**Nominee:** Katherine Garrett

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**Category of Service**: Philanthropic

**Optional Information**: White/Caucasian

**Outstanding:** Katherine Garret has been a resident of Vancouver for the past 14 years and an employee of Share for that whole time. Her passion, vision, strength of character and dedication to the hungry and homeless of our community profoundly impact the lives of so many and continue to greatly inspire all who know her. Katherine’s genuine warmth and outgoing personality, coupled with her outstanding capabilities, continue to enrich our community. She has been described as a positive and dedicated leader with a resolute allegiance to serving the homeless and low-income of our community. It is these characteristics, among so many others, that deem Katherine worthy of recognition.

**Professional Achievements:**

* St. Paul’s Core Group 2009-2013: Works with caring community members to ensure smooth operation of the men’s location of the Winter Hospitality Overflow (WHO) program at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church (program runs November to March)
* Safety Committee 2012-2015: Hosted at the Vancouver Downtown Association, including a group of concerned citizens, business owners and city staff who worked to ensure that the downtown core was a safe and comfortable place for people to visit
* Downtown Business Leaders 2012-2015: Group focused on ensuring that downtown businesses were able to easily conduct business; concerns around people experiencing homelessness often came up

**Volunteer Achievements:** Adopt-A-Highway 2009-2013: Katherine led a team of people experiencing homelessness in giving back to the community. They took two sections of freeway on-ramps and picked up garbage every month.

**Community Achievements:** During Katherine’s tenure, Share House and the Share Outreach program have grown to become a major voice for the homeless in Clark County. Almost 20 years after the program’s inception, and under Katherine’s management, Share Outreach continues to be instrumental in aiding businesses, especially in downtown Vancouver, by engaging the homeless who are living on the streets and connecting them with services for which they are qualified and helping them secure transitional and permanent housing. By creating shared value, Katherine has built a conduit between the non-profit sector and local business to foster the quality of life for all who live in downtown Vancouver. This relationship has provided multiple new opportunities for Share to collaborate with companies for mutual benefit, to build truly meaningful and impactful partnerships and to advance positive social change.

**Leader/Role Model:** Katherine continually goes the extra mile to help steward our community. She is an individual who takes a stand for men, women and children whose plight is often unseen, or ignored, by the community at large. She demonstrates leadership, inspiring her team of five staff members to do their very best; she leads by example, and while setting strategic direction and goals for her staff, respects their experience and expertise, allowing them to do their work without micromanagement. She does this very difficult and time consuming job because of her passion and belief in the dignity of all. Without Katherine’s strength and leadership, our city would be much poorer in both compassion and the resources and ability to help out those who struggle.

**Impact:** Katherine has operated Share House and Share Outreach for the past nine years, during which she has truly been the face of those programs. This past fall, she faced a new and dramatic challenge, when more than 125 people began living on the streets outside Share House, in what was called “tent city”, a result of the Vancouver City Council’s vote to lift a ban on camping. During her tenure at Share, she had never seen anything like it. And while it brought attention to the plight of the homeless, “which is often unseen and/or ignored,” it also brought controversy: complaints from the neighborhood associations and local businesses about trash, waste and illegal activities; questions from the community at large about what is really being done to help the homeless; and challenges to Katherine’s and Share’s leadership as the director of the city’s only men’s shelter and as a key staff member of the largest non-profit serving both the hungry and homeless in Clark County. Despite all the challenges, Katherine’s resolve to serve those in need never wavered. “Getting tickets for camping, vagrancies, any of that always puts a black mark when it comes to getting employment or housing,” said Katherine, in an interview with KATU. In 2016, she will face new challenges through a new leadership position as the Housing First Program Director at Lincoln Place, a permanent supportive housing program for high-resource-using, chronically homeless individuals.

**Nominator**: Jessica Lightheart

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