



A Voice for the Sacramento Area Homeless Community Since 1997

HOMEWARD

Street Journal

Volume 23, No. 1

Member INSP Street News Service

Jan. & Feb., 2019

Page 2

Crowd Fund
Jobs

Zombie Boy

Page 3

Camp Fire
Survivor's
Story

Page 4

Any Plan?
conclusion

Page 5

Deacon's
Statement
to City

Homeless
Union

Page 6

Tiny
Houses
Poem

Page 7

Homeless
Resources

Page 8

ChicoVibes

National Homeless Memorial Day Service



Original Photo Courtesy
Cathy Creswell

By Paula Lomazzi

December 21, the first day of winter, the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, has become the National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, a day to remember the homeless people in our communities who have passed away. It brings a remembrance of those that we have lost, honoring the lives that they've lived, and bringing some solace to their loved ones left behind. It also highlights, during the coldest days and nights of winter, that we have too many of our fellow human beings living without shelter in our neighborhoods, city streets, parkways, and under freeways. It is also a Call to Action.

First begun in 1990 by the National Coalition for the Homeless, the memorial day is now co-sponsored by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the National Consumer Advisory Board, and has been adopted by communities across the US who hold memorial services for the homeless who have passed away in their communities. Sacramento Interfaith Homeless Memorial Services were held December 21 at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. This is the fifth year that Sacramento

Regional Coalition to End Homelessness held this annual event.

The names of one hundred and ten homeless persons who died in Sacramento this year were read aloud.

There were reflections given by Angel Blue of the Lakota Lower Brule Tribe, Gabriela Herrera from Congresswoman Doris Matsui's office, Council Member Rick Jennings II, Pastor Joy Johnson of ACT, Father Michael O'Reilly of Blessed Sacramento Cathedral, Rev. James Richardson of Trinity Cathedral, Khalid Saeed of the American Muslim voice Foundation, Mayor Darrell Steinberg, and Aaron Washington of the Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness.

Homelessness dramatically increases one's risk of illness, injury and death. The risk is equally dire in all seasons, both summer and winter. Though we can only mourn and remember those that have passed on, we can do something to prevent more needless suffering and death in the future by providing shelter and eventual housing for those currently living on our streets and for those living in dangerous situations.

— Any Plan for Those Made Homeless by the Fires? —

A commentary on the possible future of many Paradise Fire survivors.

By Cathleen Williams

When I reached Greg Shafer in Chico for an interview, he was focused on making contact with youth who have been blown and scattered across Butte county in the chaotic aftermath of this November's "Camp Fire" – that towering monster of flames that swept up the mountainous ridges and destroyed the Sierra foothill towns of Paradise, Magalia, Concow. The town of Paradise, home to almost 27,000 people, housed a significant population of older people and people who were just plain poor. Now it's gone: 6,500 homes

incinerated.

In these small communities, most residents were just getting by before the fire – seniors on fixed incomes, children who depended on breakfast and lunch programs at local schools, workers with service jobs whose paychecks covered basic necessities like housing. Countless families lived "off the grid" -- isolated, rural, independent, without much in the way of money or possessions. In Paradise, some 500 people were homeless; down the mountain, in Chico, the homeless community was estimated to be 2,000 or more before the fire.

Continued Page 4



With the Click of a Button, Britain's Homeless Crowd Fund Their way to Work

By Lin Taylor

Homelessness has been rising in England for nearly a decade, with over 82,000 families in temporary accommodation, including more than 123,000 children. Social enterprise Beam is now helping people experiencing homelessness to crowdfund their way to study, and eventually work, as a way of pulling themselves out of their situation.

When Hana fled to Britain with her son from East Africa, she was grateful to have found safety from persecution and a roof over her head in her sister's tiny London apartment.

It should have been a stop-gap, but a year on, the four still live together in cramped conditions, with Hana sharing a bed with her young son, and her sister doing the same with her toddler.

"When I came to Britain, I struggled with everything. It's very hard to be a single mum and homeless," said Hana, who did not share her full name for fear of repercussions.

With no job prospects, she had no chance of finding her own home in London, where rents are among the highest in the world.

Homelessness has been rising in England for nearly a decade, with over 82,000 families

in temporary accommodation, including more than 123,000 children, government data shows.

But 32-year-old Hana is hoping to buck that trend, after a crowdfunding campaign by social enterprise Beam paid for her to study beauty therapy.

"It's been a dramatic change, now I will be a professional beauty therapist. Straight away I want to start a job, the day I finish my studies," Hana said in a phone interview. She is one of about 50 homeless people who secured employment training through Beam, which it says is the world's first purpose-built platform that helps homeless people crowdfund donations through their online profile.

The participants, who are referred to Beam by homelessness charities, are also supported by caseworkers throughout their studies and job hunt.

"We really want to return people to a stage of independence. They should never be defined by their homelessness," said Beam founder Alex Stephany, who launched the platform last year.

He said each crowdfunding campaign is fully funded before a new one is launched to ensure each person has the chance to

take a training course of their choice, be it accounting, dental nursing or carpentry.

"There are lots of people who need help, and also lots of people who want to help, and technology has a really important part to play in making it safe and easy for people to do that," Stephany said in an interview.

Housing emergency

Homelessness charity Shelter, which partners with Beam, blames rising private rents, a freeze on benefits and a shortage of social housing for the sharp increase in homelessness.

"We see destitution every day and desperation from people. People who are being priced out of the rental market. We're calling it a housing emergency, it's atrocious," said Alison Mohammed, Shelter's director of services.

Discrimination against homeless people has also made it difficult for them to secure rental properties, she said.

A hotel in the northern English city of Hull was criticised this week after it cancelled paid bookings made by a local charity to give rough sleepers a bed for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Mohammed said initiatives like Beam

can harness the public's goodwill to help homeless people, but it is just "one piece of the puzzle".

"Anything that can tap into the public's wish to do something about homelessness is a good idea," she said in a phone interview.

"It's not going to solve the lack of social housing, but it is going to help people who have got to a position in their life where they can take that step," Mohammed said.

Beam said a dozen people had so far gained employment and the group hopes to expand beyond London and roll out the initiative across the country.

For Hana, who will finish her beauty therapy studies next year, knowing that hundreds of strangers care about her wellbeing and future in Britain has been a source of comfort.

She is confident she will find her own place to live too.

"I don't know these people and I don't even see their faces, but they encourage me very much. It's like a message from heaven," she said.

Courtesy of Reuters / Thomson Reuters Foundation / INSP.ngo

WHY WE SHOULDN'T LOOK AWAY

By Mathieu Thériault, L'Itinéraire vendor

At the beginning of August, we heard of the tragic death of Rick Genest, who was better known under the pseudonym of Zombie Boy. This young man had tattoos covering more than 90% of his skin, many of which depicted the human skeleton below his skin – such as his rib cage, jawbone and eye sockets. His appearance could be scary to see.

In 2011, Zombie Boy reached worldwide fame when Lady Gaga hired him to appear in her music video for the track 'Born This Way'. It seems that we will never really know whether his death was suicide or a fatal accident. All in all, his is a sad story – but it can also be seen as a sort of metaphor for our collective condition.

I have always had a fascination for street youths, often punks, who choose to be tattooed in a very ostentatious way, especially on their faces. In the case of Zombie Boy, his tattoos were the result of many years of work and some saw his tattoos as being a true work of art.

There is ample evidence of this being the case as, following his appearance in Lady Gaga's music video, he became a model and appeared in several fashion shows and prestigious magazines. Instead of limiting him, his unique tattoos made him a celebrity.

The legacy of facial tattoos.

If you tattoo your neck or face, your job prospects fall drastically. My point is, apart from tattoo parlours, who will want to hire you if you have 'f--- the world' tattooed on your face? Another key question is whether, at the age of 70, you are still going to like your reflection when you see it in the mirror.

For me, street youths who have tattooed their faces, or who have undergone other irreversible modifications, are making a certain type of statement: a declaration of faith. These modifications are a symbol of these individuals' definitive and irreversible rejection

of society and the current system. They communicate that these youths have been excluded from – or have rejected – society without hope of return. Maybe it is a little bit of both.

Zombie Boy was the exception that proved the rule. He also served as confirmation of the incredible capacity of misrepresentation of the capitalist system: even a young person who roamed the streets for years and was tattooed like a zombie could become an icon and a money-making machine.

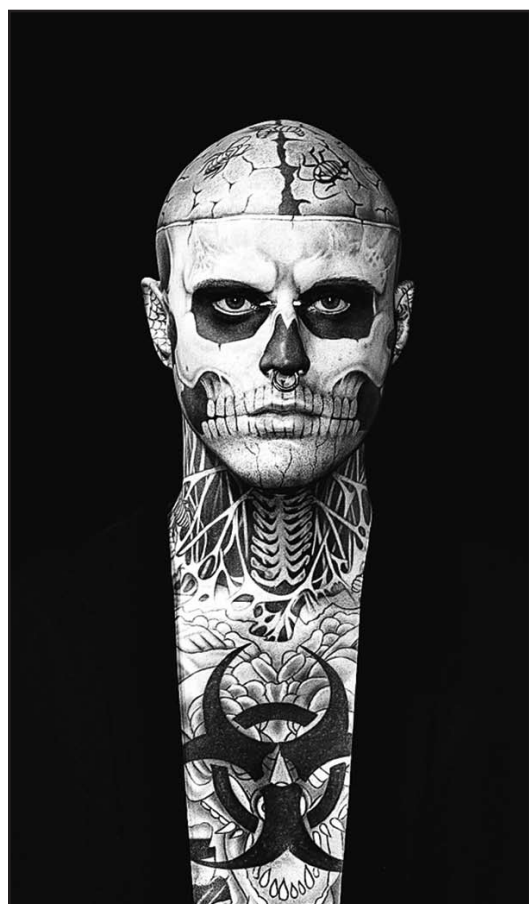
Young people who have chosen to permanently mark their faces as a sign of their total rejection of our society and our way of life should not be disregarded or misunderstood. In the days surrounding the death of Zombie Boy, we learned news that is much more worrying – yet we did not even react to it.

August 2 marked the day when we as a species had consumed all of the resources that our planet can produce in a year. This year, this date fell 5 months before the end of the year; in the 70's, Earth Overshoot Day – as it is now known – happened on or around the 21st of December. It now occurs earlier and earlier every year.

On August 6 this year, another group of scientists announced to us that the Earth could be transformed into a real sauna within a few decades. We are probably heading towards a temperature increase of between 4 and 5 degrees and a rise in sea levels of up to 60m. In these conditions, the planet would only be habitable for 1 billion people. We don't dare to imagine the fate of the remaining 8 or 9 billion.

Just like Zombie Boy or street youths, the earth has 'destroy' tattooed on its forehead. Just as many people do not look at those with facial boy modifications, we too are guilty of finding it easier to look to one side and to ignore the truth that stares us in the face.

*Translated by Kara Innes
Courtesy of L'Itinéraire / INSP.ngo*



Zombie Boy

Photo Credit : Johanna Hersbst -
Creative Commons

The Camp Fire changed lives: a Survivor's Story

"This is what being a climate change refugee feels like..."

This article was first published by ChicoSol at www.chicosol.org and is reprinted with permission.

by Allan Stellar

That awful, awful day.

On that awful day, when Paradise was engulfed in flames, I hugged my yellow lab Angel goodbye. I woke up early, 5 a.m., and decided to leave for work without our normal early morning hike. I lived in the foothills, at 2,000 feet, some 37 miles from Chico where I had work to do as a home health RN.



Stellar's off-grid home before the Camp Fire - Photo by Allan Stellar

I had lived in an off-grid solar house for a decade, enjoying the yip yap of coyotes in the country and sleeping on the deck under the stars on hot summer nights. Angel watched me dress that morning with an eerie gaze. It was as if she knew something was going to happen. As I left, I promised I would be back in the afternoon to take her for a hike.

It was 6:30 am. Five miles away, in Pulga, a spark started a fire.

At 6:45 a.m., driving down Highway 70, CalFire trucks were booking it up the hill. I saw a plume of smoke in my rear view mirror. Not too big. It looked far enough away not to pose too much of a problem. There would be plenty of time to evacuate should the need arise. I had been through these evacuations four times before in the last 10 years.

I stupidly drove to Chico and got a latte. Then I looked out the window at "The Grateful Bean" coffee house and saw the smoke. I saw a massive plume of smoke that made my stomach feel like it had been sliced open. I tore out of there to go get my dog.

Too late. At 8 o'clock, Highway 70 was already blocked at Pentz. The police officer would not let me up the hill. I pulled off to the side of the road and wept. My dog was up there.

Somewhere around 52,000 people have an evacuation story regarding that tragic morning. For these 52,000 people, it was a "9/11" moment. None of us will ever forget where we were when we saw that massive plume of smoke. That plume became our Twin Towers moment.

The stories are horrendous. People caught in cars with steering wheels melting. Hospitals evacuated and patients cared for in garages. Firefighters protecting

hundreds of stranded victims in parking lots. In Concow (where I lived), residents had to jump into the lake to save themselves. Thousands of people literally had minutes to save themselves. The stories will be shared for years.

On that awful day, Nov. 8, 2018, I, unwillingly, became a climate change refugee.

At first, I couch-surfed with friends in Chico. After five days I got confirmation that my house, my ugly little solar, off-grid, cobb and straw bale house, was destroyed. Who knew cobb (a mixture of straw, clay and sand) could burn? This house that, according to the alternative building books, was immune to fire,



Stellar's home became a pile of rubble and ash - Photo by Lennon Parrot

burned to the ground. And still no sign of my dog, Angel.

For days I was distraught and everyone believed she was gone. I grieved my stalwart friend of a decade and couldn't believe my ears when she was found in the wreckage. My clever survivor.

A neighbor who had permission to be up in Concow found my dog! Angel had survived for six days by crawling into a hole in a tree. Her paws were burnt to the point that she couldn't walk; she could only crawl. When I was reunited with her at Valley Oak Animal Hospital, she was visibly skinnier. Her collar that had been tight was now loose enough that it could slip right over her head. She was happy to be found. A friend graciously took her in to her Gerber farm and attended to her daily dressing changes.

After a week of couch-surfing in smoky Chico, I had to get away, so I found a room in Redding for a couple of days. I brought my dog Angel with me for comfort. After 10 days, my insurance company was able to secure a room for me in Corning at the Super 8. This is where I am as I type out this story.

My future is uncertain. Much of my work was with clients in Paradise, a town that doesn't exist anymore. My dog will take two months to heal from her burns.

How does it feel to be a climate change refugee? I have anxiety that stays with me all day. I have lost my appetite. I am having problems making decisions for my life. I can't sleep at night without pharmacological assistance.

I am one of the lucky ones: I had insurance. And yet, competing with 50,000 other climate refugees for

housing, in an already tight market, is daunting. I have enough money, but I still have no place to live with my dog.

I am through living in wildfire country. Those wonderful foothills that I love so much have become tinder traps for fire. California has simply become unlivable during the fire season, a season that begins earlier every year and ends later every year. We all suffer as the smoke makes 20-cigarette-a-day smokers out of all of us. No one is unaffected. My son called me from Connecticut the other day, and told me that the sky was hazy there due to the Camp Fire. That's how far the smoke travels.

On the morning of Nov. 8, 2018, that awful day, a scientist on top of a mountain in Hawaii took a reading of CO₂ – the carbon emissions that are the most important component in climate change. They've been doing that every day since 1958. On Nov. 8, the reading was 409.02. That first reading in 1958 was 221.1. Scientists say the safe level for CO₂ is 350.

Over the last few years, the Sierra has lost millions of trees to bark beetles and drought – side effects of climate change. The forest couldn't be drier. In addition, there had been only one rain storm in September. The November rains hadn't arrived yet. The last real rain was back in April. A hot summer scorched everything. The summers have been



Allan Stellar with Angel - Photo by Andrew Meyer

scorching the area more and more over the past 20 years.

This is what climate change looks like. The new normal. Huge fire. Smoke. All of it predicted back in the '80s by our climate scientists.

And this is what being a climate change refugee feels like: Doubt. Uncertainty. Anxiety. Loss. No home. I fear returning to the forest. My dog and I will probably end up living in a gifted trailer on a coworker's farm outside of Corning – a landscape of dreary industrial agriculture and domesticated animals and far from the wilds of the tinder-box forest.

Allan Stellar is a home health RN. He has written on a freelance basis for ChicoSol, the Chico News and Review, Monthly Review, Counterpunch, The Mother Earth News and elsewhere. Angel is expected to recover fully from her burns and will once again accompany Allan on daily walks in a couple months.

Any Plan for Those Made Homeless by the Fires?

continued from page 1

Greg Shafer grew up in Paradise, and worked as a youth mentor there before the fire, responsible for connecting vulnerable local kids with schools and services. He thought that perhaps one half to two thirds of the youth he was mentoring had been driven from the area by the fire – and that the greater community had also lost this percentage of its population.

Those without the connections or resources to pull up stakes and move on were tossed into California's housing catastrophe, which was recently assessed by the Haas Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, in a report which acknowledged, "California is at a tipping point: both the government and private market are failing to meet the needs of the state's 17.5 million renters. Skyrocketing rents, intensifying threats of eviction, and ongoing displacement are all part of a broader crisis..."

Greg Shafer sees the housing crisis close to his home in Chico. The "Walmart Camp," at an empty lot, sprang up in the days after the fire, populated by hundreds of long term homeless and the new homeless from Paradise. Pushed out around Thanksgiving, tents suddenly appeared in Greg's neighborhood, gathering in the "Triangle" camp around the corner from his house. These folks, too, were forced to move on.

"Housing for the poor?" Greg said, echoing my question. "If you've been burned out, you will be out of luck — the poor, the children, the mentally ill — they are the ones hardest hit. For the poorest of the poor, without a car or trailer, rental housing is gone. This will affect the middle class because rents in Chico increased immediately. Landlords are selling — renters are impacted by this, too, because units are being sold for high prices. It's like a very swift gentrification. My neighborhood was comparatively poor — you could get a house for \$190,000, say — but costs have now increased by 30% overnight."

According to Ed Mayer, Executive Director of the Butte County Housing Authority, in an interview in the Chico Enterprise Record in the first days of the fire, the pre-existing vacancy rate in the county was between 1.5 and 2.5%, typical of California at the present time. The rate of housing construction in the area was about 600 units a year: at that rate, it would take over 10 years to build enough housing for the influx of people displaced by the fire. "Now, can you develop them

affordably, would they be suitable for the households that have been displaced -- these are all questions," he commented.

Jennifer Griggs, Butte Countywide Consortium of Care Director, noted that it was already difficult to find affordable 1-2 bedroom units before the fire, at \$700-\$900 on the low end — rent at this level would claim all the income of seniors and others who depend on disability or social security. (Chico Enterprise Record, 11/12/18).

There have been some positive steps. In those first days and weeks after the fire, in an outpouring of community support, many stepped forward to offer their homes, airbnbs, and monetary donations, and to volunteer in a thousand helpful ways.

Early in December, the Chico City Council passed an emergency ordinance to reduce development fees for temporary units. A "tiny home" community that would accommodate 46 seniors was approved.

Walmart has donated \$1 million for construction of a "low barrier" shelter. And some evacuees will be eligible for private emergency grants of \$2000 for housing costs.

FEMA trailers — up to 2,000 have been identified in press reports — will eventually be available to the dispossessed for 18 months of residency. Other FEMA payments, like 6 months of disaster related unemployment, will also be dispensed to eligible residents.

But an unknown number — hundreds, perhaps thousands -- remain out in the

cold. Recognizing the need, Ed Mayer, the Housing Authority Director, proposed that community spaces like fairgrounds could be opened up for tents, RVS and trailers. This hasn't happened — in fact, emergency measures for housing poor and low-income evacuees has gone in the other direction.

It doesn't make sense to John Nicoletti, staff member of Habitat for Humanity and community advocate based in nearby Marysville.

When the Red Cross responded, it "excused" the County and local disaster response teams, including Habitat for Humanity, and took over. Red Cross almost immediately entered a new process: eliminating emergency housing and shutting down local initiatives like a children's center set up by Habitat for Humanity.

People were bumped three times in four weeks, from county fair ground to fairground. At one site, evacuees — a mix of homeless and renters — couldn't even stay in the livestock barn, in horse stalls with four walls. Red Cross put people out onto the asphalt, where pools of standing water had collected, their tents exposed to the wind and weather. "It was hard to get into their heads that people needed warmth — evacuees had to deal not only with trauma, shock and loss, but also with being treated harshly," John Nicoletti said. "Ultimately, the California Highway Patrol ran them out."

Continued Next Page



Any Plan?

conclusion

The hardship of disaster on the dispossessed is not necessarily mitigated by FEMA assistance. In fact, the more FEMA benefits received by a county hit with disaster, the more the wealth gap widens, as the poor get poorer and the rich get richer – and this is an intentional policy. FEMA protects property, not people. (Damages Done: The Longitudinal Impacts of Natural Hazards on Wealth Inequality in the United States, Howell and Elliot 2018).

Alexandra Kitz, an energetic volunteer in Chico who is setting up a non-profit to be called “Phoenix Nest,” described a friend, an older man, Dave, who had been living in his RV and doing handyman work around Paradise. He lost everything – his vehicle, his cash, his tools. FEMA granted him \$5,000 – the total sum he was entitled to receive to start his life over.

I consulted Raelynn Butcher of the Marysville Homeless Union and Bryan Lee Brown. Both are leaders of the local homeless community, and they had ideas. “What about all the empty buildings around here? The city or county owns them – we

should immediately open those up.” “The crazy thing,” Greg Shafer commented at the close of our interview, “20,000 people get displaced -- in the New Deal days we would get the California Conservation Corps and rebuild housing...”

Greg left his sentence unfinished, his thought suspended. “We need a plan,” he said finally.



Statement Made Before the Sacramento City Council on the Treatment of Homeless Persons

by David A. R. Barnitz

My name is David A. R. Barnitz. I am an ordained Deacon of Westminster Presbyterian Church and our congregation is deeply troubled by the growing crisis of thousands of homeless citizens, trapped by extreme poverty and forced to live a life of fear and suffering on the streets of our city.

Instead of finding comfortable shelter for the thousands of citizens who need a safe place to reside, we have criminalized extreme poverty and punished and dehumanized our own citizens, our own sisters and brothers, because they cannot afford a place to live.

I confess I am a Christian. I love Jesus. I speak from the Christian perspective, as I see it. But if you claim to love Jesus and yet ignore the desperation of the homeless, just what part of “Do unto others...” escapes you? What part of “Love God and love your neighbor as yourself,” do you find difficult to fathom? Have you never heard it said that “There but for the grace of God, go you or I?” do you not believe it?

The congregation at Westminster dedicate this past church-year to an exploration of the role of progressive-Christianity in the most pressing social-justice issues of our time; immigration, racial injustice, sexuality and gender identity, equality and homelessness, and global warming.

We intend to develop plans of action for a progressive, socially-just Christianity, which is less concerned about what you believe about Jesus, and more concerned about what we believe Jesus would have us do together to make this a better world.

Join us as we try to find a way to bring about greater Christian understanding, greater all-inclusive Christian loving-kindness, and ever-greater Christian action to heal this heartbroken, cynical, and confused world... God help us all to find safe ground for all.

“Out of these ashes, a Phoenix will rise!”

Statement of the California Homeless Union/Statewide Organizing Council on the Camp Fire Disaster

November 25, 2018

The *California Homeless Union* continues to bring direct support and a message of self-organization to those who have been suddenly forced into the ranks of the homeless by the deadliest fire in California history.

As the massive fire that began November 8, 2018 engulfed the small towns of Paradise, Magalia and Concow in the Sierra Nevada foothills; while residents fled for their lives and huddled in refugee camps; while politicians flew in for photo-ops, the Marysville Homeless Union began collecting blankets, clothes, hygiene items and toys from those along the river bottoms of Yuba County who have known homelessness and persecution for decades.

Union executive board members Bryan Lee Brown, Raelynn Butcher and Stanley Extein then drove to refugee centers and makeshift campgrounds in nearby Gridley, Yuba City and Chico, distributing items to their suddenly homeless sisters and brothers. The Union pushed back against efforts by city officials and traditional “disaster relief” agencies to divide the fire victims from the long-term existing homeless.



As Union President Bryan Lee Brown informed local “relief agencies,” “It doesn’t matter how we became homeless; we are all the same.”

The town of Paradise, once home to 26,000 people, is gone.

Named after Butte County’s Camp Creek Road where it began, the “Camp Fire left thousands of mostly poor, mostly aged and disproportionately disabled persons with no place to live. Overnight, residents of tiny Paradise, California joined the ranks of the

137,000 officially estimated already homeless here in the “Golden State.” It is believed that the fire has produced the largest number of homeless Californians ever arising from a single event. Meanwhile, in nearby Chico, California, thousands formed a massive encampment in a vacant lot owned by and adjacent to Walmart.

But as the lucrative Black Friday sales approached, the world’s largest retailer, Chico city officials and certain “charitable organizations” began applying pressure to disband the camp by removing porta-potties and other emergency services.

But concerned community activists fought back, including “North Valley Mutual Aid,” which grew out of the tragedy and declared in its powerful Mission Statement: “Disaster survivors themselves are the first responders to crisis [and] have the agency, ability, and power to make their own decisions and choices about their lives, recovery and long-term resilience without interference or coercion from outside forces.” The emergence of genuine aid efforts that respect the integrity of the homeless communities is a significant and welcome development.

On Living

by Nazim Hikmet

Living is no laughing matter:

you must live with great seriousness
like a squirrel for example –
I mean without looking for something beyond and above living,
I mean living must be your whole occupation.

Living is no laughing matter:

you must take it seriously,
so much so and to such a degree
that, for example your hand tied behind your back,
your back to the wall,
or else in a laboratory
in your white coat and safety glasses,
you can die for people –
even for people whose faces you've never seen,
even though you know living
is the most real, the most beautiful thing.

I mean, you must take living so seriously
that even at seventy, for example, you'll plant olive trees –
and not for your children, either,
but because although you fear death you don't believe it,
because living, I mean, weighs heavier.

II.

Let's say we're seriously ill, need surgery
which is to say we might not get up

from the white table.

Even though it's impossible not to feel sad

about going a little too soon,

we'll still laugh at the jokes being told,
we'll look out the window to see if it's raining,
or still wait anxiously

for the latest newscast...

Let's say we're at the front –

for something worth fighting for, say.

There, in the first offensive, on that very day,
we might fall on our face, dead.

We'll know this with a curious anger
but we'll still worry ourselves to death

about the outcome of the war, which could last years...

Let's say we're in prison
and close to fifty,

and we have eighteen more years, say,

before the iron doors will open.

We'll still live with the outside,
with its people and animals, struggle and wind –

I mean with the outside beyond the walls.

I mean, however and wherever we are,
we must live as if we will never die.

III

The earth will grow cold,
a star among stars

and one of the smallest,

a gilded mote on blue velvet –

I mean *this* our great earth.

This earth will grow cold one day,

not like a block of ice

or a dead cloud even

but like an empty walnut it will roll along

in pitch-black space...

You must grieve for this right now

-- you have to feel this sorrow now --

for the world must be loved this much

if you are going to say "I lived"...

February 1948

Nazim Hikmet, recognized as the first modern Turkish poet, is known around the world as one of the great international poets of the twentieth century. He spent many years in prison for being a revolutionary.

Tiny Houses, Big Dreams

By Suzanne Hastings

December 22 was an overcast day when Kimberly Church, David Andre and I went to look at the tiny homes being built in Chico, CA. The homes are being created by Bob and his wife in a place called "Simplicity Village". Bob is with CHAT (Chico Housing Action Team). The homes are built on trailers that could be moved elsewhere if needed. Bob's grass-roots efforts raised nearly \$1 million for this project. And now it's becoming a reality.

There were nine groups that were bringing the village to life. It was like watching a work-shop full of elves that are building houses, instead of toys. One of the groups is Dykes with Drills, Amy Farah Wiess who's with St. Francis Homeless Challenge, Safe Organized Spaces Campaign, as well as CHAT.

The village will consist of 33 homes that will be donated to mostly those displaced before the fire. While we were there, before our eyes; we saw one of these homes go up with 90% of the insulation finished. This shows that tiny houses could be built in a very short amount of time.

Mayor Steinberg says that it'll take anywhere from \$25,000-\$30,000 to shelter the unhoused. The City's plan will only shelter 23-30% percent of the homeless population. AND WE NEED HOUSING NOW! These tiny homes cost only 1/10th of this.

Ten times the people who are unhoused could be sheltered. And the homes could be eventually purchased with taxpayer funding. This plan would cost much less than the current one of criminalizing the unhoused. Housing gives

people dignity. Having a roof, a door that locks, and a window to look out of is so much better than a tent by the river, or worse a filthy jail cell.

Sacramento plans is to spend \$20 million on one time only "Shelter Crisis" funds for shelters where some people may go for only a night, while others would only to be turned away because there's no room. The City and County are wasting resources forming committees that talk about what to do about homelessness while people die in the streets.

Here's a run-down on the cost of building a tiny house in Chico's Simplicity Village:

Materials: \$1000

Trailers: \$1400

Labor: \$0.00

Having a place to call home: Priceless!

THANK YOU to all who are making Simplicity Village a reality! Julia with Dykes with Drills, Bob & CHAT, Amy Farah Wiess with St. Francis Homeless Challenge, and Kimberly Church, who made this article possible! You are all awesome!



Photo Courtesy Kimberley Church

A Special Thanks to Our Homeward Underwriters:

**Geraldine Baskerville
Ron & Carola Blubaugh
David Dratman, AAL**

**Ron Javor
Jeannie Keltner**

**Rory Litwin
Paul & Callie Masuhara
Michael Meek**

**Allen Pleaner
Scott Rogers & Daly Merrill
Sal & Gloria Sandoval**

**William Soskin & Marian Penn
John & Janice Speth**

**Edie D. Taylor
Michael Williams
Michelle Wright**

**Women's Empowerment
Uptown Studios Inc.
Safe Ground Sacramento
Mercy Pedalers
Los Rios College
Federation of Teachers**

I want to help HOMEWARD continue in Sacramento.

Enclosed find my donation of \$20 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

23.1
Office Use Only

Received

clip & mail coupon

Resources List

Night Shelters

Salvation Army: 12th and North B St.
 Call for shelter availability: 916-442-0331

St. John's Shelter: Women and Children.
 4410 Power Inn Rd. Call between
 10am & 3pm for space availability.
 916-453-1482

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon
 St. Beds for Men Only, sign up 6:30pm at
 mission, Newcomers/Referrals have priority.
 7:30pm Chapel Service with meal after-
 wards, 6am breakfast for residents. Show-
 ers / shaves 9-11am & 1-2:45pm. open to all
 homeless men: 916-447-3268

Next Move (formerly SAEHC) 24
 hr Family Shelter; Families, single adults
 with children who have no other resource:
 Women's Refuge; single women, no chil-
 dren: Call for screening/space availability
 916-455-2160

Volunteers of America Family Shelter:
 Adults w/children only. Apply Tues.-Thurs.
 1-3 pm 1490 Blding B, N. "A" St. 916-443-
 4688

Day Shelters

Friendship Park: Between 12th St. &
 Ahern on 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 fol-
 lowing 8:30-9:15pm. Sunday 11am service,
 lunch at noon. 916-447-3268

Loaves & Fishes: 1321 N. '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 Cen-
 ter:** Seniors Only: 3555 3rd Ave. 11:30-12:30
 lunch M-F 916-452-2866

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

Foundation of Faith Ministries 2721
 Dawes St. Rancho Cordova. Every 4th Sat.
 3-5 pm All Welcome.

Glory Bound Street Ministry 4527
 Parker Ave. Sundays; breakfast 11:30 am
 after 10 am church service; dinner 6:30 pm
 after 5 pm church service: Fridays; dinner 7
 pm after 6 pm church service. Must attend
 services. 916-452-7078

Safe Haven Calvary Christan Center:
 1300 North C St. 8 am Sun, Coffee, Wom-
 en's clothing, Service 9am: Wed. 6 pm bible
 study.

Women & Children

Maryhouse: 1321 N. '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 break-
 fast: M-W-F continental breakfast for women
 and children. 916-454-9688

Youth Services

Wind Youth Services: Drop-In
 Center for youth (ages 12-24) experiencing
 homelessness: 1722 J Street, M-F 9am-
 6pm, S-S 10am-2pm: Emergency shelter
 for ages 12-17, call **1-800-339-7177**:
 Emergency shelter for ages 18-24, call **916-
 561-4900**. Services also include: street
 outreach, case management, mental health

Free Clothing

Sacramento Food Bank: 3333 3rd
 Ave. (at Broadway) 10am-2pm Mon - Fri.
 916-456-1980

Union Gospel Mission: 400 Bannon St.
 Men: M-Sat 9-11am or 1-2:45pm: Women and
 Children: Thurs. 9 am sign up, 9:30-10am bible
 study, 10 am - 12 pm shop. 916-447-3268

Glory Bound Street Ministry 4527
 Parker Ave. Clothes Closet, Sundays 11:30
 am all welcome. 916-452-7078

Medical

Mercy Clinic: For homeless adults, chil-
 dren: 1300 block of N. 'C' Street next to fire
 station. 916-446-3345

Sacramento Dental Clinic: 4600
 Broadway (Primary Care Blding) Walk-ins 8
 am - 12:30 pm 916-874-8300

Mental Health

Guest House, 600 Bercut Drive.:
 Homeless Mental Health Clinic. Mental
 Health evaluation, medication if needed.
 Housing referrals for mentally ill, GA refs,
 SSI aps, refs to A & D counseling: 916-440-
 1500

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

Genesis: Professional Counseling for life
 problems. Referrals. 401 12th St. (DeLaney
 Center). 916-699-1536

Crisis Intervention

WEAVE: Services for victims of domestic
 violence and sexual assault and their chil-
 dren. Referrals to court mandated battery
 intervention programs, Safe house, 24 hr.
 crisis line: 916-920-2952

AIDS / HIV

AIDS Housing Alliance provides resi-
 dential care, transitional housing & perma-
 nent housing services to homeless persons
 living with aids. 916-329-1093 weekdays.

**CARES (Center for AIDS Research,
 Education and Service):** 1500 21st
 ST. Serves people with HIV and AIDS. Medi-
 cal care, mental health, case mgmt, health ed
 and regional prevention/ed classes.
 916-443-3299

Breaking Barriers: Homeless Outreach
 Program provides direct services to people living
 with AIDS and HIV. Transportation to social ser-
 vices, medical appointments, job interviews, and
 housing assistance. 916-447-2437

Harm Reduction Services: 40001 12
 Ave.; High risk outreach; HIV, Hep-C test-
 ing; case management for HIV; free medical
 clinic, needle exchange. 916-456-4849

Alternative Test Site: Free anonymous
 HIV testing, Wed /Thurs. Call for appt.
 916-874-7720.

Legal Aid

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

Tommy Clindenbeard Legal Clinic:
 401 12th St. (DeLaney Center) Free legal as-
 sistance and advocacy for problems related
 to homelessness. 916-446-0368

**Legal Services of Northern Cali-
 fornia, 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. 916-551-2150

Welfare Rights: 1901 Alhambra Blvd.
 (2nd floor) M-F 9am-5pm: AFDC, Food
 Stamps, Workfare and Medical rep at hear-
 ings. 916-736-0616

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

Veterans

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

About SHA

The
*Sacramento
 Housing
 Alliance* is a
 network of
 concerned
 citizens who promote decent
 affordable housing for low
 income households and
 homeless people through
 advocacy and participation in
 public discourse.



For more info, or if you would
 like to participate, please call:

(916) 455-4900
<http://sachousingalliance.org>

909 12th Street, Suite 114
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

Mather VA Social Works: help getting
 DD-214, any vet. (916) 843-7064

Sacramento Veterans Resource Center
 7270 East Southgate Dr. 916-393-8387

Miscellaneous

Francis House Center 1422 C St.
 Must get a lottery number 9am. M,Tu,Th,F
 for Direct Services: ID vouchers, transp.
 assistance; In depth resource coaching by
 apt.; Veteran's advocate; Notary services
 Thurs. call for apt.; Job Development Center
 M,Tu,Th,F 9:30am - 1pm. Family Rescue
 motel vouchers for qualified families Mon.
 1pm. (916) 443-2646

**Sacramento Food Bank & Family
 Services:** 3333 3rd Ave. (south of Broad-
 way) Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 10am-1:30pm,
 and Wed 4pm-7pm. 916-456-1980.

Social Services: 28th & R ST. M-F
 7:30am-5pm. Call for asst. 916-874-2072

**Employment Development Depart-
 ment (EDD):** 2901 50th St. (at Broadway)
 M-F 8am-5pm. Unemployment, job services.
 916-227-0300

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

Social Security Office: 8581 Folsom
 Blvd (East of College Greens Lite-rail stop,
 past the flea market) M-F 9am-4:30pm
 916-381-9410: Natl line 1-800-772-1213

211 Sacramento

Dial 211
 for tele-info & referral service

Califorina Youth Crisis Line:
 1-800-843-5200

Health Rights Hotline:
 551-2100

**Narcotics Anonymous
 Hotline**
 1-877-NA-6363

Welcome to Homeward:



Homeward Street
 Journal has been pub-
 lishing since 1997 as
 a non-profit project
 of the Sacramento
 Homeless Organizing
 Committee. 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 in-
 forms homeless persons of shelter and
 occupational assistance, and acts as a
 creative self-help opportunity for those
 individuals who wish to participate.

**The opinions expressed in Home-
 ward are those of the authors, and
 not necessarily the Sacramento
 Housing Alliance or SHOC or Home-
 ward.**

Submissions and Editorial Policy

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 ad-
 dress below.

All writing submitted for publication
 will be edited as necessary, with due
 respect for the author's intent. The edi-
 tors will attempt to consult with an au-
 thor if changes are necessary, however,
 the paper will go to print with the story
 as edited if the author is unavailable.

All Letters to the Editor must be signed
 to be published. If the writer wishes to
 remain anonymous s/he should so state,
 but the letter must still be signed .

Poetry and graphics will not be edited,
 either the paper will publish the sub-
 mission or not.

In submitting articles to the paper,
 authors give their permission to print
 their submissions in accordance with
 the above stipulations, as well as pos-
 sible reprinting in INSP member pa-
 pers, with due byline. Any requests for
 stories outside the above three will be
 referred to the author.

Subscriptions are available with a
 \$20 contribution. Make checks out to
 SHOC (Sacramento Homeless Orga-
 nizing Committee).

**Loaves & Fishes is not affiliated with
 the Homeward Street Journal in
 any way. Participants with the
 paper are not allowed to solicit for
 donations for L&F, nor make any
 reference regarding the relationship
 between Loaves & Fishes and this
 newspaper whatsoever.**

All correspondence can be sent to:
 Homeward Street Journal
 PO Box 952
 Sacramento, CA 95812

The paper may be reached at:
 (916) 442-2156

The paper may also be E-mailed at
homeward2@yahoo.com

On the web at:
<https://sacshoc.org/homeward>

SHOR Organization Scattered by Paradise Fire

The Nov/Dec edition of the Homeward Street Journal featured a photo essay with several guests and volunteers at the Paradise, California Sojourner's House on the Ridge (SHOR), a day center that was a respite for folks experiencing homelessness. The day after I received our 500-copies of the paper for Chico; the home SHOR operated out of burned to the ground during the Camp Fire along with an estimated 14,000 other dwellings on the Ridge. When I asked Virginia Underwood, the Executive director when they planned to



Photo by Chris Martin

re-establish themselves on the Ridge she became emotional and said, "I can't go back it's too traumatic. My husband says he's never going back."

Half of the board of SHOR has relocated throughout the country in the aftermath of the Camp Fire and only one

board member, Steve Eurotas, still have a home. Steve was in shock over the devastation to his community when I spoke to him last week. Although the board hasn't yet met, his view



Photo by Virginia Underwood

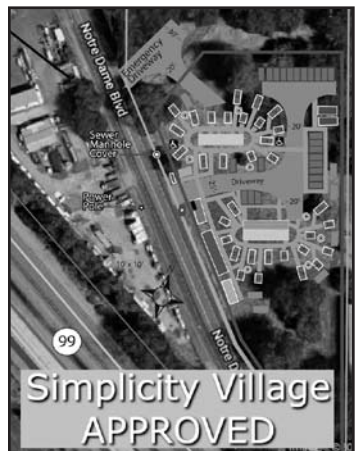
was that there's nothing left including homeless people on the Ridge. He envisions the board disbanding while keeping the non-profit status current in the event the organization arises from the ashes in the coming years. Learn more at facebook.com/SHORParadise



Photo by Virginia Underwood

Simplicity Village, a program of Chico Housing Action Team (CHAT), was approved during the December 18th Chico City Council by a vote of 6 to 1. The plan calls for 33 tiny homes housing up to 46 local senior citizens on a 2.6-acre industrial zoned parcel. The property will be managed in a similar fashion as Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon including 24-hour security, no drugs or alcohol on site and approved guests only. The joy was palatable in the face, and voice, of Charles Withuhn the unwavering champion for the village as I hugged him at Chico City Council, "Yay, we did it."

Bob Trausch a CHAT board member had this to say, "For me it's a culmination, it's like graduating from college and getting your degree in something you love. You study and you work, and work, and work, and then there's this payoff. For CHAT the payoff is the city has said yes we understand the need and we believe you guys can do it. The city has finally reached a point where hearts and minds have changed to realize the need for stabilizing the people in our community, for housing the people in our community. Not based upon whether someone is a good person, or a bad person, just based upon their need to be re-brought back into society."



CHAT also manages a Housing Now program whereby CHAT is the lease holder who subleases housing to people experiencing homelessness. The program houses about 90 people in over 20-homes and several RV trailers that were recently donated to

the organization. Learn more at chicohousingactionteam.org.

In related news Dan Everhart, a founding member of CHAT, passed away unexpectedly just before Christmas. Dan was a strong advocate for those Without a Roof and will be sorely missed...

"Those whose shelter was marginal before the fire are now compelled into a realm of poverty that capitalists are encouraged to despise. The enemy is inequality and the remedy is clear, but right now we need to either support camps for those without better options or abandon any claim to our own humanity." - Dan Everhart, from the December 10, 2018 Vice.com article titled How Anarchists Helped Californian Refugees in a Walmart Parking Lot.

Photo by Karen Laslo
karenlaslo.com

ChicoHousingActionTeam.org

The CHICO VIBE

Made possible by our supporters...

Chico Housing Action Team
Bob Woods, Ed Mayer, Lucy Gould
Friends of Tyler Rushing & Chico350

Writing for Donuts

In Time

Time-is it just an illusion?
Or is it a mathematical killer?
When can I get the point?
In time, yeah, in time...

-Alex

Of Heart and Home

Home-it seems so distant and far away
Like the sun peeking over the horizon and darting away,
Fleetingly sweet
A dream, but one well-dreamt.
Home.
Home is where you rest your head
Home is where you have a comfortable bed
Home is where I'm secure and content
Home is where my heart beats with the ones I love
To a rhythm
Only I know
Secretly
Inside of me
I have almost forgotten that feeling
Of home
But soon I will remember
As I create my new home
And build it upon the foundations of my heart.

-Brelyn

The Homie

Life is precious - Remember that. When I was young all I can remember is wanting to be rich but believe me, it didn't work out like that. I wish it did, but most of my homies are in prison and some died. But that's life. Like I said, don't chase a false dream. When you get older you will realize that life might be a bitch sometimes. But aye, you're still getting by. Life is precious, Homie - don't lose yours.

-Joseph