

# BECAUSE I HAVE A HOME

*A poem by Rebekah Sammet, founding member and former chair of the LEAP board.*

Because I have a home, I can cook healthy meals, refrigerate perishable foods and keep ice cream frozen;  
I can keep myself, my family, and our things safe from the cold, sun damage, mildew, and mold.

I have lots of power outlets! Everywhere!

I can park my trusty steed without getting a ticket, my car has a home too.

I have a mailbox — all to my own family.

My feet stay dry more often than they are wet.

Because I have a home, I can host BBQs, tea parties, and birthday parties.

I can host entire holiday seasons year after year, after year, after year.

I can have traditions. Not just the commonplace secret Santa gifting that was a tradition for years, but organic traditions to me and my family; like watching the morning glories climb up and bloom in the same place every year. Like having blackberry pie every autumn from berries we pick ourselves.

I can mark my children's height on the wall.

I can play hide and seek with my children hiding and I'm the seeker, not me hiding and the police seeking...

Because I have a home, I can use my house as a pit stop between adventurous excursions. Exploring redwood forests, beaches and playgrounds in other neighborhoods; Going home only long enough to restock our supplies, mark the days off the calendar, and go back out to explore the wild as long as we can — before we become withered by weather.

OR — I can treat my house as a nest that I mustn't stay away from longer than it takes to get groceries.

I can even completely customize my space to function as a respite for:

physical recovery,

mental health rehabilitation, or

even hospice care.

And I have done all of these.

Because I have a home, I know that I have complete privacy.

Not only can I close my blinds and lock my doors, I'm ALLOWED to be exactly where I am. No one is coming to make me leave, because I am not trespassing, nor am I on any time limit to be here.

Because I have a home, I get to sit down and chill out. The kind of chill out that most people take for granted.

Only when you've had stable housing for a long time (or never lost it) does your psyche even allow you to experience the kind of relaxation —

— where your very atoms seem to relax.

*My name is Rebekah Sammet, I was in and out of homelessness for 20 years, I have now been permanently housed for six consecutive years and I am here to highlight a tiny sliver of my story with you;*

*Which is equivalent to,*

*a single fiber,*

*in a single thread,*

*in the massive tapestry of homeless experiences.*