

# Companis

professionals  
serving the  
nonprofit  
community

2017/2018 ISSUE



Photos by Dan DeLong



Companis Workers Grant Zukowski and Raquel Moura

Companis Workers provide IT support to Ethiopian Community in Seattle, so important work like tutoring kids can continue.

## Forged in tough times for today's challenges, Companis delivers powerful solutions

Standing up for our most vulnerable neighbors. Building community to create a more just world.

It's what Companis does, with our roots in a model born during a time when government resources were closed to those suffering from HIV/AIDS and undocumented refugees were fleeing Central American wars in large numbers. Volunteers from the neighborhoods and churches stepped up to meet the needs of both communities, discovering powerful solutions as they did so.

That's why you find our volunteers at work today at the forefront of service to our neighbors who are homeless, sick and hungry, mentally ill and addicted, and creating community for immigrants and others who find themselves under increasing attack.

Now more than ever, as federal budget cutters take aim at social safety net programs including health care for the poor, as sanctuary cities and counties like Seattle and King

County are threatened with loss of federal dollars, we stand up for a healthy community that includes ALL our neighbors. By standing with us, as a volunteer or a donor, you make possible a "beloved community" that does not turn away from suffering and isolation.

"Companis Workers bring a level of professionalism, experience and wisdom to our operations that is invaluable," says Steve Knipp, deputy director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Seattle/King County. "And they save us thousands of dollars a year in staff costs, which we can then use for direct service to our struggling neighbors."

These are the reasons that Companis exists, says Companis Executive Director Gary Davis. "We were built for meeting challenges with innovative solutions, for walking alongside those agencies doing direct service, for providing Companis-powered solutions to people who need them the most."

Responding to the fraying social safety

net, Companis has identified this year's priorities as shelter, health care access, immigrant services and programs serving targeted racial, ethnic, gender, LGBT or religious communities. The result has been a record number of placements.

Companis Worker Raquel Moura, one of two IT students placed with Ethiopian Community in Seattle, is an immigrant herself who went on to a second Companis placement with Northwest Community Bail Fund, a new effort to provide bail to low income people charged with minor offenses. Although these charges are often dismissed, many people lose jobs and housing because they cannot post bail.

"Companis is a catalyst for change," Gary says. "We are able to bring together agencies working to solve a problem with volunteers and Workers receiving modest stipends who have skills, commitment and passion to offer new solutions to social justice problems."

## Your Investment = Companis Impact

Since 2011, Companis Workers have provided more than **\$6 million** in vital community services, extending a helping hand to thousands of our neighbors. **Companis does what would otherwise go undone.**

### Who are Companis Workers?

Companis Workers are doctors, nurses, teachers, journalists, bookkeepers, lawyers, social workers, therapists, job coaches, business mentors, chefs, human resource officers, technology experts and more.

- **53%** balance jobs and family with their volunteer commitments
- **37%** are retired people choosing to give back to their community
- **10%** are young people launching their careers



Companis Worker Lee Campbell



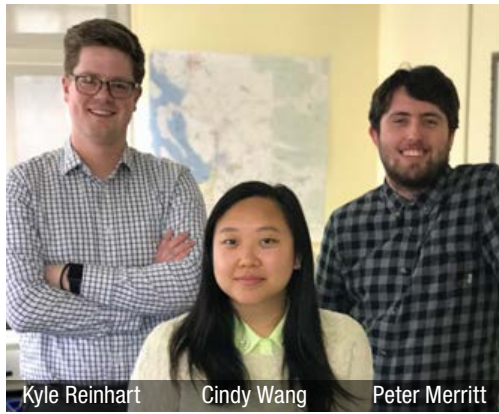
Susan Austin

Companis Worker Susan Austin finds her joy in inspiring and supporting people who have experienced homelessness to tell their stories.

As a Companis Worker placed with the **Real Change** speakers bureau, she leads group practices to generate ideas and fine tune talking points tailored for the various groups the speakers address, and accompanies speakers to their engagements.

She hopes their stories will inspire listeners to find new solutions to homelessness in Seattle.

"Homelessness is a community problem that we all have a part in creating and fixing."



Kyle Reinhart Cindy Wang Peter Merritt

Companis Worker Kyle Reinhart loves the small successes and little joys he sees every day in his placement with a program coordinating health care for low income people with chronic conditions.

"We've helped many people receive care that they thought they never would be able to access."

Kyle, with a background in gerontology and home health care, is the most recent of three Companis Workers placed with **Project Access** this year. Companis Workers Cindy Wang and Peter Merritt completed case management placements in 2017.



Seana Sakai

Companis Worker Seana Sakai knows the difference one stroller can make.

As a volunteer with **Open Arms Perinatal Services**, Seana and 20-month old daughter Sidney pick up donated baby items and take them to new moms struggling to make ends meet.

"I was able to bring a double stroller to a mom of two children under three who was living in a dormitory-style shelter. There were tears of joy on her face just knowing that she could just take her kids out for a walk in the neighborhood."

## Companis by the numbers in 2016-2017

COMPANIS HAS MADE **74** PLACEMENTS OF SKILLED PROFESSIONALS IN **43** PARTNER AGENCIES PROVIDING **VITAL SERVICES** TO MORE THAN **9000** OF OUR **NEIGHBORS**

COMPANIS VOLUNTEERS ARE WORKING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITY IN THESE AND OTHER PLACEMENTS:

**24** serving our HOMELESS NEIGHBORS

**16** working for access to medical, behavioral AND DENTAL CARE

**9** offering assistance IN IMMIGRANT and refugee programs

**9** SERVING OUR LGBT NEIGHBORS

**7** staffing programs SERVING SENIORS

**6** PROVIDING EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP to partner agency staff

**94%** of our budget is spent directly on our program

To donate, please visit [www.companis.org/donate](http://www.companis.org/donate) or call **206-328-6155** for more information on legacy gifts.



Martha Hopler

Companis Worker Martha Hopler sits down to breakfast on Sundays with men and women living in homeless shelters or sleeping rough, and fields questions from those seeking shelter, food, clothing, and other basic necessities.

As resource coordinator for the Shared Breakfast program of **First United Methodist**, she draws upon her long experience as a social worker.

“In a city where I see many things occurring that are making more people homeless, this is a place where I can do my part and be part of the solution.”

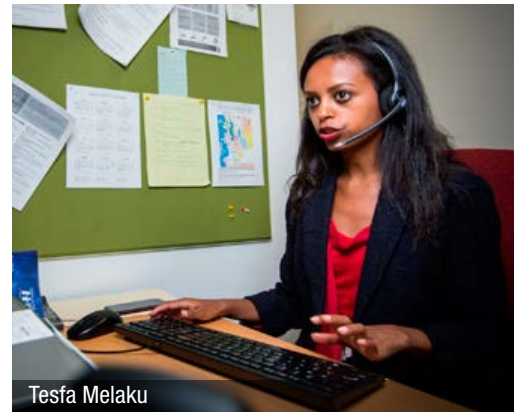


Laura Van Tosh

Companis Worker Laura Van Tosh brings three decades of experience in policy and advocacy to her placement with an organization that offers peer support programs for members of the LGBT community in recovery from addiction and mental illness.

At **Seattle Area Support Groups (SASG)**, Laura writes grants and provides training for a new effort designed to encourage people to share stories of recovery.

“When people share their stories, the voice of lived experience is heard and we move past the stigma attached to addiction and mental illness.”



Tesfa Melaku

Companis Worker Tesfa Melaku is a champion for immigrants and those facing loss of housing and other basic needs.

Having found her way from Ethiopia to a new life in Seattle, Tesfa, an attorney, assists with voter registration, teaches ESL and offers legal support to clients of Ethiopian Community in Seattle. And her fluency in Amharic is greatly valued in her second Companis placement with the **St. Vincent de Paul Helpline Center**, which receives up to 300 calls per day seeking help with housing, hunger and instability.

“I am happy to contribute my share,” she says simply.

## Financial Highlights

COMPANIS REVENUE SOURCES	2017
Individual Donors	37%
Agency Donations	30%
Foundations	21%
Seattle First Baptist Church	7%
Corporate Sponsorships	5%
<b>2017 budget is \$565,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Your individual donations change lives and are the largest source of support for Companis

Companis is grateful to these foundations for their support:  
**The Stuart & Benjamin Abelson Foundation Trust**  
**The Stuart & Jesse Abelson Foundation Trust**  
**The John C. and Karyl Kay Hughes Foundation**  
**Moccasin Lake Foundation**  
**M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust**  
**The Norcliffe Foundation**  
**The Tulalip Foundation**

OVER 23 YEARS COMPANIS HAS MADE MORE THAN **850** PLACEMENTS WITH **142** NONPROFIT AGENCIES

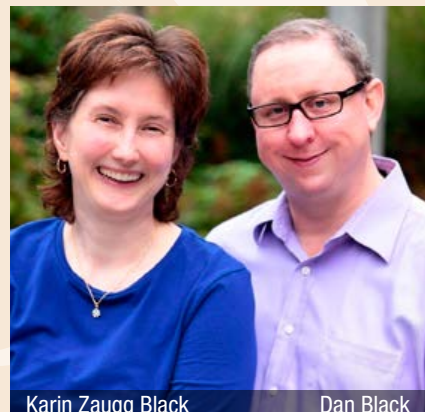
## Why We Donate



Anne Symonds Peggy Graybill

“Companis brings so many benefits to its partner agencies and to its volunteers. That’s why we are so enthusiastic about supporting Companis.”

– Peggy Graybill & Anne Symonds, former Companis Worker



Karin Zaugg Black Dan Black

“Putting skilled people into service in effective organizations makes a difference in our community. That’s how it all started at Seattle First Baptist years ago, and it’s why we give to Companis today.”

– Karin Zaugg Black & Dan Black, whose donation is employer matched

## Companis responds to the homeless crisis with many hands and hearts

You'll find Companis Workers hard at work wherever our homeless neighbors can be found.

We're a physician in a shelter's medical clinic and a social worker at a breakfast program. We staff help desks at referral agencies and assist women working toward transitional housing. We keep the books at drop-in day centers.

We help at-risk families weather financial crises. We edit a newspaper providing employment to those experiencing homelessness. We're the smiling faces greeting food and clothing bank clients. We are present with men and women who are facing addiction, mental illness and homelessness.

Extending a helping hand to our homeless neighbors is a Companis tradition and our largest area of service. Companis' unique approach – bringing skilled professional volunteers and stipended workers to non-profit organizations with a track record of success – is efficient and effective.

"We appreciate working with Companis because of the flexibility of their volunteer program and the skilled volunteers they send to us," says Jenn Romo, volunteer



Aurora Commons

Photo by Dan DeLong

manager at **Real Change** newspaper. "They add enormous capacity to our staff and help to grow our community."

As our economically booming region struggles with income inequality, Companis volunteers are making a difference.

"As a companion, I am one human being connecting to another with love and compassion," says Companis Worker Atit Marmer,

placed with **Mental Health Chaplaincy**.

Companis Worker Dr. Muriel Jones, who volunteers weekly at **Mary's Place**, says she receives a priceless gift in return for her professional skills.

"I get a lot of joy from being treated like a friend. A patient invited me to her wedding the other day!"

## Companis honors Sallie Neillie, an audacious leader with a transformative idea



Sallie Neillie

Sallie Neillie likes to think of the organization she founded and led for 11 years as

"the little engine that could. I think I can, I think I can... Gosh, I think we did!"

What **Project Access Northwest** did under Sallie's leadership is serve more than 42,000 vulnerable patients over 11 years. Project Access began by connecting patients with a large network of pro bono specialty care providers, later launching programs that support low income patients with medical and dental care.

Sallie, who retired this year, is the recipient of this year's **Janet G. Newell Award for Community Service**, presented by the Companis Board of Directors in recognition of her leadership.

"While many people believed in what we were trying to do, there were just as many people telling me that it would never

work and that I was just a tad crazy!" Sallie recalls of PANW's early days. "We started with a good idea – a "share-the-load," distributed model of charity care. Thankfully, some key people joined me in my belief that we could make a difference."

Companis was one of those early believers, providing PANW with its first volunteers and stipended workers, thus building capacity for the agency to grow into the great demand. In 2017, Companis placed our 29th Companis Worker with Project Access.

"I consider myself one of the luckiest people alive," Sallie says. "I got to spend the most significant and meaningful part of my work life making a difference in the lives of people every day."

### Companis Staff & Board

#### Administration

Gary Davis, *Executive Director*  
Rita Hibbard, *Associate Executive Director*  
Jennie Moore, *Worker Engagement Director*  
Phil Mervin, *Office Manager*  
Peter Jabin, *Program Support*

#### President Emeritus

Craig R.J. Darling

#### Board of Directors

Shawn Aronow, *President*  
Brian Hawksford, *Vice President*  
John Eric Rolfstad, *Treasurer*  
Kristen Hart, *Secretary*

Gary Davis                      Sterling Morris  
Stan Kehl                         Sarah Speck, MD  
Mitzi Johanknecht          Don Weston

### Our Mission

Companis creates healthy communities by fostering skilled volunteer service. We bridge the gaps that exclude many of us from healthy community by placing dedicated professionals with nonprofit agencies that need staffing assistance.

[companis.org](http://companis.org)      206-328-6155

Contact us at [info@companis.org](mailto:info@companis.org)

Our address is 1111 Harvard Ave., Seattle, WA 98122

 Like Companis Seattle on Facebook and stay up to date on our work in the community!