

Hour Exchange Portland Member Stories

Hour Exchange Portland is a network, a community of people. Once I went into the office to get a haircut from Robin, a HEP member. The office happened to be preparing a mailing, so after my haircut I earned my Hour back by putting address labels on envelopes. While I was doing that, another member came in and mentioned he was looking for a bicycle. I told him I had one I had been thinking about selling. The next day, I sold him my bicycle for 2 ½ Time Dollars. That's how it works--people helping people.

J. Lunden

FINDING ROOM: A TRUE STORY

Last May I left my job and said goodbye to Portland. I went off to North Carolina to set up house with my brother. We realized after 2 or 3 days that it was a huge mistake. We were toxic together. We were both suffering. It was an awful situation and we knew we had to separate. We had the best of sibling intentions but the reality was disastrous. Since my brother loved the climate, he decided to stay in NC and I decided to come back to Portland, nurse my wounds and figure out the next step.

First, I needed a temporary, comfortable and private-feeling place to stay. I wrote a letter which Robin emailed to the online membership. I was asking for two rooms (one for sleeping and one for computer work) and that it be safe for my cat who goes outside as she pleases. Ideally I wanted a house and not an apartment, off-street parking, and to live with someone who was very quiet and had her own interesting life.

I got four responses and the one that fit was with S., another HEP member, and a woman I knew from the program. She needed someone to be home so she could visit her friend up north and not have to rush back after 2-3 days because of her cats and garden. It was an ideal situation because it was based on mutual need. The Hour Exchange is a miraculous presence in the world.

R. Dacia

Member since 2001

Medical Emergency!

This pin was working its way out of my right ankle and the doctor wanted to pull it out TODAY. I got myself to the Foot & Ankle Surgeons, but my car broke down and I needed to get a ride home from Portland to Saco after the surgery!

I handed my HEP business card to the nurse, Jackie, and asked her to call the office. She did so while I was "on the table." Voila! As I was being wheeled out of the surgeon's office, Allen Greenleaf arrived. I had never met him, but here was my driver! I was completely trusting in Allen's integrity. I knew that his purpose in giving me transportation would be accomplished with honor, respect, and kindness.

Hour exchanges do indeed create bonds between people. We never know when we'll meet the next person. Every time, though, it is a fabulous event.

Submitted by I. Hart

Member to Member Knit One Pearl Two

In 1938, Beno T. began to fear the tumultuous political climate in his native Austria. Heeding a warning from a Nazi sympathizer, Beno T. felt it would be best for he and his sister to immigrate to Switzerland. At that time, he explained, the Austrians just wanted Jews out of Austria so it was not so difficult to flee as in later years.

Beno T. had hoped to put his engineering degree to use in Switzerland but the war paved him a different path. All able bodied Swiss males were ordered to join the army and all foreigners were sent to labor camps where Mr. T soon found himself. He describes his experience there as back breaking work where police officers dictated their lives.

One bright spot for Mr. T was meeting his future wife, Herta, also an immigrant from Austria. The couple married and eventually immigrated to the United States where they were blessed with a son. When Herta was pregnant with her son she knitted a sweater for her husband.

Mr. T wore the sweater for thirty years. After his wife's death some years ago, he wore it as a reminder of his departed wife. Eventually, the sweater started to wear away in the collar and big holes formed in the elbows. Mr. T was despondent that such a treasured memory of his wife was slipping away.

That's when Mr. T got the idea to ask for Member to Member help. Knowing that Elderplan members volunteer from home by crocheting and knitting, he asked if one of the volunteers might assist him in repairing his keepsake sweater. As a member himself, Mr. T has earned over 600 hours with the program. Hours that can be redeemed for services such as help with shopping, transportation, minor home repairs or even knitting! A long time Elderplan member, Pearl B., readily agreed to help upon hearing Mr. T's story. Pearl was able to take the thirty year old sweater and with some new yarn and a little TLC bring the sweater back to life.

Mr. T is thrilled, saying that he had only hoped to get the sweater in enough shape to wear it around the house and now it is so nice he can hopefully enjoy it and feel close to his wife for many more years to come!