



A Voice for the Sacramento Area Homeless Community Since 1997

HOMeward

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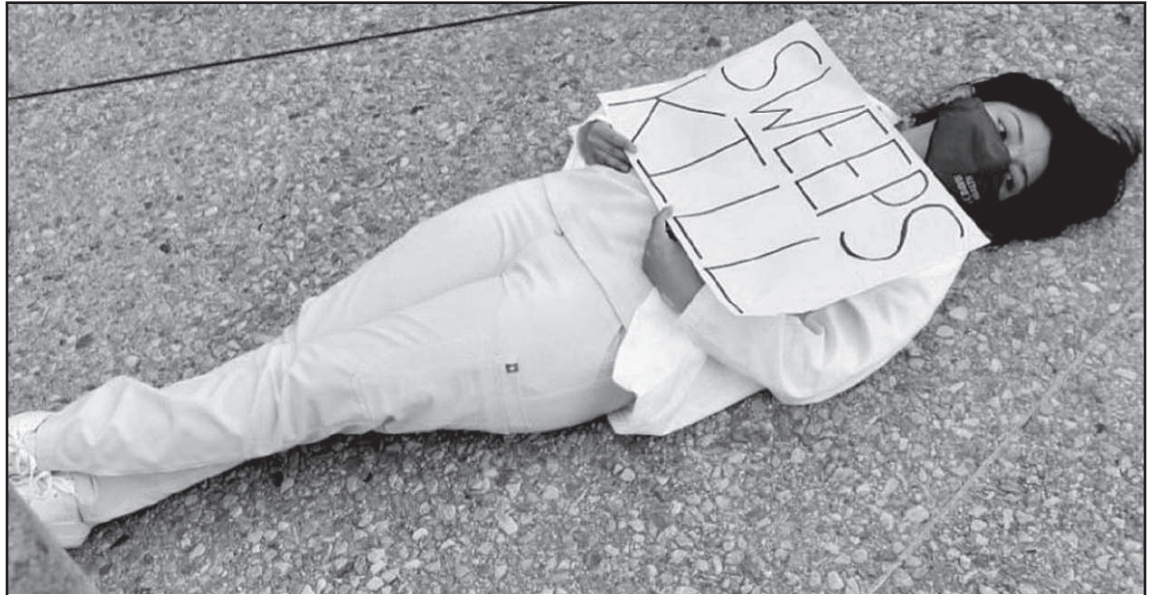
White Coat Die-In

Members of Sacramento Street Medicine Protest Withdrawal of Homeless Protections.

By Jenna Arciero

On June 15th, Sacramento County started lifting the public health order that provided temporary motel housing to people living outside during the COVID-19 pandemic. This order also offered a small relief from police forcibly removing

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Why are so Many People with Mental Problems Unhoused?

By Cathleen Williams

For this article in the series dealing with the “why’s” and “wherefores” of homelessness, we look at why so many people with mental problems are unhoused. According to recent figures, one third to one half of all the unhoused have serious mental problems, adding up to tens of thousands of Californians. (See, “Mental Health and Homelessness in the Wake of Covid 19,” 68 Discourse, 8/31/2020.)

Introduction

So, why? We understand that poverty and lack of affordable housing has thrown people on the street in numbers that are rising with frightening inevitability due to Covid evictions and accelerating job loss. The laborless/cheap labor economy of the modern technological era has indeed become a reality, evident in the “wealth gap” between the millions fighting for survival and the billionaires.

And this broad social destruction certainly impacts the vulnerable, complex population of people who are classified as “mentally ill.” This term, however, “pathologizes” (condemns as diseased) a broad range of problems that stem from many causes, including trauma and innate differences between people. So here we refer to “mental problems” rather than “illness,” understanding that these conditions can and do cause social dysfunction and suffering.

As we trace the history of society’s treatment of people with mental problems, we also keep in mind that systemic racism is operating in the mental health system, and as a result, people of color suffer most of all from the consequences of having mental problems in this society, even though these consequences affect us all.

The special vulnerability of people with mental problems to become unhoused has deep roots that go beyond individual and family destitution. Some can buy

their safety and security if they have money and family support. But the larger reality is that in this country, time and time again, the very “reforms” that are supposed to serve the needs of people with mental problems have been used as a means of social control through forced treatment and incarceration.

One activist on behalf of the civil and practical rights of people with mental illness, D.B., has summed up this societal history with a short, grim statement: “The mental health and medical system has been built on forced treatment. Lives cut short.”

The History Of Societal Treatment Of People Suffering From Mental Problems

For most of recorded history, mental problems were viewed as a form of “demonic possession” and the treatment was similar to the “domestication of wild animals – individuals were subjected to beatings and torture.” “Bedlam,” “mad house,” “looney bin” – all the popular names for mental

institutions -- indicate how government at all levels disposed of people with these problems.

In the mid 1800’s, U.S. governments at various levels established as a “reform” a barely funded asylum system, which confined roughly 140,000 people by the early 1900’s. However, in these new “humane” institutions, care actually consisted of “custodial management and social control of mental illness.” (See, See, “Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System” at Researchgate.net.)

New coercive “reforms” followed, spurred by the birth of psychiatry and the growing eugenics movement in the United States. According to Wikipedia, “The American eugenics movement embraced negative eugenics, with the goal to eliminate undesirable genetic traits in the human race through selective breeding.”

Psychiatric surgery, “most notably compulsory sterilization

Continued Page 5

Open Letter on the “Right to Housing Declaration”

Mayor of Sacramento’s recent “Declaration of a Right to Housing” proposal included the requirement that unhoused persons now living in informal encampments or on their own would be “obligated” to “accept” what is offered as shelter. The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee opposed the plan to make shelter involuntary in this letter.

July 20, 2021

Dear Mayor Steinberg and Sacramento City Council:

The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), as well as other organizations and individuals (see the undersigned), have long advocated a legal right to housing to be enshrined in statutes, ordinances, charters and constitutions and enforceable in courts. That legal right, recognized in many countries, requires the commitment to construction of quality housing subsidized for low- and no-income people, indistinguishable from what is now described as “market-rate housing”.

The Mayor’s recently proposed “Declaration of a Right to Housing,” — which reportedly will be taken to the City Council with the goal of enacting an ordinance — however, falls far short of what is necessary to alleviate the suffering of the thousands of homeless individuals and families in Sacramento and, for the following reasons, we OPPOSE the Mayor’s proposed “Declaration of the Right to Housing”.

No adequate or appropriate housing (or shelter) currently exists in Sacramento for the thousands of unhoused people who reside here. Therefore, the city’s proposed “Declaration” of a right to housing is a sham, fundamentally dishonest and misleading. The proposed Declaration interferes with full public exposure of, and opposition to, the City’s utter abandonment and neglect of the unhoused community, so apparent during the extreme heat now beating down on encampments. The Declaration is “window dressing” that looks good but has a negative impact and blocks real change.

The plan to obligate people to “accept” shelter is an inherent, necessary part of the sham “right to housing” Declaration. It provides the basis for coercion, police sweeps, displacement, loss of property, and selective legal harassment. Moreover, the “offer” of shelter, once refused, becomes a permanent part of the person’s HMIS record and is used to block further housing opportunities. For example, M.W., R.W, and E.G, all unhoused individuals, were told that since they had refused an unsuitable, unacceptable offer of shelter on an earlier occasion, some months ago, they could be -- and actually were -- forced out of motel housing and denied an extension. Use of this type of data will have a devastating impact on housing opportunities. Women especially will not submit to a mandate that forces them into congregate housing because of fear of violence and ongoing trauma.

The civil obligation to “accept” shelter involves civil penalties that can lead to contempt proceedings, a criminal sanction. This type of coercion is unconscionable. It is designed to drive unhoused people out of Sacramento.

The Declaration and its concomitant coercion illegally and immorally strips unhoused people of their dignity and their liberty under the U.S. Constitution, the State Constitution, and other laws. The sham “right to housing” Declaration with its deceptive message has been condemned by major homeless organizations, including LA CAN and Downtown Women’s Center in LA. Here’s what the

New York Times had to say on this issue:

“A ‘right to housing’ mandate has been long sought by progressives, who argue that public funding and compassion are wasted without the power of law to force cities to supply adequate housing. At the same time, state and local governments have been leery of the financial implications of singling out housing as a legal right.

Housing advocates have also expressed concerns that such a law might be used to intensify police crackdowns, potentially giving cities free legal rein to sweep encampments of homeless people as long as they first offer some form of shelter.

Eric Tars, the legal director of the National Homelessness Law Center in Washington, D.C., said Mr. Steinberg’s plan to couple housing rights with a parallel duty by homeless people to accept a bed if it is offered ran counter to the spirit of the ‘right to housing’ concept.

‘The right to housing is based on the inherent dignity of the individual, so a straightforward obligation to accept whatever is offered undermines that,’ Mr. Tars said.

A mandate requiring homeless people to accept housing could be difficult to enforce in California, where laws severely restrict civil commitments and forced treatment for mental illness. Mr. Steinberg, a former state lawmaker who for decades has been a leading Democratic voice in California on homelessness and mental health policy, acknowledged the state’s history of embracing the civil rights of homeless residents, but said that ‘sometimes the pendulum swings too far.’” New York Times 6/30/21

Mayor Steinberg, we do not believe that the “pendulum” has swung “too far” in constitutionally protecting the liberty and dignity of unhoused individuals. On the contrary, the “pendulum” has not swung far enough. Let’s build the housing and provide treatment on demand.

Sincerely,

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC); National Homeless Union, Sacramento; Sacramento Poor People’s Campaign – A national campaign for moral revival; Sacramento Area Black Caucus; Sacramento Democratic Socialists of America; Sacramento Tenants Union; Community Lead Advocacy Program (CLAP); Safe-Ground Sacramento; Peace and Freedom Party; Sacramento County Central Committee; Sacramento Safe Space; Sacramento Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom; Individuals: Deborah Franklin, Kimberly Church, Kendell Sue, Richard Wake, Rev. Dr. Pamela Anderson, Charlie Anderson, Debra Reiger, Kathy Day, David Andre, Wanda Cleveland, Lela Thomas, Karina Garcia, CT Weber

Open Letter on Homeless “Master Plan”

When the Mayor of Sacramento introduced a Plan to create “sanctioned encampments” for the many thousands of houseless people in Sacramento, the provisions for permanent housing were obviously limited and inadequate. Many organizations and individuals raised the question, where are people going to go for actual housing? The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, and other organizations made the following key demands in response to the Master Plan:

August 10, 2021

Dear Mayor Steinberg and City Council

We write to express our appreciation to the communities and the city leaders for attempting to create a plan to begin to address homelessness. However, the current “Master Plan” has a dangerous and counterproductive focus if the City’s aim is to protect and secure the lives of the thousands of unhoused who have made Sacramento their home.

Given the on-the-ground realities that face us, the Plan will not succeed in its announced goal of “addressing homelessness” as long as police management, sweeps, and criminalization of people living outside continues. Moreover, the Plan’s focus on emergency, temporary housing poses the danger of segregating and warehousing the poor. The City must commit to building and buying actual permanent housing with the new funding available to it.

As advocates for unhoused people, these are our demands:

1. The Plan needs to include strategies for providing adequate numbers of affordable permanent and supportive housing so that people can transition from the temporary, emergency type shelters which are the primary focus of the Plan.
2. Homelessness must be decriminalized and police management and sweeps must stop. The City should work with the needs of informal encampments. We cannot arrest our way out of the crisis.
3. Participation in City-run facilities must be entirely voluntary and uncoerced on the part of unhoused people without an obligation to accept what is offered.
4. The Plan needs to include an ombudsman who can hear and help resolve inequities and contested decisions, especially with regard to racial and gender issues, brought by unhoused residents. The eviction of unhoused families from motels is a case in point.
5. The Plan perpetuates systemic racism, failing to include any job training, employment, transportation (and other measures) to address the long-term consequences of segregation, discrimination, mass incarceration, poverty, and denial of equal opportunity. The Plan must make this focus a priority, and it will benefit all.

We look forward to collaborating with the City to reformulate the Plan.

Sincerely,

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee
 Sacramento Poor People’s Campaign
 - A National Campaign for Moral Revival
 Sacramento Area Black Caucus
 CLAP *Community Lead Advocacy Program* Sacramento
 Rev. Dr. Pamela Anderson
 Charlie Anderson

White Coat

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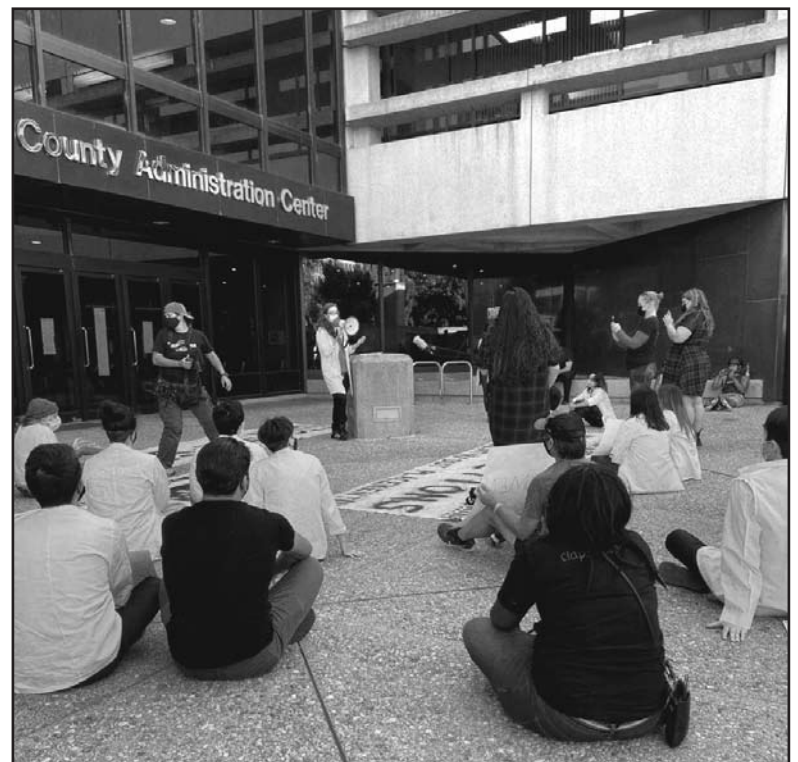
people living outside from the homes and communities they had built. By lifting the public health order, Sacramento City and County officials have removed this limited help and have provided no other support. This has caused vulnerable members of the unhoused community to be forced back onto the streets.

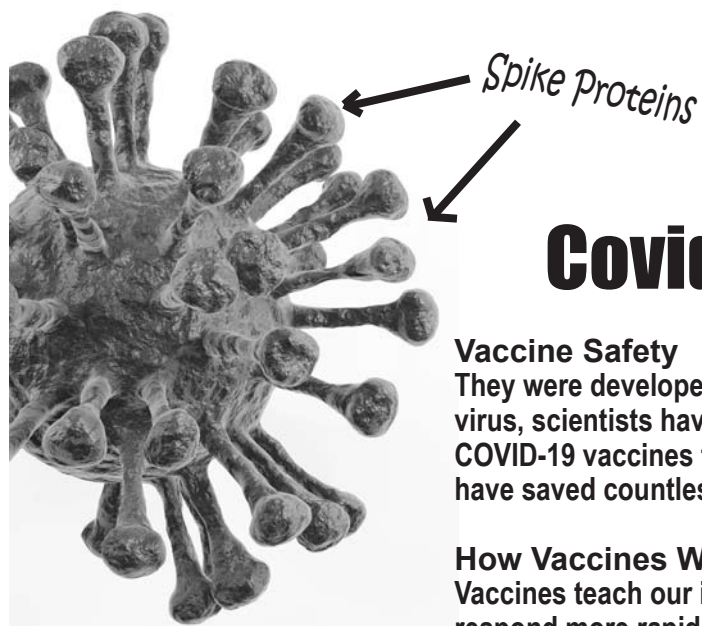
A group of professional students, healthcare providers, members of Sacramento Street Medicine (SSM), and other individuals organized a White Coat Die-In on June 8th at Sacramento City Hall to protest lifting the public health order as it ended the previously mentioned protections for people living outside. These participants firmly believe that housing is healthcare and urged the County and the City to stop the sweeps and displacements of encampments until everyone has a safe place to live. Participants stated that encampment displacement can lead to poor personal health outcomes, poor public health outcomes, and untimely deaths of people living outside.

While meeting at City Hall, participants at the White Coat Die-In held up signs that highlighted the difficulties people living outside face on a daily basis. Members of the executive board of SSM then spoke about the effects of ending of the public health order and the need for advocacy for the unhoused population. Participants then marched to the Sacramento County Administration Building and had the die-in as members of the unhoused community spoke about how they would be directly affected by the expiration of the public health order.

Ben Slobodnik, a second-year medical student and member of SSM, attended the White Coat Die-In and expressed his concerns about efforts by the City and the County to actively displace the residents of the camps that he serves. Slobodnik was outraged by the City and the County who gave the long-term residents of the camp that he works with three

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Covid-19 Vaccine Info

**GET THE FACTS!
GET THE SHOT!
SAVE LIVES!**

Vaccine Safety

They were developed under strict vaccine standards and tested in clinical trials. Although COVID-19 is a new virus, scientists have been using "viral vector" vaccines and developing the mRNA technology behind the COVID-19 vaccines for decades. They cannot change your DNA. The vaccines have been widely used and have saved countless lives.

How Vaccines Work

Vaccines teach our immune system to recognize a piece of the Covid-19 virus (spike protein), so it can respond more rapidly to fight the virus and save lives. Moderna and Pfizer vaccines use Messenger RNA (mRNA) that teaches your cells to make copies of the spike protein. After this, the mRNA breaks down. Johnson and Johnson's vaccine is a "viral vector" vaccine, similar to the flu shot. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain active virus. If you get the virus, your body will recognize the virus' spike proteins and know how to fight it. They have saved millions of lives!

Vaccine Side Effects

Symptoms after vaccination can sometimes be a sore arm, mild fever, headache, or chills. This is normal and a sign that the vaccine is working and the body is building immunity! Symptoms typically resolve within 24--48 hours.

Vaccine Effectiveness

The two dose Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine all greatly reduce the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19. Although we know vaccinated people can still be infected with the Delta Variant, overall all three vaccines remain highly effective at protecting from severe illness and death from all types of Covid-19. It takes two or more weeks after your last dose for your body to build the immune response needed to fight the virus.

Sacramento County Walk-In Vaccine Clinics

Offering the one dose Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine and the two dose Moderna vaccine at Loaves and Fishes Tuesday's 7:30-9:30am and Harm Reduction Services Thursday's 3:30-6:00pm. Regional Transit will provide free rides with proof of appointment or clinic.

Compiled by Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee
(www.sacshoc.org)

On July 26, 2021, the California Poor Peoples Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival was joined by the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee and other organizations. We took a stand at Diane Feinstein's office in San Francisco against the Filibuster, which is a remnant of Jim Crow policies, and is being used to block voting rights and necessary aid to our communities. **BUST THE FILIBUSTER!**



Why People with Mental Problems are Unhoused

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and frontal lobotomy” and other brutal, devastating treatments accompanied 20th century institutionalization. This physical mutilation was extended to homosexuality and depression as “disorders.” See, Researchgate.net, above.)

In the 1930’s, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that forced sterilization of “those deemed mentally unfit” was perfectly legal and constitutional. Over 50,000 lobotomies were performed “before the procedure fell out of favor” in the 60’s; over 63,000 Americans were sterilized against their will. (See, Researchgate.net, above.)

By the 1950’s, more than half a million people were confined in overcrowded “mental hospitals” with “dismal conditions.” “Many patients could expect to be confined for life with the real possibility of psychosurgery.” (See, ResearchGate.net, above.)

With the discovery of medications like Thorazine, which controlled symptoms, a new wave of reforms known as “deinstitutionalization” took hold in the 1970’s. Mental hospitals were closed (by 2010 92% of the beds had been eliminated) and people with mental problems were expelled upon the promise that community treatment centers would provide care.

The consequence of these “reforms” was abandonment, homelessness, and criminalization of people with mental problems. In a deliberate policy choice, these “community centers” were never actually funded at any adequate level by the federal government or the States.

What’s Happening Now

At the same time as deinstitutionalization, arrests and punishments for the use of street drugs were stepped up through the passage of new punitive laws in the late 1970’s. The prison system was hugely enlarged – in California, 23 new prisons were built in the 80’s and 90’s.

With the “management” of street homelessness mostly assigned to the police, unhoused people with mental problems were swept up in the mass incarceration of the poor – often for drug crimes. The practice continues today, in effect a long-term strategy to use incarceration instead of other, more wholistic and supportive measures to deal with social problems. This strategy targets the poor, and especially African American, Latino, and

Indigenous youth.

Prisons and jails have replaced mental hospitals for social control of people with mental problems. The largest mental institutions in the country today – and in the counties, including Sacramento – are jails and prisons. In California, 70% of unhoused and unsheltered people have spent time behind bars – many with mental problems. (See, CalMatters, Breakdown: California’s Mental Health System Explained 9/17/20.)

The criminal system was not established and is not equipped to treat people with mental problems. Only 20-25% of people with these problems receive treatment in prisons, and even smaller percentage of those in jail receive treatment, which is generally limited to pharmaceutical regimens and drugs.

Incarceration brings its own trauma and exacerbates mental problems. People in this population serve longer sentences, and are less likely to be eligible for early release or parole, precisely because of their problems, which can involve non-conforming behaviors. (See, Researchgate, above.)

Generally prisoners in jails and prisons are released to the street without housing, without aftercare, and without support. Those on medication often face insurmountable problems in remaining consistent because of the ongoing deprivation and trauma of homelessness – including access to drinking water and assistance.

At every level the system is thread bare, lacking providers, board-and-care homes, hospital beds and outpatient clinics, as well as housing itself. State Senator Jim Beall’s recent observation sums it up: “If you think the system works, then you’re dead wrong.” (See, CalMatters Breakdown, above.)

The New Policies for Involuntary Treatment

Even as the official abandonment of people with mental problems worsens, new “reforms” have created new avenues in California for forced treatment and confinement. The Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, passed in 1967, restricted involuntary confinement of people with mental problems. There are now a range of policies either under consideration or actually enacted to legalize involuntary treatment and make it easier to institutionalize and coerce people with

mental problems.

In 2018 and 2019 California passed two laws, SB 1045 and SB 40, which expanded the use of “conservatorships,” a form of long-term guardianship for people with mental problems, made applicable to those who have been repeatedly subject to involuntary holds, and proposed as pilot projects in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. (See, Scholar’s Strategy Network, “Expanding Mental Health Conservatorships in California.”)

This has been advocated despite the fact that there are no corresponding services or houses available to people subject to these procedures. County conservatorship offices have been overwhelmed with “a huge influx of new clients in recent years, even as the appropriate facilities for new housing is shrinking.” (CalMatters, Breakdown, above.)

“Laura’s Law,” passed in 2002, allows counties to build court-ordered treatment programs (Assisted Outpatient Treatment), another form of involuntary care, without meeting the stricter standards of the LPS Act. The provisions of the law were recently adopted by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. According to Sue Frost, Board Chair, showing her hostility to, and ignorance of, people with mental problems, an attitude that is prevalent among many elected officials at every level of government: “You can’t exercise your civil rights if you are seriously mentally ill or in a drug-induced psychosis.” (See CalMatters, “Counties Face Choice About Forcing More Mentally Ill Californians Into Treatment” 5/20/21)

A Broad Involuntary Confinement System?

The drive for social control and management of people with mental problems has now converged with the drive to involuntarily contain the unhoused population in large city-run “sanctioned encampments” in Sacramento because of the lack of housing. These measures followed a federal court ruling that restricted the ability of cities and counties in the western states to forcibly displace unhoused people from informal encampments.

The Sacramento City Council recently passed a proposal to set up such encampments across the city, and will soon consider an ordinance

proposed by Mayor Darrell Steinberg to make acceptance of such shelter arrangements obligatory: that is to say, involuntary.

Before going public with this policy, Mayor Steinberg had mused about the desirability of involuntary (obligatory) treatment of people with mental problems. He “asked his colleagues if the debate around involuntary treatment might be reframed to insist that people have both a right — and an obligation — to come indoors. That would mean that, before the state could compel people to come indoors, they would have to have safe, appropriate placements to offer them.” (CalMatters, Breakdown: Mental Health, “We’ve Lost Our Compass.” For California’s Most Visible Mentally Ill, Is A Return to Forced Treatment A Solution – Or A False Promise? 9/17/20)

Looking at the options for those with mental problems, from the “mad houses” of the 1700’s, to the “asylums” of the 1800’s, to the “mental hospitals” of the 1900’s and, currently, the prisons, jails, and “sanctioned encampments,” used to contain this population, it is clear that promises of “safe, appropriate placements” for people with mental problems have a long history of being empty, as each reform is followed by new forms of coercion.

The Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, joined by other organizations, recently sent Mayor Steinberg a letter in opposition to the involuntary confinement of unhoused people in city-run encampments:

“The obligation to accept will brand those who refuse, no matter how valid their reasoning, as ‘service-resistant’ – ‘providing the basis for coercion, police sweeps, displacement, loss of property and selective legal harassment.’” (See, TruthOut, “Homes, Not ‘Sanctioned Encampments’ Are the Solution to Homelessness, quoting letter, 8/2/21.)

We will need to keep fighting for the civil rights of people with mental problems – even as we fight for the housing, the services, and the civil rights of all the houseless tens of thousands who call our cities their home. We demand good governance that meets our needs, not these sham promises that are designed to disguise the use of force against vulnerable populations.

White Coat Die-In

continued from page 3

days to vacate the land without any assistance or resources. Slobodnik also noted that plans to vacate within 3 days were reversed and no future plans to vacate have been announced for that particular camp.

However, some communities of people living outside have not been that lucky. A longstanding encampment in a wooded area of Rio Linda was demolished by Sacramento County Regional Park rangers on July 9th due to a cited “fire danger.” Rangers gave minimal notice of this sweep and provided no assistance to help the residents find safe housing. People’s belongings, places of shelter, and a chicken coop were destroyed by bulldozers.

Members of SSM continue to be infuriated by the injustices perpetrated by the City and County against the unhoused community members. Adam Sauer, a third year medical student and SSM member, stated that “if people knew how hard an unhoused person must fight to survive each and every day, I think their views of them would change, and the need for reform would be greater stressed.” Despite the seemingly continuous setbacks, SSM will continue to work with other organizations to advocate for the unhoused and end the disparities this community faces.

(All photos courtesy the author)



In Memory of Garren Bratcher

**By Joe Smith, Advocacy Director,
Sacramento Loaves & Fishes**

Garren Bratcher was a man who dedicated his life to his faith, his family, and in service to the unhoused community. For nearly 20 years, he worked for Sacramento Loaves & Fishes, serving men, women, and children experiencing homelessness.

I met Garren for the first time twice in my life. Once as a person experiencing homelessness and once as a new volunteer at Friendship Park. He was a kind man with a considerable presence and didn’t mix words.

Yesterday I attended his second memorial service, and today marks the first anniversary of his passing.

The first service was at Friendship Park in April. The second was at Faith Legacy Church, July 31, 2021. Both were full of people who had many fond memories of a man who meant so much to everyone lucky enough to know him.

One story told at Faith Legacy Church was from Mark Zoulas (aka, “Batman”), a retired Sacramento Police Officer. Mark met Garren after being assigned to “rid” Sacramento of its homeless problem. After being invited to Friendship Park, they formed a partnership and friendship. The two worked together to help as many people as possible. After retiring, Mark came to work for Garren as a volunteer at Friendship Park.

Another story was of a man who came to Friendship

Park one day agitated without any shoes. He began to act aggressively toward the staff. Garren and the man fell to the ground and wrestled. After the situation calmed, Garren was seen bringing him a pair of shoes and, instead of asking him to leave, allowed the man to stay in the park so he could eat lunch.

Shortly after coming to work as a volunteer in Friendship Park, I asked Garren for a job. I wanted to work for the place that helped me when I was unhoused. Garren wasn’t so sure I was ready but gave me a job anyway. He hired me to work a few days a week in the park and a few days on the weekend as a street monitor. When my roommate and friend Craig died from cancer, Garren offered me words of strength. Not long after, Garren came to me

individually, as he did with everyone who worked for him, and told me of his diagnosis. He left Loaves & Fishes shortly after opening the new Friendship Park to spend his days with those he loved – his wife Linda, his children, grandchildren, and his dogs. He came to visit the park one day and told me he had heard I had earned a promotion and was proud of me.

Several months later, he passed away.

The world is a better place today because of Garren Bratcher. He was there for us all. From the man with the badge. To the man with no shoes. To the man who needed a job.

Thanks, Garren.

“There are some who bring a light so great to the world that even after they have gone, the light remains.”



*Garren Bratcher,
July, 1962 – August, 2020*

Under the Oak

here sitting on a bucket
under the oak
measuring my years
oh, live oak, leaves like thorns
I am attached to you
and to the hill

the air cool and speaking, dispersing
last night's mist
that lay in a pool
over the valley below...
the grasses bowing
in soft gleaming stroke

coming slowly to see
what's called history
is really the continuing
sporadic struggle
of the evicted, the excluded
the naked & dispossessed

only annihilation stops us
& only for a time
we must have a place
to be
we cannot finally
all be killed

and they cannot finally
quell our revolt

that current, that river
of awareness
wells up flows on, driven
by the common feelings
of the people
and the moods of the earth

© 5/16/21 Cathleen Williams

Terror's Dream

On a warm April dawn.
Beneath an overpass,
A child sits,
And, dreams.
Dreams of a daisy's embrace,
Its petals and leaves, a comfort.
Dreams of a painful
Night without fear.

On a hot August day,
A young man runs,
And, dreams.
Dreams of a dusky
Monster in his veins.
Dreams of an eternal fix,
In the wilderness of his mind.

On a cool October eve
An old woman sleeps,
And, dreams.
Dreams of
Loneliness' end,
Dreams of a land,
Long gone.

On a frigid January night,
The dead wait,
And, dream.
Dreams of forgotten names,
And, unwanted lives.
Dreams of shadows, and,
Cruel rebirth.

© 2021 Johanna Elattar

Friend

A flash of ginger out of
The corner of my eye.
In the emptiness,
I see you, still
Eyes of green,
Wide and bright
Looked at me with
Ancient wisdom
Spoke to me,
Without a sound
Two strays, invisible souls in
A world that passed us by.
We shared a can of corn
in a dark corner
You healed me
When my heart bled.
You were my light,
In an endless night.
Vanished from my arms,
But not forever.
My heart is where
You reside.

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A Special Thank You to all our Underwriters:

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Organize Sacramento
Uptown Studios Inc.
Safe Ground Sacramento
Mercy Pedalers
Los Rios College
Federation of Teachers

The Spring the Earth Stood Still

March 2020/alley cats examine/converse/cautiously at first traverse/then gamble/
that the newly renovated/usually 24 hour operating Capital Casino/gated parking
lot/once teeming with humans/(just one smidgen/of one degree/of the 38.5816*
N/121.4944*W/that put/SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA/on the pandemic
world map)/was now finally their territory/And once confirmed that “ding, dong,
people had indeed truly ceased to be!”/(I’m telling y’all/as a homeless person/
allowed to shelter-in-place on the street/the whole city looked like a deserted
studio backlot/from some episode of “The Twilight Zone” to me/in the finest
next-up-top-dog-fashion/feral felines celebrated becoming apex/24-7/And the
Capital Casino parking lot/nw the local catbird seat/was successfully rebranded
as the “Cat’s Meow”/while it seems the only attire/in the dress code/were cat’s
pajamas/So as the planet’s person populace went missing/anxiously isolating
indoors/the wild yonder got way bluer/and a whole lot wilder/Nature usually
abhors a vacuum/But in this case/Nature loved it!

--arthur butler © 6/4/21



I want to help HOMEWARD continue in Sacramento.

Enclosed find my donation of \$20 for a one year subscription. Please mail my copies to:



\$20 for a one year subscription



\$100 for one year as an Underwriter

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State: _____ Zip: _____

25.4

Office Use Only

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

Received

clip & mail coupon

Resources List

Sacramento Loaves & Fishes1351 North C Street
-www.sacloaves.org - (916) 446-0874-limited services-

Friendship Park is open to provide breakfasts, supply survival items, and lunch tickets. Open until 2:30pm on weekdays for specific usage but not for congregation. The Dining Room will remain open to distribute "to-go" or bag lunches for guests from 11:30am to 1:00pm weekdays, and 11:00am to 12:30pm on weekends. Maryhouse, daytime hospitality shelter for women, will limit traffic inside, but continue services and dispense survival supplies.

The Washhouse will minimize congestion inside, but remain open.

Mustard Seed School will run a limited half-day program on campus from 8:15- 11:30 am for unsheltered children living in cars or outside and the front office will stay open until noon for intakes.

The Warehouse will remain open until noon to receive donations.

Genesis Program - Free mental health counseling, resources, and referral services. They will meet guest outdoors or phone conferences. (916) 669-1536

Mercy Clinic - health services and information clinic. 8am to noon, weekdays. (916) 874-2811

River City Food Bank

(916) 446-2627. Food Distribution Hours: Midtown, 1800 28th Street - Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30am to 1:30pm. Arden Arcade, 2300 Edison Ave - Friday-Saturday, 10:30am to 1:30pm.

Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services:

3333 Third Avenue, (916) 456-1980; 1951 Bell Avenue, (916) 925-3240. Visit website for list of services: www.sacramentofoodbank.org

Food search by zip code: www.sacramentofoodbank.org/find-food

Miscellaneous**Sacramento Safe Space for Unhomed Youth -**

Tuesdays, 9am to noon, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 1430 J Street. Temporary sanctuary for ages 18-30. Breakfast, hygiene items and other supplies when available. For more information: www.engage.us.org

Pilgrimage Program -

Rotating support from congregations in Midtown Sacramento. Overnights have been canceled. Clothing, Meals, and mobile showers one or two days a week at:
Bayside Midtown (19th & W) (916) 706-2337;
First United Methodist (21st & J) (916) 446-5025;
St. John's Lutheran (17th & L) (916) 444-0874;
Trinity Episcopal (25th & Capitol) (916) 446-2513;
First Church of Nazarene (28th

& S) (916) 452-6171
PilgrimageSac on facebook for the calendar.

Sacramento Self Help

Housing offers housing counseling and housing lists. sacselfhelp.org - (916) 341-0593

Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal

Clinic provides free legal services to homeless people relating infractions and misdemeanors in Sacramento County. Also manages court-ordered community service sentences for homeless people to pay fines in lieu of incarceration. (916) 446-0368

Legal Services of Northern

California: Handles cases about Housing, public benefits, including CalWorks, CalFresh (food stamps), Medi-Cal, General Assistance (GA), Social Security, SSI, unemployment insurance benefits (UIB), and statedisability insurance (SDI). lsnc.net - (916) 551-2150

Sacramento Tenants Union

- Advocacy support for tenants: sactenantsunion@gmail.com

Department of Human

Assistance(welfare) is closed but can be accessed online or by phone: Appointments - over the phone. Mail - use drop boxes outside office, or submit documents online through mybenefitscalwin.org, or mail them to: P.O. Box 487, Sacramento, CA 95812
Apply for Benefits

Sacramento
Homeless
Organizing
Committee



<https://sacshoc.org>
(916) 442-2156

SHOC open meetings are suspended for the duration of the Covid shut down.

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. 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 occupational assistance, and acts as a creative self-help opportunity for those individuals who wish to participate.

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

Submissions and Editorial Policy

We welcome any participation or contributions: 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 author's intent. The editors will attempt to consult with an author 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 submission 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 possible reprinting in INSP member papers, 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 Organizing 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>

City services:
311

Community Resources:
211

Sacramento Covered
(916) 874-9670

Elica Health Centers
(916) 454-2345

WellSpace Health
(916) 737-5555

Sacramento County Health Center
(916) 874-9670

Sacramento County Department of Health Services: www.saccounty.net/COVID-19

Sacramento Steps Forward:
sacramentostepsforward.org/covid-19-resources