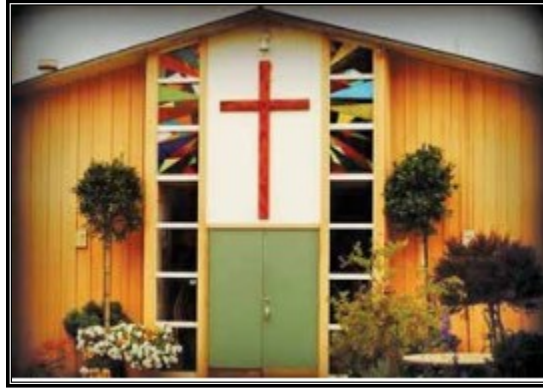


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

October 21, 2016

Column #106

Part 2 – Whatever Happened to the Matching Funds Challenge?



AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME

By Wanda Sue Parrott

VOTING got you down? If yes, welcome to the 2016 election draggin' train.

That's a metaphor for being off track or far afield of intended purpose which, in this case, is to elect those who will best serve America's most prominent and pressing needs.

In political jargon, "needs" are translated into "issues" and issues are expressed as "ideas."

Victor Hugo said it best: "Greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come."

In America today, the issue whose time has come is homelessness

So, what can you do? Follow the lead of media band-wagoneers and help predict the future.

Become An Armchair Prognosticator

You don't have to be a visionary or psychic to predict the outcome of things. You're already foretelling the future if you name winners in sporting events, anticipate whether the stock market will rise or fall, or plan your weekend around potential weather conditions.

TV, radio, and social media are full of prognosticators guessing the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. Are you hooked, meaning a "news junkie"? Your alternative as a private citizen is to tune out such goings on and just wait to see how these events turn out or become active in preventing them from getting worse. Or follow the lead of a few visionary locals who foresaw rising homelessness and did something about it.

Kickoff: Homeless In Paradise Conference

Timothy Barrett, now a member of Monterey City Council, organized the first local conference on Homelessness in Paradise back in 2012. Major spinoffs were:

Following the forum at Monterey Peninsula College, the Fund for Homeless Women was founded by Father Michael Reid, then associate pastor at St. Mary's By the Sea Episcopal Church in Pacific Grove, Marian Penn and Kathy Whilden.

It is a field-of-interest fund administered by the Community Foundation for Monterey County (CFMC). <http://www.cfmco.org/nonprofits/grants/special-purpose-grants/fund-for-homeless-women/> Friends of Homeless Women, outreach arm for the fund, was also established. For the past four years,

Friends of Homeless Women has met the fourth Wed. of the month at St. Mary's by the Sea Episcopal Church, 146 12th St., Pacific Grove. Visitors are welcome. <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofhomelesswomen/>

Spinoffs included formation of non-profits like One Starfish Safe Parking Program for women, Gathering for Women and Interfaith Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP) for Women.

Homeless Outreach, grassroots group dedicated to homelessness-in-general, started meeting once a month on Monday at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 501 El Dorado St., Monterey. Visitors are welcome. For details contact Sandy Larson at slarson2130@gmail.com.

Rudy Fischer, Pacific Grove councilmember, was inspired to form a coalition for the homeless of cities on the Monterey Peninsula three years ago. By pledging \$1 per resident to a Matching Funds Challenge established by PG, members would jointly decide how to share grant money with agencies that help the homeless throughout the peninsula.

For its first round of operation, Monterey, Carmel, Sand City and Pacific Grove formed the coalition. Seaside, Del Rey Oaks and Marina abstained.

Currently, Pacific Grove, Carmel and Monterey are participants in the matching funds challenge, which is now being administered by the City of Monterey. Granting of the current fund's \$55,500 will be announced in the near future. At that time, a recap of how the first round of funds was distributed will also be published.

What A Difference Four Years Made

Meanwhile, last week a premiere public look at Marina's houseless situation was held at the Epiphany Lutheran Church. Co-sponsors of the Community Homeless Housing Discussion were: Supervisor Jane Parker, Marina city councilmember Nancy Amadeo; Father Jon Perez.

This homeless-in-paradise meeting featured houseless individuals speaking for and about themselves.

Fr. Perez's recap included the suggestion, "Maybe (hold a) public forum every six months, to see that what we are doing is working and anything new has come up. . . A place where people can have a voice. It seems that a lot of programs are being offered and a lot of money is being spent, but I just do not know if everything is connecting."

He also said, "As for funds, Epiphany has put in over \$16,000 in grant requests for food and emergency supplies for 2017. All the requests are 'delayed'."

As the idea/issue whose time has come spreads in greater transparency throughout the paradise where we live, you can help predict a winning future by casting your vote on Nov. 8 for candidates pledged to help end homelessness.

And, you can help by supporting the Harvest for Hope special benefit brunch for One Starfish Safe Parking Program, Sun., Oct. 23, Elks Lodge, 150 Mar Vista Dr., Monterey. Call Sara Myers at 831-324-4664.

(Next week: Homelessness in Marina.)

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