

## **Jean H. - Winter 2016**

Not many of us would call going to a homeless shelter “the best decision I ever made.” But Jean Hernandez says it with conviction. That decision came after a long and painful journey. She’d been a single mother of two for many years; a single mom who just couldn’t stop drinking. Her boys grew up and started living on their own. Jean’s parents retired, left Bend. Jean was on her own, broke, jobless, drowning in alcohol and living on the street.



She showed up at Bethlehem Inn, afraid at first, not knowing what to expect. But once there, she says, “I felt the relief of being off the streets and safe.” As Jean says, “They gave me a foundation and resources.” Within two weeks she found a job with help from Inn staff. But she was struggling. She drank on the job and was suspended from the Inn. More than once. More than twice. But, Jean says, the staff “never gave up on me. They saw potential. They saw me making an effort.” Along with support and encouragement, Inn staff, she says, “nudged me gently but firmly, toward sobriety and steady employment.” And in July of last year, Inn staff gave Jean a referral to a women’s sober living home. She’s been clean and sober for more than a year, just earned a promotion at her job. Jean Hernandez: a living, smiling reflection of Bethlehem Inn’s mission: transforming lives through shelter, help and hope.