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HOMELESS COMMUNITY SINCE 1997

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Safe Ground Sacramento Rallies March for Camp

By Paula

SACRAMENTO, CA: On July 1st Safe Ground Sacramento held a Rally, March and Campout. It began Wednesday morning at Loaves & Fishes' Delaney Center parking lot with breakfast and some great songs by Glenn Bailey. Various news reporters milled around the growing crowd of supporters

looking for interviews.

At 10 am there was a short rally with John Krintz of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee welcoming everyone and serving as MC.

Greg Bunker of Francis House spoke on how Sacramento is one community, and it needs to put aside the us-vs-them attitude between social groups.

Jacoby of Pappa Roach and Sr. Libby Fernandez of Loaves & Fishes confirmed their support and encouraged the participants.

The speeches ended with Garren Bratcher of Loaves & Fishes explaining the logistics of the march ahead.

Then around 350 homeless, formerly homeless and never been homeless people, five dogs and a pony marched or

trotted 1.2 miles from the Loaves & Fishes staging area to a piece of City property off Richards Boulevard to declare it "Safe Ground".

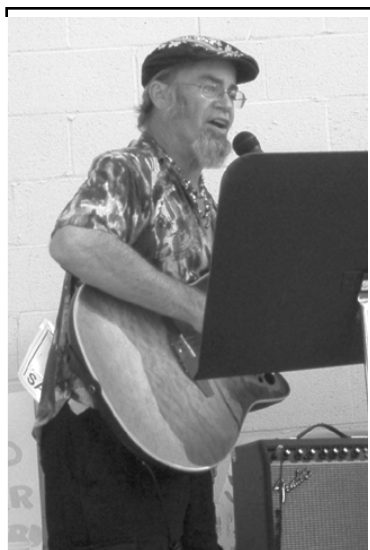
Police and safety monitors helped to direct traffic along the way. Foodlink's flatbed truck transported a U-dome World Shelter for display.

The flatbed trailer then became the stage for another

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Long time civil rights attorney Mark Merin spoke on the values of a society that seems to give to those who have much, and take from those who have little, making it necessary for good people to stand up for what is right.

James Little briefly spoke about a recent incident he experienced because he was homeless. Sharon Hendrix spoke about the need for our solidarity.



Glenn Bailey



Supporters gathering at Loaves & Fishes for March

A Bailout for the Homeless?

Street News Service
www.street-papers.org

by David Jefferson
Spare Change News

CAMBRIDGE, MA: Over the past several months, mainstream media outlets have been quite concerned with questions of bailouts. These rescue efforts, spearheaded by the Obama administration and Democratically controlled houses of Congress, have reached several industries, such as insurance, banking, and auto making. Economic bailouts of companies on the brink of failure have impacted individuals across social strata - they have enabled blue-collar workers to keep their manufacturing jobs and, prompt-

ing criticism, to ensure that corporate executives can keep at least a portion of their massive bonus checks. But what about stimulus dollars for the individuals who didn't have stocks, mutual funds, or mortgages to lose when the current recession hit? What about a bailout for the homeless?

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA; the so-called "stimulus package") was passed into law on February 17th. Since then, federal agencies have begun to tentatively use the funds. The Boston Globe recently ran a cover story about how ARRA moneys are begin-

ning to trickle into the Boston area. The Globe article focused on Watertown and examined diverse realms into which the money is being injected.

Among other things, ARRA funds in Watertown are being employed for road repairs, school programs for special education and for low-income students, subsidies for the production of batteries for electric vehicles, additional Social Security payments and increased unemployment benefits. As the stimulus package unfolds in various domains within a given community, it will inevitably impact members of

diverse populations therein. Spare Change News is especially interested in discovering how the ARRA would affect communities of homeless and low-income individuals living in the Boston Metro area. What kind of aid is built into the stimulus package for underserved, urban populations? How will these funds reach individuals; in other words, through which direct and indirect channels will the money flow? Finally, can the ARRA funds be considered an effective means for precipitating positive changes for the individuals and families that are being hit the

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Squatters' Rights in the Age of Foreclosure

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by **Cassandra Koslen**
Street Roots, USA

As the current economy leaves many in a lurch, a handful of advocacy groups across America are taking it upon themselves to solve the latest surge in homelessness by helping people locate and move in to foreclosed homes as squatters. One such group, Take Back The Land in Miami-Dade, Florida, is receiving attention nationwide for openly championing this cause in their new campaign, Take Back The Housing.

Max Rameau, the group's director, says that being conspicuous is what sets Take Back The Land apart. It is primarily a land control group, with a specific focus on empowering the black community.

As more people become frustrated with the surge in homelessness, the lack of affordable housing and the ironic prevalence of empty homes, many previously held stigmas about squatting are softening. In a New York Times article, a national organizer likened the practice of organized squatting that is growing in popularity to "a modern-day underground railroad."

Take Back The Land gained attention by moving the Trody family back into their own home of 22 years after it was lost to the bank in a credit scam. Rameau was also a founder of the Umjoa Village, a shantytown in Miami that was lost to a fire in April, 2007. Recently, Rameau lectured at PSU, discussing different social solutions to homelessness that we all can be a part of.

Cassandra Koslen: Obviously by doing this you are also making a statement, how much does the statement play into as well as the reality that there are so many people who need to be housed?

Max Rameau: We have too many vacant houses, at the exact same time as we have too many people that need places to stay. This is like a bizarro world, in many ways. And then of course what the government does in response is to give billions of dollars to the people who have all these empty houses, rather than giving the same amount of money or some other kind of support to the people who don't have any houses. It makes no sense in many ways, and I think demonstrates what some of the limits of what this economic system is, and how unjust it is. This strategy has always existed, but it would not have always been effective in its implementation. Right now it is, given the crisis. People are saying, 'I need a house,' and across the street from them there is an empty house. So, that is a huge social contradiction. The contradiction has always existed it just hasn't been exposed. So I think we're able to do that, and in that sense, yes.

C.K.: You've been getting a lot of media attention lately, have you been getting more response from the community?

M.R.: *We're getting supportive responses from people who live in these areas, and

we're getting supportive responses from people who think housing is a human right.

One day I was in the office and the phone rang, and there was a lady on the other end, and she said, "There's a house that's next door to me that's been vacant now for almost two years, the grass is up to my knees, I'm getting sick and tired of this." I said, "Ma'am do you know where you're calling?" And she said, "This is Take Back the Land, right? You guys move people into places? Well, we need to move some body in here, and mow the lawn!" So she was demanding that we move somebody in, a white lady in a white neighborhood, and we mainly do work in the black community. So, I think she understood the value of having someone in the place both in terms of what it does physically, but also for the stability of the neighborhood.

C.K.: Take Back the Land is primarily a black-for-black organization, and you've said you speak to neighbors and potential tenants before a move in. To be blunt, how does race factor into your selection process, in terms of both neighborhoods and families?

M.R.: Fundamentally, we are a land organization. We're not a homeless organization; we're not a housing organization; we are a land organization. On top of that, we're a land organization specifically dealing with land control in the black community, and the black community's right to control land in the black community. We talk about that openly and clearly, even though most of the media focuses on homelessness or housing. We feel that the race component is important because although there are many communities that are impacted by homelessness in general, in this housing crisis in particular we feel that the black community, and the numbers will bear this out, is disproportionately impacted both in homelessness and in the larger housing crisis. The black community has been deliberately and systematically denied access to land, and denied control of land. That's in terms of land, but in a broad social sense, we've been denied access to power, and the power of control over our own affairs. That is a significant component to the problem, and therefore a significant component to the solution.

C.K.: You make it a point to talk to neighbors in a community before you move people in, and you also work with the families to integrate them into the community. Why do you think that it is important not just to house people, but to also create that larger community?

M.R.: We're really operating on at least three different levels. One is that we are trying to help the individuals and the individual families. The second is we want to help the broader community. We think the community is strengthened by having families in homes rather than having them sit vacant, by having good neighbors rather than by having bad neighbors, and by having some sense of cohesion in the neighborhood. We think that moving people in next door to someone without

letting them know, even if we don't fully tell them what's going on, is disrespectful. And one of the things that we require is that the families we move in be good neighbors. We tell them, when you see your neighbors in the morning, say good morning. You see them in the afternoon, say good afternoon. If they say you're too loud, you need to quiet down. We have these rules that will help the tenants that we move in to be good neighbors.

The third level is that we're trying to build a movement that is able to happen in a geographical area much wider than Miami, and will have an impact much greater than the individual families that we move in. In order to do that, the initial phases of the movement have to be very clear, very crisp and not have any confusing messages about them. ... We want there to be only one issue, and that issue is that you have a family who has a right to and deserves housing. So we want them to be good neighbors because we feel that not only helps the individual family, but it also helps the community that they are moving into, and it helps build a broader movement by keeping messages very clear.

C.K.: Would you recommend for people to squat on their own?

***M.R.:** * People need to do what they need to do to get housing, and they do that. Squatting right now in the U.S. is absolutely rampant and it's primarily, overwhelmingly, happening by people doing this on their own. That's clear and there is no denying that.

With that said, I don't think that squatting itself is the most dignified way of dealing with the problem of lack of housing, and I don't think it's a long-term society-wide solution. The long-term solution is of course to elevate housing to the level of human right society-wide. The only way it is going to be dealt with society-wide is by there being a society wide discussion/clash/struggle around this issue. It could happen with individuals acting individually, but I don't think that is how social change is made, however. Social change is made by people joining organizations, being part of organizations, and then as members of organizations acting as a group fighting for the particular things that they believe in.

C.K.: You recognize that what you are doing is illegal. What steps do you take to ensure families have the longest possible amount of staying time in a location?

M.R.: The U.S. is signatory to no less than seven treaties which define housing as a human right, including the declaration of human rights. So, at least on the policy side, on the big international law side, this should be completely and totally legal, but it hasn't filtered down yet to the local level. So, while there are specific laws outlawing squatting, there are specific laws which you could argue don't do that. There just hasn't been a reconciliation between the two.

In terms of having people extend their

longevity there, we have certain guidelines around the homes that we move people into, both the homes and the families. And the two guidelines are supposed to work together, and we think that this is one of the ways that we can maximize their stay. The homes, for example, have to be in good condition, they have to have the capacity for electricity and running water. And the other benefit to having the family act as good neighbors, is that neighbors will want them to stay and will fight for them to stay.

In the two cases in which we have been very public with the families that are there, we think that the main reason they have stayed is not because of our great political work, but because there has been no neighbor who has come out and said, I want these people out of there.

There's a whole range of reasons why we'd move someone into a home, and a significant number of those reasons have to do with the ability of them to stay there for a long period of time.

C.K.: Describe some of the different families, to put a face on some of the people that you are helping.

M.R.: Sure. We have one young lady who went to a political rally. She had a dual masters and the only thing missing for her to get her PhD was her dissertation, which was finished, but she just couldn't pay for another semester of school. Extremely smart, obviously, very bright, very political, and just fell on a series of unfortunate events which completely undermined and destroyed her financial life. So, she was homeless and very frustrated, given the fact that she was so smart and so independent and had been used to being so independent.

The moment that I remember most about her is that when we moved her. We were there with media, and she said, "The guy just asked me where I am going to sleep." We were in the master bedroom, and she said, "I said I was going to sleep in here," and she pointed to the walk-in closet. I was completely shocked. We had discussed this many times, you're moving here, we're giving you a key and etc, so I said, "Come with me for a second," and we went out to the front door. The guy was just changing the lock and I took the keys and I gave them to her and I said, "You know, we want you to walk in the front door. I know what the law says, but we feel that this is your house." And for the first time she realized, she wasn't going to be sneaking in the back door in the middle of the night. She is going to be walking in the front door, and I think it dawned on her that for the first time in a while she doesn't have to live under really degrading circumstances, even though obviously squatting has its own inherent issues. I feel like at that moment a part of her own humanity was reawakened that had died while she was living on the streets and in the shelters. She wept quietly at the idea of having keys,

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Welcome Home - A Transitional Tale

Street News Service
www.street-papers.org

by Michael 'Pontiac' Cooke
The Contributor, USA

NASHVILLE, TN: It is early morning on a cold December day, and I am lying in a warm bed in my new apartment in Mercury Court North. But my mind is somewhere else. I am thinking about my friends in Tent City. Are they staying warm? Do they have enough to eat?

Breakfast in my camp almost always consisted of cold sandwiches gathered from the food truck the night before. Food storage difficulties in camp life certainly limited the options, and cunningly crafty critters were always in search of a mid-night snack. In my new apartment, bacon & eggs are back on the menu again, as well as the dairy products that are in such seemingly short supply on the streets.

In my camp, taking a shower always proved to be a very chilly challenge. It would involve a walk of nearly a quarter a mile, carrying bags of toiletries and clean clothes, while trying not to incur injury in the slippery shower sandals that aren't designed for outdoor travel. In my new apartment, the bathroom is only steps away, and a long, hot bath is now an option for the first time in several years.

When I lived outside, my daily duties rou-

tinely required the constant cleaning of camp due to the annoying ash created by a crackling campfire. The search for firewood was unending and exhaustive, and always aggravated old injuries.

Also frustrating, were the daily decisions of when and where to seek sustenance. Some 'feedings' would require a walk of several miles, after which we would usually be hungry again - having travelled a taxing trek back to our campsite. At my new apartment, a short span of a block or two will find fast food fare, many mini-markets, and the Second Harvest Food Bank truck, which stops by twice a week with donated delicacies.

When I lived in Tent City, my morning routine consisted of getting out from under several layers of blankets, then shaking and shivering while trying to get several layers of cold clothing on as quickly as possible. I would then proceed directly to the fire pit, stacking crumpled paper and broken twigs - with all the meticulousness that my obsessive compulsive disorder could muster - and then slowly build it from a tiny fire into a fire big enough to heat coffee water and camp as well. In my new apartment, all that is required is to turn the dial to the heat setting, and place a pan of water on the stove.

Every night, bedtime's beckoning included waiting for the fire-pit to no longer pose a hazard to camp or community, making sure there had been no tasty temptations left out for the local rodent population, and the securing of camp gear and personal belongings. I would then carefully zip the tent up from the inside, hoping for one more night of dependable division from the damp night time air. A broken tent zipper was always a very possible predicament. Finally, I would take off several layers of warm clothing and get under several layers of cold blankets, after which I would often read my Bible by the light of a headlamp. Realizing the inherent dangers of sleeping outside, with nothing but a piece of tent fabric for security, I would pray for the Lord's providence and protection. In my new apartment, a dead-bolted door now keeps me and my belongings safe and secure. As I crawl into a soft bed, with crisp sheets and a cosy comforter, I give thanks for all the blessings in my life. And I think about my friends in Tent City, my friends all over the streets of Nashville, and I pray that they, someday, might be so blessed.

The transition from Tent City life to living in an apartment has been pretty smooth for me thus far. The case management as well as the wrap-around services

offered here at Urban Housing Solutions promises to make future transition even more productive.

Having been a part of the homeless community for more than six years, I can personally attest to the effectiveness of current efforts to help the homeless. In the old system, services were made available at set locations in many different parts of the city. This made it difficult, if not impossible, for people with physical and mental disabilities to obtain those services. The newer outreach efforts are helping the homeless to overcome those obstacles. By getting out of the offices and onto the streets, outreach workers are better able to assess the needs and assist with the necessities for our society's most vulnerable human beings. And efforts by the Southern Alliance for Animal Welfare and founder Laurie Green are helping the animals that share in the difficulties and dangers of life on the streets. She has found loving homes for many animals that might have otherwise been put down when their owners are simply unable to keep them.

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A Theft from One is a Theft from All

Street News Service www.streetnewsservice.org

by C'daoim
Victoria Street Newz, Canada

Victoria, Canada - University courses really expose a person to so many different types of information and it is not always the professors or books that offer a these unique observations. For the most part my classmates are at least half my age (does it ever sound different using the term class without social implications) and at times I'm not so sure that we really have that much in common. Then a week such as the one that just passed unfolds and I learn more from this Political-Science class, my classmates and politicians then I would have ever expected to learn over a couple of days.

For Poli-sci we have to write a paper on a public meeting, any public meeting, and in my case I chose to go to the Esquimalt Municipal hall meeting, a first for me. I experienced something I never imagined possible and it was dealing with the homeless situation in our fair city. I'm never going to use the term homeless again because the fact is we are discussing poverty which is the cause of homelessness; this I learned from some of my classmates.

From the Municipal meeting I learned that those living in poverty should be punished and denied any respect for being a Canadian Citizen who hasn't oppressed enough people in order to qualify as a not being poor. Remember our society is built upon the premise of individuals having more material wealth than another person and there is only so much room at the top. So in order to feel good about ourselves some of us have supported the idea of a bottom rung of society and then blame those standing there for their situation. We put rules in place, commonly referred to as laws, that describe how you can legally oppress one another and what is an illegal way to oppress someone; ah, the life of the civilized.

Now it's not as though I didn't already suspect/know these things but it was the confirmation I received from some of my classmates (half my age), politicians, and homeowners. The Municipal Hall meeting was going the way it assumes it is supposed to, I guess, when the time arrived for vocalizing local concerns. This is a really mind expanding experience because I get exposed to a lot of different concerns; my parallax view has expanded. Yet it is this one concern that brings me back to "class" as being

a social prejudice and it not being the women and men "class"mates in Poli-Sci. The concern expressed went something similar to this: "Does Esquimalt have a by-law to stop homeless people from moving here?"

Legitimate to some citizens certainly, shocking to others (but no one there except myself and one other) but not as bewildering as the response. "Victoria is going to put water sprinklers in these places to stop them from using public places." So why all the court battles if they have found a way around this, what is the purpose of such actions? Is it that if the city wins a court battle they have defined legal oppression and as it stands they cannot oppress Canadians? It certainly is not helping those that we chose to build the bottom rung on the social ladder for.

Oddly a few days later sitting outside of my Poli-Sci class with other students a conversation takes place regarding the headline in another local paper (MSM) regarding a new by-law created to stop those living in poverty from protecting themselves from the elements. For some reason, probably a respect of life (to some idealist) I find myself engaged in this conversation and I hear some young people

expressing disgust. This conversation gets very deep for those involved and students are wondering how we can allow this to happen. One classmate expresses the idea that we don't admit that old women suffer out there with nowhere to go because if we admit it, we would have to take responsibility for it. Another student makes the observation that they understand other cities are dealing with social problems in ways that are working. The idea this classmate was sharing didn't include sprinklers but rather human ability at its best, which understands a problem and then and only then adjusting to it so that there is satisfaction for all citizens in the ladder structure of society we support.

If I didn't suffer from such a powerful social anxiety disorder I could have heard the voice of our youth much earlier. It is a wonderful experience to realize that some of the next generation recognizes the need for change. University courses really expose a person to a lot of different types of information but it is the youth of today who inspire the heart.

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Bailout

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hardest by the recession?

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds total \$787 billion nationally and are designed to be spent quickly in order to reinvigorate the currently stagnant United States economy. The Massachusetts Center for Budget and Policy website reveals that ARRA funds for this state are slated to be distributed among 37 different areas of programming.

Some of the programs that are eligible for ARRA funds would indirectly benefit underserved populations in and around Boston. For example, Medicaid in Massachusetts will be allocated \$2.4-\$3.1 billion and \$323.7 million will be available for food stamps (a.k.a., Supplemental Nutritional Assistance, or SNAP). Meanwhile, other portions of the ARRA would more directly benefit individuals who are homeless or of low-incomes. Examples include the \$45.9 million allocated to Massachusetts for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Funds and the \$44.8 million for homelessness prevention through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, a public policy advocacy organization headquartered in Boston, could potentially benefit from federal stimulus dollars under the ARRA. Joe Finn, President and Executive Director, described his organization's efforts, stating "MHSA has been pushing for rapid-re-entry housing dollars for unaccompanied adult homeless persons." Finn envisions long-term solutions to combat homelessness, emphasizing the importance of finding permanent residential solutions, which "Would work particularly well for the so-called Tier I or Tier II individuals who are homeless primarily for economic reasons or those who are the result of state discharge from other systems of care."

Immediate aid to quickly re-house individuals would be especially significant in today's economy, given that many people have faced foreclosures on their homes due to mortgage woes or job layoffs. Finn notes that this type of aid would "Have a tremendous impact on shelter capacity reducing the necessity

of wasting dollars on emergency resources." ARRA funds could be used to create a buffer for these "Tier I and II" individuals, potentially laying the foundation for a more evolved system of rapid re-housing for the recently homeless.

Yet any government-subsidized system to counter homelessness beyond emergency response measures would require a stable, long-term source of funding, something that is not guaranteed by the ARRA. Marc Alston-Follansbee, Executive Director of the Somerville Homeless Coalition, explained that the ARRA means an amplified infusion of support for a limited time period for his organization. Specifically, the stimulus package funds will provide housing subsidies to individuals and families in need for 18 months. Of the ARRA funds, Alston-Follansbee said, "It's good that the federal government is acknowledging that preventing homelessness is important to overall economic recovery." As Finn, the President of MHSA, had also noted, it is crucial that a portion of the overall stimulus money go toward keeping people directly affected by the economic downturn housed.

But victims of mortgage foreclosures and company layoffs are not the only types of individuals that comprise the full homeless population. As Alston-Follansbee mentioned, there is a "need to recognize that there is a number of people who will never get apartments without a [housing] subsidy." These people need economic supports because, for myriad individual reasons, it is unlikely that they will be able to work, or to earn enough to pay for rent on their own. When these individuals are considered, the 18-month subsidies provided by the ARRA to Somerville residents are a short-term fix but not a long-term solution.

Among Boston-area homelessness organizations, the general consensus seems to be that any ARRA funds designed to help homeless or low-income individuals should be transferred to those individuals directly, rather than through indirect channels. Finn, the MHSA President, said of his organization, "Our feeling here is that housing dollars have the most direct impact on people and we would like to see [the ARRA money] used for that

purpose."

In contrast, an alternative use of funds would bolster the resources of those who work with underserved populations. Of this approach, Finn said, "We are a little concerned about those advocates who wish to plow this money into salaries for service providers, etc. that may not be sustainable long-term and only create another structural deficit with the system." Essentially Finn is cautioning against the argument that stimulus dollars be spent to bolster the incentives for working with homeless and low-income populations, which could benefit these groups indirectly. Instead, Boston homelessness organizations hold that any money allocated by ARRA for helping the underserved should be given to members of this population directly.

The ARRA should consider less tangible ramifications of economic stimulus spending in addition to considering how to best effect concrete outcomes. By allocating money directly to the underserved, the federal government can acknowledge the significance of these people and their agency as consumers, which would locate these individuals as integral members in the larger American economic system. Conversely, indirect aid, such as attracting better service providers via increased compensation, could threaten to perpetuate the extant system of social stratification and unequal distribution of power and privilege in United States society.

Rosie's Place, the Boston organization that describes itself as a sanctuary for poor and homeless women, does not accept any government money will therefore not receive nor apply for ARRA funds. Nevertheless, "There are two direct assistance ARRA funds that I know would go to our guests directly," said Sana Fadel Director of Public Policy at Rosie's Place. "The first is an increase in their monthly SNAP (food stamps) allotment; a \$250 one time check for SSI/SSDI [Supplementary Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance] recipients; and an increase of 25% per week for unemployment benefits."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act does repre-

sent some benefits for individuals who are homeless or of low-incomes in Massachusetts. People will be able to access ARRA funds in several ways that will perhaps allow for a brief respite from current economic hardships. Much of the cash that will reach individuals will come in the form of single payments, such as the aforementioned SSI/SSDI check or help for one-time costs such as security deposits and moving costs through the HUD, as described on the Massachusetts Center for Budget and Policy website.

Yet, while it might be hard to accept a stimulus act with a \$787 billion price tag as a mere band-aid, it behooves the average citizen to progress toward a vision for long-term solutions for the poor. A delicate balance must be struck between celebration of the ARRA and maximization of its positive potential, and careful design of a more sustainable framework for community support in the future.

So while the ARRA reverses some of the policy priorities of the Bush administration that severely neglected underserved populations, it remains to be seen whether or not the Obama's stimulus plan represents a true paradigm shift in the relationship between the federal government and local communities. Currently in its early stages, the ARRA is not yet even an end in itself. As funds trickle into the Boston Metro area, the most significant question that lingers is this: Can the ARRA precipitate a re-conceptualization of how we as individual Americans relate to our communities, our country, and to each other?

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Shelter Beds Saved

By Joan Burke

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted on June 17 to preserve funding for Sacramento County's shelter system! They were considering cutting funding to the winter shelter and 160 additional shelter beds (totaling around 320 beds) due to the County's budget deficit, but now the total number of beds will remain the same, although the type of shelters and the level of services they can offer will shift. The winter overflow shelter that closed on July 1st will now re-open as usual for the colder months in November.

The staff of the Department of Human Assistance, notably Director Bruce Wagstaff, Deputy Director Toni Moore, and Homeless Services Director Suzanne Hammer, also deserve our thanks. They worked long hours to maximize available funding and come up with a creative and workable plan. They care deeply about the homeless men; women and children helped by Sacramento's homeless programs and truly deserve to be recognized as outstanding public servants. The Supervisors were faced with very tough choices and a slashed budget but voted to save the shelter safety net.

We will face additional challenges as the state government decides on where to cut to meet its own budget crisis. Sacramento's cuts to its mental health and primary care systems have been severe and are of great concern.

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Supporter Display

Safe Ground Sacramento

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rally on the hot vacant lot that was the march's destination, with Tracie Rice-Bailey as MC.

A team set up a bunch of tents while speakers from San Francisco, San Jose, Fresno, and Merced offered their solidarity with Sacramentans.

Bill Camp from the AFL-CIO offered his endorsement and support. Rev. Brian Baker, the Dean of Trinity Cathedral, lead the rally goers in prayer. Then there was an open mic session where rally participants were able to share their words of encouragement and musical entertainment.

The lot was hot since there were no trees for shade.

Also, it happened to be located next door to the police station. So, around 1 PM, it was time to move on down the road; actually through a hole in the fence, down the road and around the corner by the water treatment plant, where an inviting park-like setting became the second Safe Ground declared that day.

The police said campers would receive amnesty for 24 hours at that spot and the sprinklers were to be turned off for the night.

The weather turned drastically cool and pleasant. The neighboring Highway 5 traffic rushed by like a sea breeze and sounded like ocean waves, Sr. Libby mentioned.

Over 60 Campers set up around 25 tents and some cots. Many who were out for the first time from the overflow shelter were given sleeping bags. The portable toilet just happened to be placed directly under a street light, so evening trips without a flashlight were accident free.

Everyone got a \$5 McDonald gift certificate, which wasn't needed for dinner because Mo Mohanna brought everyone some perfectly prepared pizza and chicken wings.

Everything was pleasant and people were able to rest without fear of harassment, and were able to unwind from the weeks of work planning for the event, except for a brief encounter with Wackenhut security.

Everything was just about perfect, until the next morning when reality set in and everyone had to tear down their tents and cots, pack up their gear and re-enter the real world of Sacramento, where homeless people are not allowed to legally live outdoors, and all emergency shelters are full, especially since July 1st marked the closing of the Overflow shelter at Cal-Expo.

The Safe Ground Sacramento Campaign will continue though, and homeless campers will declare yet another piece of land as Safe Ground for yet another night. This time with a growing number of supporters, and with the plight of the homeless people of Sacramento being less ignored - less swept under the rug, so to speak.

Current organizational sponsors are: Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, Loaves & Fishes, Francis House, Mark Merin Law Offices, Uptown Studios and Phil Giarrizzo Campaign Consulting. Visit Safe Ground Sacramento's new website that Uptown Studios just created at: www.safegroundsac.org



What is "Safe Ground?"

- A secure location, sanctioned by the city and operated by the residents.
- A place with clean water, toilets, and garbage collection.
- * A new type of low-cost community living.
- * A place where residents can be free from harassment and danger.
- * A place where homeless people have a chance to access the services they need to turn their lives around.



Marchers along Richards Blvd.

Sacramento's Anti-Scavenging Ordinance Makes Common Recycling Practice a Crime

In March 2009, Sacramento City Council approved an ordinance amendment to Section 13.10.160 that makes it against the law for anyone to take anything out of a city operated waste receptacle or green waste container. Previously, it was only illegal to take recyclables out of the recycle containers.

This will turn many poor and homeless people into criminals for the mere act of recycling. They may have taken pride for years in their ability to provide for their own needs through their hard, honest work of recycling. Now the city has eliminated this noble profession from our community's economy. This is the worse time possible for such a

restriction, especially in a depressed job market. This practice of recycling and reusing other people's throw-aways not only provides our poorest community members with a meager and necessary survival income, it also is a necessary method of practicing environmental sustainability (also very much needed in our time of global climate change crisis).

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee opposes this ordinance. Join us in our campaign to protect our rights to reclaim discarded resources by calling SHOC at (916) 442-2156 or visit us online at <http://shoc.wikispaces.com>



More Marchers with the U-dome World Shelter passing on street in background.



Welcome Shade at Second Safe Ground

The Shape of Space

by Chongo

The preceding article described the simple, conventional picture of the universe existing during Einstein's era, that a static, single-galaxy universe. Human understanding of nature then was far more simplistic - and likewise far less accurate - in the days of Einstein, which is now nearly a century ago, and the tools for scientific inquiry, far less powerful than they are today. Common convention presumed that the entire universe, the whole of physical existence, consisted of nothing, but ourselves and our one, galaxy alone, suspended eternally in an endless otherwise empty space.

Einstein's new theory of relativity did not yield such universe, but instead, resulted in a universe that would eventually collapse upon its self. In order to yield a universe consistent with the conventional presumptions, Einstein introduced a new value into his relativity equations, called the "cosmological constant," and fixed it to an infinitely precise value, appropriately, so that these equations would agree perfectly with scope of our knowledge at the time.

Upon review of Einstein's supposition, that is, the cosmological constant, a man named Friedmann proposed, instead of a static universe, a dynamic one as the only kind possible, deeming Einstein's choice of a single, fixed value for the cosmological constant to be far too exact to reflect nature's realities. Then, an astronomer named Edwin Hubble validated Friedmann's conclusions by discovering first, that our Milky Way galaxy was not the only galaxy in the universe, but that rather, it was just one, among billions and billions of other galaxies. Second, by discovering the abundance of galaxies throughout the cosmos, Hubble further revealed the dynamic character of our universe, irrefutably.

Aside from discovering the existence of an enormous abundance of other galaxies besides our own filling space as far as could be observed, Hubble discovered further that, in general, the farther these galaxies lay from our galaxy, first, the closer these galaxies were to each other, and second, the faster these galaxies raced away from our galaxy. This meant that overall, galaxies were spreading apart, from what was a progressively more compact "universe," consisting of a smaller, denser, spatial volume, constantly expanding into a larger, more disperse one.

Hubble had concrete, observational proof of the dynamic character of the cosmos, substantiating Friedmann's

proposal that the universe was dynamic, because observations clearly demonstrated that it had always been expanding, constantly, throughout the course of its entire history. (That our dynamic universe would continue to expand endlessly, instead of eventually ceasing and then ultimately collapsing into a "big crunch," would be determined decades later.)

Well, one might think that such a marvel as amazing as a dynamic universe would have been staring Einstein squarely in the face, considering that it was he, after all, who had originally introduced a new value into his own equations to the end of excluding a dynamic universe as a possibility in nature, thereby excluding all of the consequential intricacies inherent to such a universe. Surely a man as brilliant as Einstein would have considered all the possibilities, including the dynamic, with equal objectivity, as any brilliant scientist like him would ideally do. But that is not what seems to have happened, despite Einstein being among the foremost scientists who ever lived.

Being then, among commitments to a multitude of other pursuits, the lonely pioneer exploring gravity, Einstein had many duties and many problems to solve. Perhaps he wanted to avoid the new questions that a dynamic universe would have raised and thus avoid the additional work that both identifying and answering those new questions would have demanded, like, for example, questions and answers regarding origin and destiny of the universe. Without a doubt, he would have been compelled then not to involve science or himself with what would surely have been extremely sensitive issues, in light of prevailing contemporary thought. Choosing the course that he did might have seemed the most sensible choice, under the circumstances that Einstein confronted in his day. However, had Einstein assumed differently, he would have made what would have undoubtedly been an absolutely monumental discovery. Unfortunately for Einstein, this colossal opportunity for scientific advancement fell elsewhere, rather than upon the very man who had laid the foundations leading to it. In hindsight, Einstein called his gross oversight "the greatest blunder of his life."

Hubble's revolutionary discovery of an expanding universe filled with galaxies everywhere was an enormous step beyond the limitations of long-entrenched conventional thinking. It provided observational proof of Friedmann's insight in identifying the rich character of nature; redefining and deepening the image we associ-

ate with the idea of universe. Given what this illuminating insight uncovered, we can, just as Hubble did, recognize that if we look far enough, deep enough, into space, we will eventually see a microscopically sized "universe," pouring out of something that science now calls the Big Bang. Like the word universe, Big Bang is a term that requires precise clarification or it could very easily be misinterpreted for being something that it simply is not. The name is definitely misleading.

To understand accurately what the Big Bang physically is, it is paramount to recognize what the Big Bang is not, through an appreciation of how it got its name. The term Big Bang itself is actually a misnomer, because the term "Bang" incorrectly implies that it is an explosion, which the Big Bang flatly is not. Indeed, it was the Big Bang's principal opponent who was responsible for this confusing name, and who utilized the misnaming jokingly, in an effort to demean the brilliance of the idea through an inaccurate analogy - all for the sake of endorsing his own alternative conjecture, which was subsequently disproved. Unfortunately, the name Big Bang remained, no fault to either Friedmann or Hubble.

So, one should be cautious not to take the name Big Bang literally. Doing so can easily lead to mistakenly confusing it with an explosion, which happens once and is then over. To be clear, the Big Bang is NOT as simple as an explosion. Unlike an explosion, the Big Bang effectively never ends, continuing constantly, effectively forever.

This, of course, leaves us with the obvious question, which is, what then is the Big Bang, if it is not an explosion, albeit an explosion that persists into eternity? In actual fact, it is much more. Physically, the Big Bang is a super-microscopically sized "pit," of what is effectively an inexhaustible supply of energy, with an infinitely distant, unreachable "bottom." It is a perpetual "spout" of physical energy, what could be legitimately considered a genuine white hole of existence, in fact, the only white hole in the entire history of the universe; there are no others, only it alone.

Proof of the Big Bang as an "origin" for the cosmos came in the form of cosmic background microwave radiation detected emanating from the farthest reaches of space. This radiation is the same radiation as the "initial" light of the Big Bang that once emanated from here, long, long ago, then, when the Big Bang edge of space was located right here. The initial light that was once here, billions of years ago, is now, of course, long

gone. Nonetheless, while the light that was once here then, is no more (that is, for us), the same light as it, from exactly the same source, is the same light, identically, the same, exact radiation, as what we see today in the form of cosmic background microwave radiation that we detect, as it still happens now, in every direction that we point our detectors into space.

The Big Bang always lying as far as is possible for anything to lie distant, in every three-dimensional direction, including opposite directions together (i.e. at once), as well as in time, is somewhat incomprehensible in light of ordinary human experience and certainly counterintuitive to standard three-dimensional thinking. As incomprehensible and counterintuitive as the concept may seem, it is an undeniable reality in nature, just like the Big Bang not being an explosion is. This seemingly blatant contradiction to conventional three-dimensional thinking is explained by the clear, indisputable fact that complexities allowable in the geometry of four dimensions are absolutely impossible, not to mention wholly meaningless and seemingly illogical, in the limitations existing in a mere three dimensions.

Our universe is not simply three-dimensional, anymore than it is limited by the simplicities characterizing three dimensions. Grasping the notion that contradictions in three dimensions, like the same location lying in completely opposite directions at once, are physical actualities in four dimensions, is crucial to understanding, because what round and spherical is in four dimensions cannot be understood without abandoning what would be perfectly reasonable conclusions, although still wholly incorrect ones, of what round and spherical is in three dimensions. Abandoning three-dimensional principles is absolutely unavoidable for comprehending the actualities of four-dimensional ones, as the next two articles will explain.

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(From the Appendix of THE HOMELESS INTERPRETATION OF QUANTUM MECHANICS, by Chongo in collaboration with Jose. To see all the books and prior science articles that Chongo has written, go to chongonation.com, and click on "Science Articles." Chongonation.com is a web site dedicated to educating those who have least opportunity for learning the scientific foundations that describe nature (that is, describe it accurately). Chongonation.com provides, in addition to its science articles, serious books that describe theoretical physics, in lay terms, without any math at all. Simply go to the www.chongonation.com home page and click on "Books on Nature.")

Squat

From page 2

and she spent the rest of the time just jingling the keys.

C.K.: How do you prepare the families that you work with for the possibility of being arrested and the possibility of being separated from their kids?

M.R.: I think that the biggest responsibility that we have is to be honest with them and allow them to make their own decisions. We have had a number of families come up to us and ask us for help, and when we explain to them exactly what we do and what the potentials are, who never called us back. Obviously we'd like to help those families, but the important thing is that we don't put them in a position where suddenly they are in a whirlwind they didn't realize they'd be in. We are brutally honest with them, both about what the prospects are and also where we've been, that no one has been arrested and etc. But we are very clear with them and we let them know what some of the possibilities are, which include arrest, which include getting all kinds of trumped up charges, which include losing their children in the instances that they do have children.

There are very serious potentials, at the same time the most likely scenario really is that the police would tell them to leave and they wouldn't arrest them. If they arrested them the most likely charge would be trespassing, which would be a misdemeanor, which then would not endanger them and their children.

C.K.: Having just visited Dignity Village, do you have any thoughts on the recent proliferation of tent cities across America?

M.R.: We said when Umoja Village was up in Oct of 2006 to April of 2007, that we would start finding shanty towns and tent cities all over the country, and in 10 years it would be commonplace, but probably in five years you would find them everywhere. It looks like we are beating the 5-year estimate.

We're in a moment where the conditions are clearly declining very rapidly, but people's ideas of what the U.S. is still remains in this past period.

Reprinted from Street Roots
Street News Service
www.streetnewsservice.org

Lost Hope

Vice-grips squeezed on trouble minds, death grip ruptures all
through the spine, tweak what pressure disrupts time
No safe place to hide nor sleep one can find

Visions unfold within traps of despair
Seeing an illusion of emotions to care
Is the place where vultures prey
Destine to be born corrupting what callous way

No rain may befallen silver lining rue
What splendor moments cusp a morning due
Crushed by the fleet adrift without harbor
Can I wake this night and go much farther

Yet a tide sweeps in clinging to hope
Casting what fate all doubts or fears to cope
Dare share one dream of common birth
To feed that vision upon dear earth

Only to have those treasures stole
by everything that does not exist
with just a meekly cast pride to behold
For song birds pray would never be told

Trapped deep within the purest mind
Is the one song we will never find

Anthony Louis Taylor

Mirage

Who are you that made me hunger to have, the bosom of your soul,
And pray that I may be just like you,
shower me with all your riches that
I can never touch,

Cast a spell that would never be broken,
Then feed me with another false hope,
Knowing I must believe in something,
So why not you,

After making certain I had nothing before,
All the time I never knew,
It was just a mirage.

Anthony Louis Taylor

Anthony is a part time Homeward distributor here in Sacramento. He has been published by the *International Library of Poetry*. *Mirage* was selected as the best poem of 2007 in their anthology. Reprinted with permission of the author.

A Special Thanks from
SHOC
to the
Bank of America
and the
Sidney Stern Memorial Trust
for their support

Obituary

Charlie Ward

d. 5/5/09 aged 62
of heart attack

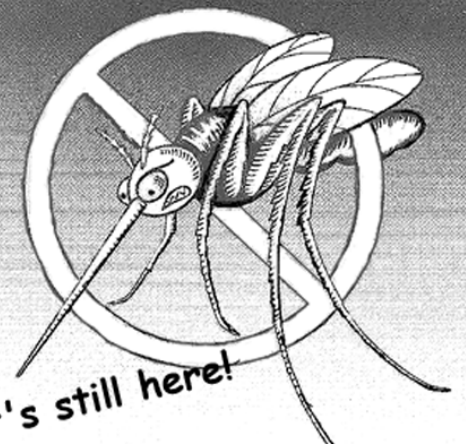
Barry Crom

d. 6/6/09 aged 40
cause pending

Daniel Beckes

d. 6/17/09 aged 37
cause pending

**FIGHT
THE BITE!**



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AND YOUR FAMILY FROM
WEST NILE VIRUS**



I want to see **HOMEWARD**,
a newspaper produced by homeless people, expand in Sacramento.
Enclosed find my donation of \$15 for a one year subscription.

Please mail my copies to:

Name: _____

Street & Apt: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Make checks payable to the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC)
and mail to: PO Box 952 • Sacramento, CA 95812

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HOMELESS RESOURCES

Night Shelters

Salvation Army: 12th and North B St.
30 days per year: Dormitory living, C&S:
Dinner, breakfast clothing for residents:
Men/Women: Sign-up SA patio weekdays
at 1PM. **442-0331**

St. John's Shelter: Women and
Children. 4410 Power Inn Rd. Call
between 10am & 3pm for space avail-
ability. **453-1482**

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon
St. Beds for Men Only, sign up 6:30pm
at mission, Newcomers/Referrals have pri-
ority. 7:30pm Chapel Service with meal
afterwards, 6am breakfast for residents.
Showers / shaves 9-11am & 1-2:45pm.
open to all homeless men: **447-3268**

**SAEHC, Sacramento Area
Emergency Housing Center:** 4516
Parker Ave. 24 hrs: Family Shelter:
Families, single adults with children who
have no other resource: Women's Refuge,
single women, no children: Call for
screening/space availability **455-2160**

Day Shelters

Friendship Park: 12th St. & North C:
Weekdays 7am - 2:30pm: open to anyone:
Many services

Meals

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon
St.: 7 days, **Evening meal**, Men/Women:
Church service 7:00pm required, dinner
following 8:30-9:15pm. Sunday 11am
service, lunch at noon. **447-3268**

Loaves & Fishes: 1321 No. C St.:
Lunch every day 11:30am-1pm. Tickets
available 7 am- 12:30 pm at Friendship
Park weekdays: at 8 am on Saturday and
10am on Sundays .

Women's Civic Improvement Center:
Seniors Only: 3555 3rd Ave. 11:30-12:30
lunch M-F **452-2866**

Helping Hands: 3526 5th Ave.
Sundays, 8-11 breakfast, sack lunch,
clothing

Food-not-Bombs: serves free food in
Cesar Chavez Plaza, 9th & J St., every
Sunday 1:30 pm. All Welcome.

Women & Children

Maryhouse: 1321 No. C St. suite 32:
Breakfast for Women and children 8am-
9am. Day shelter 8am-3pm weekdays for
women and families.

Wellspring 3414 4th St.: T&Th full
breakfast: M-W-F continental breakfast
for women and children. **454-9688**

see *Wind in Youth Services* for
young adults

Free Clothing

Sacramento Food Bank: 3333 3rd Ave.
(at Broadway) 10am-2pm Mon - Fri.
456-1980

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon
St. Men: M-Sat 9-11am or 1-2:45pm:
Women and Children: Wed. only. Call for
appointment to go in at 11am, 1 or 1:30pm,
or attend Bible study at 9:15am and get
clothing at 10am **447-3268**

Medical

Mercy Clinic: Adults, children: Nurse's
office in Friendship park 7:30am &
12:30pm. **446-3345**

Capital Health Clinic: (C St. Clinic)
Closed due to budget cuts.

Sacramento Dental Clinic: 4600
Broadway (Primary Care Bldg) Walk-ins
8 am - 12:30 pm **874-8300**

Mental Health

Guest House, 1400 N. A St.: Homeless
Mental Health Clinic, M,W,Th,Fri., 8-
11:30am Tues 8-11:30am only. Mental
Health evaluation, medication if needed.
Housing referrals for mentally ill, GA refs,
SSI aps, refs to A & D counseling:
443-6972

TLCS Intake Offices: 1400 N.'A' St.
Bldg. A: Adults 18 yrs & up; Referrals
to transitional living programs, indepen-
dant living, mental health support services;
SSI/SSDI application assistance;
Walk-ins 8-11am M-F **440-1500**

**Consumer Self-Help: Currently out of
business**

Genesis: Professional Counseling for
life problems. Referrals. Next to
Friendship Park gate. **699-1536**

Youth Services

Diogenes: youth 16-21 yrs old. Hot
Line call **1-800-339-7177**

Wind Youth Center: 701 Dixieanne
Ave. Serves youth ages 12-20. Breakfast
and Lunch; Clothing; Laundry and
Showers; Case Management. Drop-in
Hours: M - F from 8:00am to 4:30pm and
Sat 10am to 2pm. **443-8333**

Crisis Intervention

WEAVE: Services for victims of domes-
tic violence and sexual assault and their
children. Referrals to court mandated
battery intervention programs. Safe
house, 24 hr. crisis line: **920-2952**

**Sacramento Mental Health Center
(County):** 2150 Stockton Blvd (at T St.)
24hr. Will evaluate anyone for voluntary
or involuntary psychiatric care due to
danger to self or others. In-patient care
facility, drop-in. **732-3637**

AIDS / HIV

AIDS Housing Alliance provides res-
idential care, transitional housing & per-
manent housing services to homeless
persons living with aids. **979-0897** week-
days.

**CARES (Center for AIDS Research,
Education and Service):** 1500 21st St.
Serves people with HIV and AIDS. Medical
care, mental health, case mgmt, health ed
and regional prevention/ed classes.
443-3299

Breaking Barriers: Homeless
Outreach Program provides direct services
to people living with AIDS and HIV.
Transportation to social services, medical
appointments, job interviews, and housing
assistance. **447-2437**

Harm Reduction Services: 3640 40th
St.; High risk outreach; HIV, Hep-C testing;
case management for HIV; free medical
clinic, needle exchange. **456-4849**

Alternative Test Site: Free anonymous
testing, Wed /Thurs. Call for appt.
874-7720.

Legal Aid

Disability Rights, CA: Free legal ser-
vices for people with disabilities. Call for
appt. toll free: TTY:(800)776-5746

**Legal Services of Northern
California, Inc:** 515 12th St. (at E St.)
M-F 8:30am-12pm, 1pm-5pm. Problems
with public benefits, landlord / tenant,
divorce clinic. Call for appt. **551-2150**

Welfare Rights: 1901 Alhambra Blvd.
(2nd floor) M-F 9am-5pm: AFDC, Food
Stamps, Workfare and Medical rep at
hearings. **736-0616**

Miscellaneous

Francis House: 1422 C st. 9:30-11:30
am M-W & 1-3 pm M-F: walk-in or refer-
ral providing resource counseling, adv-
ocacy, vouchers for IDs, Dvr Licenses, Birth
Certificates, plus motel vouchers for qual-
ified families. **443-2646**

Social Services: 28th & R ST. M-F
7:30am-5pm. Call for asst. **874-2072**

**Employment Development
Department (EDD):** 2901 50th St. (at
Broadway) M-F 8am-5pm. Unemployment,
job services. **227-0300**

Medi-Cal: 1-800-773-6467, 1-888-747-
1222. Or see DHA eligibility workers 1725
28th St. **916-874-2256**

Social Security Office: 8351 Folsom
Blvd (College Greens Lite-rail stop) M-F
9am-4:30pm **381-9410:** Natl line 1-800-
772-1213

About SHA

The Sacramento Housing
Alliance is a network of
concerned citizens which pro-
motes decent affordable housing
for low income households and
homeless people through adv-
ocacy and participation in public
discourse.

**The SHA does not
itself provide or
manage housing.**

You may call for info:
(916) 455-4900

Annual Membership dues:
Standard, \$35;
Low-income, \$15

Organizations:
Full, 0.1% agency budget;
Associate, \$100

Send donations to:

Sacramento Housing Alliance
1800 21st St. Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Mail or bring your ad to the
Homeward office. Try to keep
it under 25 words.

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Give hope and happiness.
Give a job, such as moving or
yard work, to a homeless
worker.

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job phone at
832-5510;
Or mail to
Loaves & Fishes,
Jobs for Homeless,
PO Box 2161,
Sac, CA 95812

**Social Security
Disability / SSI Lawyer**
Free Consultation
(916) 658-1880

Infoline:
Tele-info & referral service:
498-1000

**Californina Youth Crisis
Line:**
1-800-843-5200

Health Rights Hotline:
551-2100

VA Outreach:
1-800-827-1000
Homeless VA Coordinator:
(916) 364-6547

Welcome to HOMEWARD:

Please help us make a difference!



Homeward Street
Journal has been
publishing since
1997 as a non-profit
project of the
Sacramento Homeless
Organizing Committee,
which is a member of the Sacramento
Housing Alliance. The paper's mission
is to alleviate miscommunication between
communities by educating the public
about housing and poverty issues, and
by giving homeless people a voice in the
public forum. Homeward also informs
homeless persons of shelter and occu-
pational assistance, and acts as a cre-
ative self-help opportunity for those indi-
viduals who wish to participate.

The opinions expressed in Homeward
are those of the authors, and not nec-
essarily the Sacramento Housing Alliance
or SHOC or Homeward.

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We welcome any participation or con-
tributions: Articles, poems and other
writing can be submitted at our office in
Friendship Park, or mailed to the address
below.

All writing submitted for publication
will be edited as necessary, with due
respect for the authors' intent. The
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however, the paper will go to print with
the story as edited if the author is unavail-
able.

All Letters to the Editor must be signed
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but the letter must still be signed .

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either the paper will publish the submis-
sion or not.

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