

2016 Woman of Achievement-Health & Safety Meg Martin



Meg overcame personal challenges to support the most vulnerable in our community. As a founding member and director of the InterfaithWorks Emergency Shelter, she was instrumental in the creation of the harm reduction and low barrier shelter. She worked with a community that was deeply entrenched in fear-based biases. Her political will, persistence, collaboration, negotiations, support from fierce advocates on the front lines and the street community willed the creation of the shelter.

Many other shelters screen people out; but looking at the Vulnerability Index, the IWEOS shelter screens in those who are living with the most complex challenges. Many of the guests faced serious risk of death if they **hadn't been** welcomed into the shelter. She and the shelter team know that people are valuable, deserve love, respect, connection and a community who believes in them.

Meg rocks both figuratively and literally. Whether EGYHOP street outreach or Queer Rock Camp, Meg inspires every professional and volunteer that she works with. **According to one of her many nominators, “She is one of my favorite people in the story of downtown Olympia’s social justice advocacy and restores my faith in humanity all the time with her humor, wit, bright eyes and laser sharp focus teamed with universal perspective.”**

Meg Martin is the Program Director of the Interfaith Works Emergency Shelter, a Certified Peer Counselor and a social worker. She earned her Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Washington, Tacoma in 2013 and founded the Interfaith Works Emergency Shelter in 2014 with two other dedicated street outreach workers Cassie Burke and Jefferson Doyle from the Emma Goldman Youth Homeless Outreach Project (EGYHOP) a local volunteer run organization that she has been a volunteer of for 8 years.