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## HANGING ON TO OUR HOMES: FORECLOSURE PREVENTION IN SONOMA COUNTY

By Linda Hedstrom, Betsy Timm, and Georgia Berland

Sonoma County's residents continue to suffer from the surge in home foreclosures and job losses, and a new wave is predicted in 2010. Stunned newly homeless families and individuals are filling shelters, standing in food lines, and struggling to find their way back to stable housing. Preventing the loss of homes in the first place is the first line of defense. Some Californians misunderstand the federal housing stimulus programs and the state's current moratorium on foreclosures. Very few actually qualify, but many believe that they are protected. It makes sense to make sure. Both Catholic Charities and California Human Development offer foreclosure counseling.

Catholic Charities Foreclosure Services had 88 active cases in July, and opens about 5 new cases per month. Phone inquiries are high, with 140 calls in May. A Foreclosure Counselor educates people about options, helps them assess their current financial condition and create new budgets, advocates on their behalf with lenders, and helps them access community resources.

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## OCTOBER IN PARADISE HONORS LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

By Fawn Moran

Our exciting 15th Annual October in Paradise dinner, dance, auction, and awards event, is coming up Thursday, October 1st from 5:30 to 10 PM, with fun new features, deserving Spirit Awardees, great wine, food, and live music, and some of our finest auction treasures ever. This is a chance to come together as a community to celebrate and further our work of ending homelessness. It's also a time to honor those among us who've led the cause of ending homelessness and provided exemplary service to our homeless neighbors.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Gary Nadler is our Marijke Byck Spirit of Community Award winner for his enduring commitment to assist homeless people to find permanent solutions to their life issues. Judge Nadler has long been a champion of homeless people, serving on the Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) board



Superior Court Presiding Judge Gary Nadler, 2009 Marijke Byck Spirit of Community Awardee

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**The Sonoma County  
Task Force  
for the Homeless**

*is a coalition of public and private service providers, community organizations, religious congregations, businesses and individuals working to end homelessness in Sonoma County and to assist those who have lost their homes. We depend heavily on our members for direction, financial support, and volunteer assistance.*

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## **Dialogue...**

*The Dialogue section is devoted to items submitted by readers. We particularly invite personal experiences, ideas, suggestions, and responses from homeless people, program staff, volunteers, and the community. Please see Editorial Guidelines below for how you can contribute your thoughts.*

## **OBSERVING HOMELESS COURT**

**By Sally Davis**

I observed Homeless Court on the afternoon June 24, 2009 in the County Courthouse. My first impression was that the defendants were impressively clean and considerate. The proceedings were less formal than other more usual sessions I had observed, starting with the fact that Judge Kenneth Gness' entrance did not include the usual "All stand" honor. He was soft spoken, polite, and kind to all the people who appeared before him. He gave an oral overview of how the session would proceed, and set some expectations.

The process was gentle but fast paced. Steve had twice walked against a pedestrian wait signal in Petaluma. He was also charged with public urination. Judge Gness noted that Steve was currently studying for his GED and for his driver license. His fines totaled \$313, but the judge reduced them to \$100, and then converted them to 10 hours of volunteer work. Tessa had two traffic violations, no license and no proof of insurance. She entered a plea to one offense; Judge Gness dismissed the other and converted a \$50 fine to 5 hours volunteer work. Casey had been cited for camping, for shoplifting, and for drinking in public. His fines totaled \$700. He is taking two classes at the JC. The judge reduced his fines to \$300 and converted that to 30 hours of volunteer work. So it went for a total of 11 defendants in the space of an hour.

My sense of the cases that I observed was that Judge Gness wanted to help each homeless person get his or her life in order without being overwhelmed by fines and fees. For each \$10 owed, he usually converted the debt to 1 hour of volunteer time. For those who were in school, he extended the deadline for completing the volunteer work and seemed to reduce the volunteer hours as well.

I left the courtroom feeling proud and grateful that Sonoma County has such a compassionate Homeless Court.

### **REPORTER Editorial Guidelines:**

*Publication of any article will be finally determined by the Editor and is not promised. Articles are edited for length, grammar, accuracy and clarity, and may be held for a later issue. Personal stories, constructive critique, photos, graphics, ideas, and suggestions are warmly invited, as is information of interest to those concerned about homelessness in Sonoma County. Unsubstantiated allegations are not published, nor are profanity, racial, ethnic, religious or personal slurs, denigration or name-calling of individuals or agencies. Submissions must be 500 words or less, and sent via e-mail or CD to sctfhmls@pacbell.net, mailed to the Task Force for the Homeless at 3315 Airway Drive, Santa Rosa 95403, or faxed to 575-4494. Submissions must include the full name of the author or artist. Typed or legible handwritten articles will be accepted from authors who do not have computer access, but must be received at least one week prior to the regular deadline.*

**Publication Dates for 2009**

Fall 2009

Spring 2010

**Submission Deadlines**

October 6

February 10

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING WEEK 2009

By Gale Brownell

The Task Force for the Homeless was a community partner for Affordable Housing Week this May. Craig Meltzner, a local housing consultant who has assisted in the development of nearly 1,000 affordable rental units over the past twenty years was named the 2009 Housing Hero. The annual Housing Progress Report was released, showing the progress of each County jurisdiction in meeting its State-mandated housing goals. A second report detailed the inventory of affordable rentals in each community and showed the number per 1,000 population (see chart on page 7). Three Open Houses were held during the week. PEP Housing showed off the Casa Grande Apartments, the first affordable senior housing to be certified “Green” in Sonoma County. Affordable Housing Associates held a grand opening for Petaluma Avenue Homes, the first rental co-housing project in the nation. (see photo). Habitat for Humanity and YouthBuild held a dedication ceremony for an Energy Star affordable home in Sebastopol.

The Task Force co-hosted a workshop, “Unlock the Door to Affordable Rentals”, with local Housing Authorities and Burbank Housing Management Corporation. Other workshops included Financial First Aid presented by Redwood Credit Union. A workshop on Restructuring Mortgage Debt was co-hosted by three agencies that provide HUD-certified mortgage counseling: ACORN, Catholic Charities, and California Human Development. Photos showing a wide range of affordable housing that has been built in Santa Rosa and the unincorporated areas of the County were also on display.

The next Affordable Housing Week will be in May of 2010. We hope you will participate in an activity that will help you learn more about affordable housing in Sonoma County. *continued on page 7*



Petaluma Avenue Homes Grand Opening, Sebastopol. First Rental Co-Housing in the USA! Affordable Housing Week, May 2009.

## *Hanging On To our Homes...continued from page 1*

Clients are from all walks of life, singles, couples, young and middle-aged. Loan modifications are difficult to achieve. A Forbearance process assists in the short term, but can be costly. Many must short sell (for less than the amount owed) or enter foreclosure because they owe more than the home's value and have inadequate resources to move through forbearance or loan modification. Still, Catholic Charities resolved 103 cases last year through loan forbearance, loan modifications, communicating with bankers, and client counseling to accept loss of homes and develop realistic budgets and housing plans.

At California Human Development (CHD), Linda Hedstrom handles Foreclosure Prevention, with an active caseload of 60 clients — too many for a counselor whose main job is as CHD's Housing Developer, adding units and rehabilitating housing. Linda was formerly the Lake County Housing Authority Director. She got HUD Foreclosure Intervention Counselor Certification last year because CHD was getting so many calls from people desperate for help. CHD is hiring an experienced bi-lingual counselor to take on this program so Linda can focus on housing development.

CHD covers 32 counties and foreclosure clients come from all of northern and central California. Much of the counseling is by e-mail, phone and fax. Most CHD clients are in trouble because of income losses, although most also bought houses they couldn't afford long-term. Some have big medical bills or are dealing with the death of a spouse. All are desperate.

About half of CHD's 60 clients come from the Santa Rosa area. Most of these are Hispanic, speak only Spanish, and had already been targeted by scam rescue artists who took as much as \$5,000 to do what HUD counselors do for free yet never delivered on their promises. Several people could not be helped because they had already lost their homes to scams. Recently one lady was told, even when getting nasty bank notices, that the company was on top of it and would save her home. Finally when her house was scheduled for foreclosure sale the company told her not to worry, their lawyer was flying up from Los Angeles to meet her at the courthouse steps and stop the sale. Of course that didn't happen and she lost her home. There are many stories like this.

When clients do come in at the last second and their homes can't be saved, sometimes in return for the homeowner leaving the premises quickly and in good shape the buyer is willing to offer "cash for keys". Clients are advised to find a rental they can afford, get move-in costs in writing, and the program tries to get that paid. But there are scams where the company keeps pressing for an eviction order despite promising to help, and the residents are evicted without moving costs.

Many Hispanic and low income clients were pushed into predatory loans with high interest rates and constant readjustments even if they had good credit scores and could qualify for traditional loans. Sometimes it was plain cheating on both sides. Many, Hispanic or not, bought houses they obviously could not afford. Yet someone gave them the money. Deals often included second loans so the buyer put in almost no cash. No legitimate lender would let someone buy a house this way. And these are the same people now calling themselves "rescue" companies.

Dealing with lenders is challenging. Linda's still working with her first client from last fall on a permanent loan modification that works for her family. She has managed with her and several others to get the second loan/equity line of credit lender to accept pennies on the dollar in return for walking away and giving back the deed. Her family owed \$80,000+ on a second and the lender accepted \$5,000. Second lenders have little or no chance of getting any money if a house goes into foreclosure since the little money made goes to the first lender, attorney fees, and any taxes owed. Rescue scam artists and predatory lenders must be stopped through strong legislation, active law enforcement and prosecution. (See 'Taking Action' on page 5.)

*Catholic Charities' Housing Counseling Department is at 575-0215. For CHD's Foreclosure Prevention Program, e-mail [Linda.Hedstrom@chdcorp.org](mailto:Linda.Hedstrom@chdcorp.org).*

## Taking Action:

Laura Weir, Policy Director at the National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty, notes that now is an opportune time to urge and support our legislators in their efforts to stop foreclosures and their effects, as well as to end homelessness. Last year, legislation was enacted to create a National Housing Trust Fund. This year Congress provided \$1.5 billion for homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing and included the Protecting Tenants From Foreclosure Act in the reauthorized of the HUD McKinney-Vento programs to ensure renters living in foreclosed housing receive at least 90 days notice before being evicted and can remain in the housing through the end of their lease term unless the buyer intends to occupy the property themselves. Legislation to create affordable housing for low-income veterans and their families passed the House this summer. Rep. Maxine Waters introduced a resolution to recognize housing as a basic human right for all children and their families. Numerous bills are pending in Sacramento to enhance tax credits to build affordable housing, transit villages, farm worker homes, workforce coops, and address tenants' issues. For information on state legislation contact Julie Snyder at Housing California, 916.447.0503 x102 or jsnyder@housingca.org. We can ask our legislators to assure ongoing funding for Federal, State, and Local Housing Trust Funds, increase funding for low-income housing and crucial services, and support the right to housing. We can let them know we care about ending the foreclosure crisis and making homes available to people at all income levels. We have a long way to go to resolve our housing crisis, but together we can make lasting change.

## SONOMA COUNTY'S HOMELESS CENSUS 2009

*Excerpted from the 2009 Sonoma County Homeless Census and Survey  
Produced for the Continuum of Care by Applied Survey Research*

Sonoma County's bi-annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count found 3,247 people homeless in Sonoma County on January 23rd, 2009. The census and a follow up survey were conducted this year by Applied Survey Research of Watsonville, who specializes in homeless counts. It employed many homeless people as guides and survey interviewers as well as involving community volunteers. Using formulas recommended by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the number estimated to become homeless in Sonoma County at some point this year is 7,883. That's not far from the population of Cloverdale or Sebastopol!

Most (53%) are experiencing homelessness for the first time. One third said the reason was they had lost their job. One quarter have children. Approximately 67% were male; 64% were over 30. Native Americans and Blacks were over represented compared to the county's overall population. Fourteen percent of the homeless had jobs, and of the unemployed, 20% did not have a high school diploma or GED, 30% had no transportation, and nearly 20% said their health prevented them from securing employment.

Over 76% indicated they had been living in Sonoma County when they became homeless, and another 16% in other California counties, reaffirming that homelessness is indeed a local issue. Just 7.5% were from out of state. Only 30% could be accommodated in emergency shelters or transitional housing. Most of the 2,222 unsheltered were outdoors (37%), in buildings not meant for human habitation (15%), or in their vehicles (8%), despite that it is illegal to stay in vehicles on the streets or other public property throughout the County.

Only 51% of those who responded to a survey question said they usually get enough to eat daily. Thirty-seven per cent said they sometimes do, and 12% reported that they do not get enough to eat. Government services are supposed to be the safety net. This winter, before the recent cuts in government services, 53% of the respondents were benefiting from at least one service. The most common was food stamps (37%), with Medi-Cal serving another 27%. Thirty-one percent did not think they were eligible and 16% had been denied service.

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## ***October in Paradise...continued from page 1***

before being appointed to the bench. In late 2002, he approached the Task Force to help convene the Courts, District Attorney, Public Defender, law enforcement, Public Health, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and homeless and related non-profit services to create a Court Homeless Protocol Project. His intent is to end jail recidivism for homeless defendants recycling through the jails by meeting their needs for shelter, substance abuse services, job training, and other support.

Judge Nadler brought key community leaders to the table, worked with the Task Force to organize and lead numerous meetings over the last seven years, and still spends countless hours to support these services and ensure they are succeeding. He continues to work to make essential re-entry services (housing, treatment, counseling, education) remain available to homeless defendants in Sonoma County. This year Judge Nadler launched a separate initiative to re-start the Homeless Court Program, sessions to clear warrants that have held homeless people back from stabilizing their lives. He set up the process and got this program back on track after years of inactivity. Judge Kenneth Gness conducted the first Homeless Court session in years in late June. (See Dialog section, p.2), We're proud to recognize Judge Nadler's long record of extraordinary leadership to end homelessness for some of our most troubled residents.

Our 2009 Spirit of Service award just as proudly goes to the Mental Health Division of the Sonoma County Health Services Department. The Task Force provides a \$500 check to a non-profit cause selected by the Spirit of Service award winner. Current Division Director Michael Kennedy, MFT, oversaw the broad, inclusive planning process for Mental Health Services Act funding and program development after the passage of Proposition 63. He and the Division helped community-based services to expand and address expressed community needs despite crushing funding losses in residential and other critical Mental Health services. Partnerships have been nurtured with community-based agencies to assure that homeless residents and others have mental health support even with declining resources.

The Mental Health Division provides outreach, screening, treatment, and housing assistance for severely mentally ill people. Many homeless people have been well served by Mental Health's Community Intervention Program (CIP). Spurred by the dedication and skill of Program Manager Mario Guerrero, MFT, CIP serves people with serious mental illness who are homeless and/or have co-occurring alcohol and other drug problems, reaching underserved ethnic minority communities (Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, and African Americans). CIP's team members—Dr. Michael Kozart (SR Homeless Clinic Medical Director), and Ted Fox, LPT, SCSS among them, work with people countywide with no other resources. The CIP leads an interagency Community Health Outreach Worker (CHOW) Team including Ted Fox, Karin Adams from the Drug Abuse Advisory Council, Vietnam Veterans of California staff and others. The CHOW Team works with homeless people in encampments, public parks, and on city streets, linking many hard-to-reach people to community resources. They work hard to find housing and other resources for people they cannot serve and help stabilize those they can. The work of CIP and the CHOW team are proving invaluable to homeless people in crisis. In cooperation with the City of Santa Rosa/County of Sonoma Creek Stewards Program, they've been instrumental in helping people living outside to resolve their life issues and encourage them to gather their belongings and move before public agencies 'clean up' or 'sweep' encampments.

Beyond our Spirit awards and another special surprise presentation, October in Paradise offers hors d'oeuvres and wine accompanied by Brulée's Jazz With a Twist, a Lively Auction with celebrity auctioneer Ernie Carpenter, an abundant silent auction, a yummy sunset dinner and dessert, and dancing to the Blue Moon Rhythm & Blues Dance Band at Paradise Ridge Winery, known for its sculpture garden and a panoramic view of the Santa Rosa Valley! Our best live and silent auctions yet are filled with a new and wonderful array of wine packages, vacation getaways, sports & entertainment memorabilia, gift dinners, books and jewelry. Bring your friends, relax and enjoy this great night of fun and camaraderie!

*To purchase tickets, sponsor, or offer an auction gift or donation, please call our office at 707-575-4494, or email [sctfhmls@pacbell.net](mailto:sctfhmls@pacbell.net), or visit [www.sonomacountyhomeless.org](http://www.sonomacountyhomeless.org).*

## BID FOR GOOD AT OUR NEW ONLINE AUCTION!

Be an early bird! Here's your chance to get special treasures for friends and family, or just for you, and help end homelessness at the same time. Our online auction opens September 8 and runs through September 29. We have stunning jewelry selections this year that include an 18K gold oval cuff with Ripka-cut champagne quartz and diamonds and an 18K white gold ladies cocktail ring with pave set diamonds surrounding an oval spessartite among them. Delicious to wear and marvelous to own! Spend 5 nights relaxing in a charming condo (pool, spa, tennis, barbeque, high speed internet) across from a sweet beach cove on Maui. Soar through the skies on a one-hour private flight to a destination of your choice or savor a dinner for two at Sushi Hanna, Ravenous or Thai Taste.



Kalepolepo State Park Beach - Your newly upgraded condo is right across the street!

Surprises await you! Just go to [www.sonomacountyhomeless.cmarket.com](http://www.sonomacountyhomeless.cmarket.com) to peruse over 50 items. You can bid online or buy any item at the 'take it away' price. Items not purchased online will become part of our great October in Paradise selection at the event. Support the work of the Task Force by telling your friends, family and community to check out our online auction too.

*BiddingForGood.com, managed by cMarket.com, hosts our online auction. Their mission is to help nonprofits increase concern for their cause as they develop new sources of income.*

### *Affordable Rental Housing by Community - 2009....continued from page 3*

City	Progress toward 2014 Goal	Affordable Rents per 1,000 pop.
Cloverdale	23%	30
Cotati	2%	18
Healdsburg	98%	26
Petaluma	7%	20
Rohnert Park	41%	26
Santa Rosa	19%	23
Sebastopol	75%	42
Sonoma	25%	16
Sonoma (unincorp)	17%	4
Windsor	44%	10

### APOLOGIES & THANKS

The Presbyterian Church of the Roses was kind enough to grant the Task Force \$1000 in 2008 to support our work. They were inadvertently left out of the list of 2008 Donors thanked in our last issue. We apologize for the accidental omission, and express our sincere appreciation to the Presbyterian Church of the Roses for their generosity.

## *Homeless Census 2009...continued from page 5*

Disabilities cause numerous difficulties for 76% of homeless people. More than a quarter (27%) reported chronic health problems. Thirty per cent were experiencing a mental illness at the time of the survey, 53% depression, and 21% Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Nearly 10% have a developmental disability; 3% have AIDS/HIV; and a whopping 42% said they were experiencing substance abuse. Nearly 60% have more than one disabling condition; 5% had SIX or more. These people may qualify for Social Security, though only 3% have managed to get those benefits. The majority will not be able to obtain work.

A special Homeless Youth Census this year categorized homeless youth as between 18 and 27 years old because that group does not generally mingle with homeless adults. There were 273 youth identified — the majority were males up to age 22. A larger proportion are from minority backgrounds than among homeless adults. Only 8% live in shelters or transitional housing; 16% in encampments and 11% in a place not meant for human habitation. Generally their homelessness was of shorter duration — less than 6 months for 56%. Eight-five per cent of homeless youth lived in Sonoma County before their homelessness. Forty-five percent said the cause of their homelessness was a conflict with the family or friend where they were living. Shockingly, only 33% say they usually get enough to eat daily; 10% say they do NOT. Only 37% were using any Government services, mainly because they did not know where to sign up (24%) or did not think they were eligible (45%).

## **SUMMERTIME**

**By Gale Brownell**

Summertime, and the living is easy... or so the song goes. In summers past, homeless shelters sometimes had vacancies as people camped out or went to visit relatives. Not today. The sun may be shining but most local shelters have waiting lists. They are working hard to do more with less, but often have to do less with less. Government funding and donations are down, and services are shrinking. Some providers are reportedly feeling “compassion fatigue”.

We fear the worst is yet to come. Many economists predict another wave of foreclosures related to newly unemployed and underemployed homeowners. Typically, newly unemployed people try hard to find another job and maintain their life style. Competition is stiff for people who are disabled or who have made bad choices in the past. Sometimes, they are unable to find jobs, as is the case with 11% of the Sonoma County work force. They burn through their savings all too quickly and some will find themselves homeless. Usually when that happens, people become “couch-surfers”. They try to share housing with family and friends. They may also live in motels or stay in campgrounds. Sometimes the stresses cause latent problems to emerge. Depression, alcohol or drug abuse, domestic violence, and mental illness all are more likely to become problematic. These issues make it difficult for family and friends to continue their assistance. Then more people apply to shelters or try to live in their cars.

Newly homeless folks present new challenges to homeless service providers. They are not used to asking for help and frequently don't know where to get it. The new 2-1-1 information and referral line is helpful, but these clients need not only information, but assistance to understand that it is acceptable to ask for help. This takes more staff time.

Our service providers are reviewing how they operate. Catholic Charities and COTS are consolidating programs and looking for efficiencies. It appears that both organizations will retain the same number of beds, but services may have to be cut.

This summer it's good to recognize the sincere efforts made by the members of our Continuum of Care...but the living ain't easy. Not for those 7,800 who are or will be newly homeless, and not for those who do their best to help others end their homelessness.

## VOICE MAIL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

By Gale Brownell

Imagine what it might be like if you were job or house hunting and you had no phone. That's a very daunting task! The Sonoma County Task Force for the Homeless has had a partnership since 2002 with the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Rohnert Park to provide free voicemail to people who are without telephone service. The Baha'is provide all the technical support and the Task Force does the "marketing" and outreach to homeless service organizations that assign voicemail boxes to clients who need them. The Task Force also pays for the phone service. For the past two years, we have had the good fortune of receiving a grant from the Sebastopol Rotary Club to cover the costs for the West County phone service.

Each person is assigned a phone number with a private voicemail box number. This makes it possible for them to leave a message phone number for any business or personal matter without disclosing that they are homeless. Clients use voicemail for many reasons, including family reunification and healthcare, in addition to job and housing contacts. The system averages about 1,400 calls per month.

Organizations that participate by helping clients obtain voicemail service include Catholic Charities, COTS, The Living Room, Petaluma Peoples' Services, Goodwill, and West County Community Services. Members of the Health Care for the Homeless collaborative have also requested access for their clients. If you know someone who could benefit from this service, please refer them to a participating organization.

### REMEMBERING DEBRA STEIN

Affordable housing advocates were saddened to learn of the death of Debra Stein, president of GCA Strategies, on July 31st from complications related to a rare neurological disease. She was 48. Ms. Stein was nationally known for her innovative work that developed support for affordable housing. She presented a very valuable workshop on Community Acceptance Strategies co-sponsored by the Task Force during Affordable Housing Week in 2008. Her website, [www.gcastrategies.com](http://www.gcastrategies.com), has very useful, informative strategies for local practitioners. Ms. Stein will be widely mourned.

## TASK FORCE WORK IN PROGRESS

### Committee and Project Updates

**ADVOCACY AND FUNDING COMMITTEE:** The Task Force asked Senator Feinstein to include homeless people as a protected class in pending Hate Crimes legislation. We wrote four federal legislators requesting continued supplemental funding for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. We wrote to Congressman Thompson expressing support for health care reform with universal coverage and a strong public option. We encouraged advocacy in favor of the first affordable rental housing in the River Area proposed by Burbank Housing Development Corporation and Community Housing Santa Rosa at Fife Creek. The Task Force is looking for new energy on our Advocacy efforts since our Advocacy and Funding Chair is leaving the Board. Contact [scfhmls@pacbell.net](mailto:scfhmls@pacbell.net).

**EMERGENCY FOOD & SHELTER PROGRAM (EFSP) FUNDING:** \$520,322 was distributed this year to 28 programs of 20 different agencies in two separate funding rounds. This was three times more than usual, due to a Congressional supplemental allocation in Fall 2008, and additional Federal Stimulus funding in Spring 2009. Interim Reports were submitted in July and programs appear to be on track. The Task Force administers EFSP funds and we're pleased that compliance has improved every year of the last five. Our 2008 Agency Final Reports had only one very small compliance issue this year, and that was quickly resolved.

**EDUCATION:** The Task Force co-sponsored Affordable Housing Week in May and co-produced the workshop, "Unlocking Doors to Affordable Rents". We continue to make community presentations and to offer rel-

## ***Task Force Work in Progress...continued from page 9***

evant speakers at our monthly General Meetings. We do media appearances and write news articles. To secure a speaker or get involved in community education, contact Nick Stewart at [scfthmls@pacbell.net](mailto:scfthmls@pacbell.net).

### **PUBLICATIONS:**

**REPORTER NEWSLETTER:** We publish 3 issues a year and invite input and submissions for our Fall issue by October 6th at [gberland@aol.com](mailto:gberland@aol.com). Issues are archived for download on our web site.

**[www.sonomacountyhomeless.org](http://www.sonomacountyhomeless.org)** offers the Homeless Resource Guide for download or online use, Requests for Proposal for EFSP funds, links to local and national resources, material on our October in Paradise fundraiser, including our online auction, service directories, and information on homelessness and Task Force projects. Please send any content/format suggestions to [gberland@aol.com](mailto:gberland@aol.com).

**ANNUAL MEETING/BOARD ELECTION:** New Board members will be elected at the Task Force Annual Meeting on Monday September 14, 2009, at 9:00 am at the First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery St. Santa Rosa. Members recorded in our database are eligible to vote or run and have been notified. We are accepting new voting memberships up to the time of the election, including on site on the 14th. Our regular monthly General Meeting will follow the Election at 9:30 am. The new Board will elect officers at its September meeting.

**OFFICE/STAFF:** Sandra Haggin, our Program Assistant for the last three years through the Senior Community Employment Program, has left the agency. We express our deepest gratitude for her years of dedicated, dependable, caring service. Fawn Moran, our half-time Operations Manager, is now working with some great volunteers, including Eddie Phipps-Bennett, Angelina Byrne, and Megan Lawrence, to keep the Task Force office open and functioning most of the time. Please be patient if we're not here to answer your call, and do phone before you stop by to be sure staff is available.

### **FUNDRAISING — HOW YOU ARE SUPPORTING US:**

The funds that keep the Task Force running come from our community. In addition to October in Paradise (see Article p.1), memberships, and donations, we participate in iGive, MySpace, and are exploring other online giving options. We are a part of the CommunitySmart program, and accept Vehicle Donations. The Task Force welcomes planned gifts, bequests and tax-deductible donations for program operations as well as designated gifts to our Fund for the Homeless for services such as Voicemail, Resource Guides, and annual Spirit of Service awards. Task Force funds come entirely from private donations, membership, and events, except for EFSP, Health Care for the Homeless, and special grant-funded projects,

The Task Force maintains a prudent operational reserve, strengthened in 2008 through the generous bequest of Betty Bock. Financial reports are available at 575-4494 or [scfthmls@pacbell.net](mailto:scfthmls@pacbell.net).

### **COORDINATION PROJECTS**

*The Task Force facilitates these projects or is an active participant. We help to develop and integrate activities in the community to assure more effective and efficient services.*

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS:** The Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Collaborative is moving steadily toward the goal of universal access to integrated care for homeless people countywide. This includes primary health care, mental health, substance abuse, oral health and homeless services. We've developed specialized screening and care standards, and an integrated case management system. We've chosen to pursue the MiVia patient-owned medical record system developed through St. Joseph Health System and used now with farm workers. We're now refining these three system components, adapting them to each discipline's intake, data, and service systems, and getting ready to pilot test the systems in different agencies and disciplines. We plan to follow this with broad implementation in agencies countywide. We're also address-

## ***Task Force Work in Progress...continued from page 10***

ing discharge planning. The Collaborative was solicited by Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit to submit a proposal for medical respite for homeless people being discharged from hospitals. We investigated program models and collaboratively designed an interagency recuperative care program lead by Catholic Charities. We submitted that proposal to Kaiser Permanente and plan to pursue the program as best we can whether or not it is funded. We're continuing to identify service gaps and coordinating to fill them. We now have participation from all three major hospitals, Public Health, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services, community clinics, and homeless services countywide. The Task Force originated and facilitates this community-wide voluntary group, which is chaired by Dory Escobar of St. Joseph Health System. It is supported by the Task Force as a project of the whole community, as part of our convening function. Contact Georgia Berland at gberland@aol.com or 575-4494.

**ENCAMPMENT SWEEPS/ALTERNATIVES:** We continue to work with the interagency Community Health Outreach Worker (CHOW) Team to respond to concerns regarding encampments. Members try to find and assist people who would be displaced by sweeps, with the cooperation of City of Santa Rosa officials and the City/County Creek Stewards Program.. We still hope to devise longer-term, more effective solutions both for public agencies to protect health and safety, and for residents of encampments. We plan to work with the County and other jurisdictions as we move forward. Contact Georgia Berland, 575-4494 or scfthmls@pacbell.net.

**WINTER WARMTH:** Our clearinghouse for coats, jackets, blankets, sleeping bags, and other warm gear is closed for the season, but beginning to gear up to accept and redistribute from Fall drives. In 2008-09 we distributed about 1900 items through homeless service agencies countywide. Thanks to all our wonderful donors and partners who run coat and blanket drives and keep so many homeless people warm and dry! For information on how to help, please contact Fawn at 575-4494 or scfthmls@pacbell.net.

**COURT HOMELESS PROTOCOL PROJECT:** Originated by Judge Gary Nadler and developed by a criminal justice, health, and homeless services consortium coordinated by the Task Force, Project Intercept of California Human Development runs this comprehensive re-entry program supporting Homeless defendants, supported by a two-year CA Dept. of Community Services grant for \$87,000 that is ending in early 2010. We are exploring additional funding sources to expand and continue the program. Contact Georgia Berland at gberland@aol.com or 575-4494.

**HOMELESS RESOURCE GUIDE:** The Sonoma County Human Services Commission has helped replenish the stock of Homeless Resource Guides, and the Task Force now has more to distribute. Updated English and Spanish versions are in the works and we hope to raise funds to print them once the draft is completed through the Volunteer Center and 2-1-1 service. The Guides remain extremely popular. Many unsheltered people live far from telephones and the Guide helps them see the range of services available and to know when to try to contact them. We prioritize the distribution of the printed guides for unsheltered homeless people. One can also use the online version at [www.sonomacountyhomeless.org](http://www.sonomacountyhomeless.org), or download the booklet format, cut it to size and staple it for distribution. Contact Fawn at 575-4494 or scfthmls@pacbell.net.

### **Task Force for the Homeless**

General Meetings First Monday of Every Month  
Sept 14, Oct 5, Nov 2, Dec 7 9:30-11 AM  
First United Methodist Church, McMullin Room  
1551 Montgomery Drive, Santa Rosa  
All Organizations & Individuals Are Welcome!

### **Continuum of Care Planning Group**

October 15, 2009 1:00 to 4 PM  
Sonoma County Community Development Commission  
1440 Guerneville Road, Santa Rosa  
All Jurisdictions, Departments & Agencies  
Dealing With Homelessness Are Welcome!



**SONOMA COUNTY TASK FORCE  
FOR THE HOMELESS**  
*Safe, Secure, and Affordable Housing for All*  
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**Individual or Group (Church/Synagogue, Business, Agency, Organization) Annual Membership**

- Regular \$25    Supporting \$50    Contributing \$120    Limited Income \$12    Complimentary  
  
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Expiration Date (Month & Year)

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(Signature)

**Membership Dues and Contributions are Tax Deductible!**

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**Please return form and payment to: Sonoma County Task Force for the Homeless  
3315 Airway Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95403**