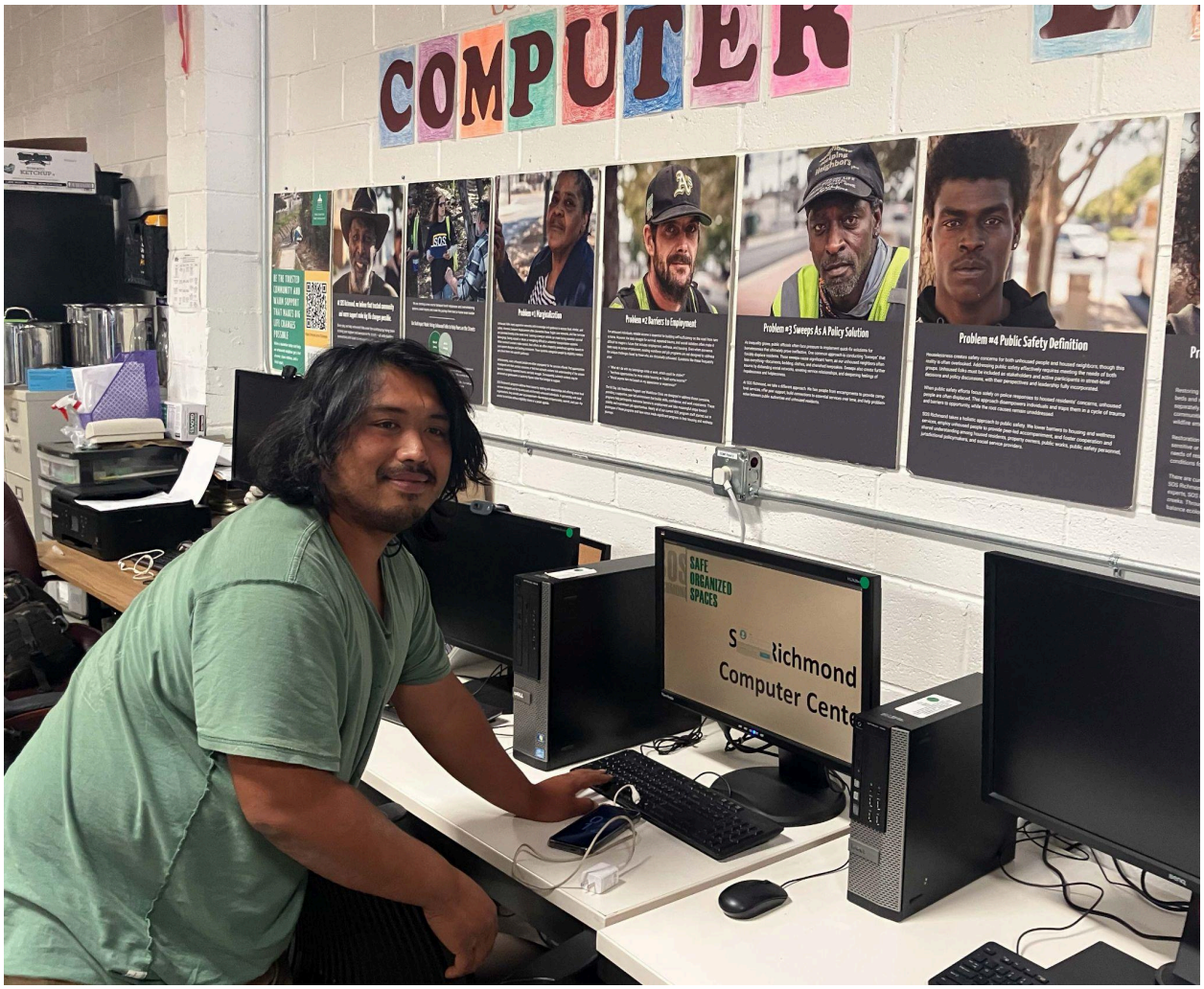
Welcome to the first edition of the SOS Richmond Special Donor Newsletter.

In the recent past, you've helped provide showers and keep the Warm Hand Wellness Center open. Taylor wants you to know what that actually means.



When Taylor talks about what it's like to live outside, he comes back again and again to something many of us rarely have to think about: how much work it takes simply to maintain yourself when you are experiencing homelessness.

Taylor has been unhoused for about seven years. Before SOS Richmond, something as basic as taking a shower was a major undertaking.

> **“There wasn’t a real way to take a shower at all. I would have to go find some source of running water somewhere. And that’s almost impossible when you live outside.”**

Today, Taylor can come to SOS Richmond, take a warm shower, get something to eat, find clothing if he needs it, charge his phone, spend time indoors, and be around people he knows.

He shared that one of the hardest things about living outside is the lack of structure. Everyday necessities such as food, water, hygiene, transportation, and a place to charge a phone can consume enormous amounts of time and energy.

> **“When you’re homeless, you’re still forced to do everything and then still find time to be all right with yourself.”**

The Warm Hand Wellness Center gives him a place to anchor.

The predictability matters because Taylor doesn't know what the next week will bring. Taylor described showers in much the same way. Being able to get clean doesn’t just solve an immediate problem.

> **“It really motivates me.”**

The Warm Hand gives him a routine. It gives him relief. And it frees up some of the mental energy that he needs to find his way into a better situation.

But Taylor was also clear that The Warm Hand Wellness Center provides something beyond material resources and structure.

> **“SOS is always an open place to go to, somebody to talk to.”**

For someone who spends most of his day outside, having a place where he knows he is welcome matters enormously.

> **“There’s not any other place I know where I’m accepted.”**

Taylor shared about friends who struggle with mental health challenges and can't always comfortably use other public spaces. He sees The Warm Hand Wellness Center as a place where people can come as they are, and where being around other people who understand what they're going through can make it easier to keep trying.

> **“As long as you keep on providing these resources, people will turn around. They find that strength.”**

This is what your donations are doing.

If you have donated to SOS Richmond to support showers or The Warm Hand Wellness Center, **you are part of Taylor’s story.**

- You are helping make sure there is running water when finding running water feels nearly impossible.
- You are creating a place where someone can take a shower without spending hours figuring out how or going days or weeks without.
- You are providing a few predictable hours in a life that can otherwise be profoundly unpredictable.
- You are giving someone a place to charge a phone, find clothes, eat something, talk to somebody they know and be welcomed inside.
- And perhaps most importantly, you are giving people a little room to think about something beyond survival.

Near the end of our conversation, Taylor asked a question of his own:

> **“I’ve been wondering lately, how happy can I be?”**

It’s a remarkable question.

When so much of each day is consumed by survival and a safe place to be, there isn't much room left to ask what might make life meaningful or what you might want your future to look like.

Your support creates this opening.

Thank you for being part of Taylor’s journey.

Daniel Barth