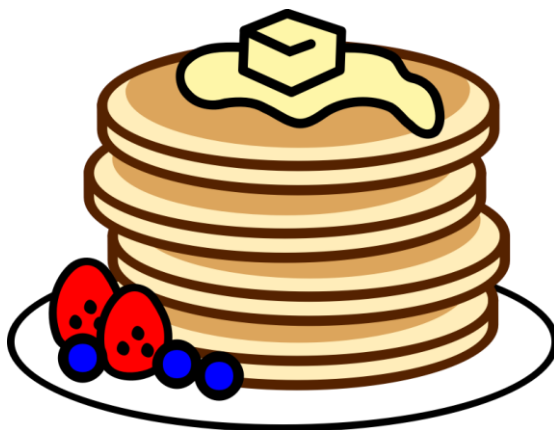


## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

November 14, 2014

### Column #1



## BRUNCH TO BENEFIT PENINSULA'S HOMELESS WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

by Wanda Sue Parrott

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Pancake Brunch benefitting programs for homeless women of the Monterey Peninsula will be Sun., Nov. 16, 2014, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Elks Lodge, 150 Mar Vista Dr., Monterey.

The program will include special guest speakers who include members of the local homeless community, and a silent auction. Tickets are \$20.

Besides pancakes, the brunch banquet catered by Vista Events of Monterey will include hot beverages, juice, sizzling bacon, succulent sausage, eggs and other mouth-watering foods for build-your-own-breakfast fans.

Sponsor is The Friends of Homeless Women, a fundraising arm of The Fund for Homeless Women, which meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wed. each month, 10 a.m., St. Mary's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Pacific Grove.

Purpose of meetings, which are open to the community, is education about local resources for and about homeless women. Participants collaborate and share information about the public and private-sector services available to the growing community of homeless women, which ranges from teens with babies to 80-something grandmothers living in cars.

The Fund for Homeless Women is a field-of-interest fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County that supports programs and services for homeless women on the Monterey Peninsula.

The first pancake brunch fundraiser in 2013 served 400 people and raised more than \$36,000; nearly \$33,000 went to assist with harm reduction for homeless women on the Monterey Peninsula.

The One Starfish Safe Parking and Supportive Services pilot program, under direction of Dr. Tia Sukin, founder, and Rosemarie Axton, associate director, was a principal beneficiary. It is now open and offering overnight parking and support with access to housing, income, and health care at one host church site; at least five other houses of worship have also expressed interest in participating.

Pacific Grove city councilmen Rudy Fischer and Ken Cuneo compiled a Spring 2014 report entitled "A Homeless Challenge—The search for a long-term solution" which cites statistics based on the 2013 Monterey County Homeless Census and Survey Reports 2,590 homeless people in total; of this number, 1,244 homeless individuals live on the Peninsula. Estimates show that one third of the homeless are women. 350 women live outside or in their cars each night on the Monterey Peninsula. These women range in age from teens who are moms to octogenarians who live alone in vehicles or tents.

Reasons for homelessness: 41 percent—loss of home; 26 percent—loss of job; 14 percent—divorce. Health problems, family crises and mobility among “travelers” made up the balance.

Councilmen Fischer and Cuneo conducted a matching fund campaign in which Pacific Grove would donate \$1 per resident to a fund to help the homeless, provided three other Peninsula cities joined PG.

To date, Sand City, Monterey, and Carmel are part of the matching-grant coalition. Seaside will consider joining at its mid-year budget session.

Timothy Barrett, candidate for Monterey City Council, organized the first public forum to address homelessness, held at Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) in 2012. Barrett is a supporter of the Interfaith-Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP), previously sponsored by Shelter Outreach.

I-HELP provides a daily meal and shelter to approximately 25 homeless men at 30 local churches and synagogues. A steering committee of local faith communities took over I-HELP operation on Feb. 1, 2014, and applied for a 501(c)3 non-profit status under the name of Outreach Unlimited. It has been approved by the Federal Government, and California State Application has been made.

The new Board of Directors is now operating the I-HELP Program for men. An I-HELP program for women is on the drawing board for the next round of fundraising.

Marian Penn, Kathy Whilden, and Fr. Michael Reid are co-organizers of the Fund for Homeless Women and the Friends of Homeless Women. Linda Henderson is chairperson for the brunch; planning sessions are held on Mondays at Christian Church of Pacific Grove.

For information about volunteering, donating silent auction items, or ordering tickets, call 831-372-7432.

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Wanda Sue Parrott is author of *The Boondoggler's Bible—How to Fight Like City Hall to Win!*

Proceeds from book sales benefit homeless women of Monterey Peninsula. Details from [amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com](mailto:amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com).