



PORTLAND, Ore. – There's no denying that tiny houses have been the new in thing over the last five years as many PDX people have been downsizing to smaller homes, often the size of a small bathroom or closet, and one of those people is Dee Williams, author of *The Big Tiny* and owner of her own tiny house.

### **About Dee Williams**

Williams began researching tiny houses in earnest after life changing experiences forced her to rethink her life and she realized like many people who have decided to downsize to tiny homes in recent years that she no longer wanted to be burdened by the costs and responsibilities of maintaining her home.

Although her home was beautiful, Williams also realized that she didn't need the square feet or things that she had acquired over the years, once she sold her home then downsized she was able to account for all of her worldly possessions on one sheet of paper and she now enjoys the same benefits as many other tiny homeowners like being able to take off at a moment's notice without having to worry about her house.

### **Life in the 8-By-10**

After living in big homes her entire life, Williams shocked her friends and family members by downsizing her entire life to an 8-by-10 foot space.

She originally mapped out the layout of her new home on a large area rug in her living room using a roll of tape and after purchasing house plans from Jay Shafer's company, Williams purchased a flatbed trailer and was soon building her tiny house in a neighbor's driveway.

Since it was one of the first tiny homes built in Portland Oregon she attracted the attention of everyone. Some people wondered if she was building a coffee stand, while others thought she might be preparing an exhibit booth, but when it was finally finished, Dee Williams quickly had people thinking about their own priorities and contemplating changing their lives.

### **Building Her Tiny Home**

*"The building process was the coolest thing I've ever gotten to do," she says. "The most satisfying thing was that I took it from a dream to three dimensions."*

*Part of the excitement was the challenge itself a chance to push her own limits. "This is my way of trying to get in step," says Williams. "I'm still learning how to live inside a more sustainable footprint."*

*As the project took shape, more than a few passers-by assumed she was building an espresso stand. "Someone asked if I was going to sell elephant ears at festivals," says Williams.*

*Most charming, perhaps, is the cabin's rustic, cozy countenance, a diminutive homestead with 21st-century amenities such as wireless access and solar-powered electricity. The covered front porch is her dog Roodee's favorite perch, a hangout she occasionally shares with other four-legged pals."*

### **Would Her Tiny Home Last?**

Although many people have questioned if her tiny house would actually hold up to the rigors of daily life, it certainly has and over the years Dee William's tiny house has endured everything from hurricanes, earthquakes, wind shear and snow.

Besides being able to withstand the natural elements, Dee also built her home using recycled materials from other construction projects in the area including using recycled leaded-glass windows, recycled skylights and a wide variety of other recycled items to give her tiny home character and style that's uniquely her own.

Once her tiny home was built she sold or gave away most of her worldly possessions, pulled her new home to a brand new job in Olympia Washington and the start of a brand new life.

She acclimated well to her tiny home and quickly grew to love the simple life including being able to get up and go whenever she wanted, not being a slave to a 30-year mortgage and also being able to use the outdoors as a literal extension of her living room.

### **Portland Alternative Dwellings**

Since building her own tiny home, Williams has come back to Portland thanks to the huge interest in tiny houses both locally, and nationally, to co-found a company called Portland Alternative Dwellings (PAD), a design firm which builds and inspires people across the country to create their own tiny homes.

After starting PAD, Williams has also been a contributor to the TED Talks series and she's been spotlighted all over the Internet as interest in the Tiny House movement has grown in recent years following the recent housing crisis.

One of the most well-known television shows that started following the birth of the tiny house movement is HGTV's Tiny House, Big Living, a show that spotlights people living in tiny homes all over the world.

*"There's something different about when you step out the door and you're sharing space," Williams told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.*

*My garden is our garden. I love that, that little difference of what it's like.'*

*Williams helped take care of Aunt Rita before she passed in 2013, and would help watch and entertain the couple's children as they grew up.*

*It also made it easy for Williams to spend time with two of her closest friends. And, she said, relying on them gave her an extra 'little dose of humanity'.*

*'Not having water puts me on par with most of the earth's population,' she said. 'You forget that there's this other part of humanity that's struggling.'*

*'As I'm dragging water from one spot to the next, I'm reminded that I'm doing the same thing many others are doing.'*

*The small space has made Williams come to terms with her own mortality, making her feel less afraid and more at peace, she said."*