

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #107

Part 3 – Whatever Happened to the Matching Funds Challenge?



CAMPING BETWEEN MARINA AND THE DUMP

By Wanda Sue Parrott

CHECKING out rumors takes time. If clues were clear, then confirming places homeless people sleep would be easy. Instead, hearsay needs fact checking.

At issue is a claim I heard at last week's Democratic Women of Monterey luncheon that Seaside's unwanted campers and vans now gather on a county road between Marina and Last Chance Mercantile.

An unidentified woman said, "The sheriff's looking the other way, so Marina's getting worried. . ." Here is what I know that's factual:

Fact Versus Rumor

Marina declined to join the Matching Funds Challenge proposed by council member Rudy Fischer of Pacific Grove almost three years ago in which participating towns on the peninsula contributed \$1 per resident. Seaside and Del Rey Oaks also declined participation in the fund that covers peninsula-wide homelessness.

A coalition of representatives from member cities selected non-profit agencies that serve the homeless to receive grants.

Pacific Grove administered the fund during its first year of operation (2014- 2015) in which \$49,012 was raised. Participants, besides PG, were Monterey, Carmel, and Sand City.

Where The Money Went

As of Jan. 1, 2015, first recipient of grant money was Pass the Word Ministry for its One Starfish Safe Parking Program that helps mainly homeless women who sleep in their vehicles: \$15,000.

On April 14, 2015, Outreach Unlimited was awarded \$6,000 and Coalition of Homeless Service Providers was granted \$5,000.

On Aug. 27, 2015, the Salvation Army Monterey Peninsula Corp (Good Samaritan Center in Sand City) was granted \$5,000. At that time, The Community Foundation for Monterey County, on behalf of the Fund for Homeless Women, was given \$5,000; also, The Gathering Place (now Gathering for Women) was given \$5,000.

Undisbursed funds amounting to \$8,012 remained in the fund, to be held by PG pending unanticipated need for emergency or crisis arising from then-anticipated heavy El Nino rains.

Since potential crises didn't materialize during winter 2015, the \$8,012 was added to the 2016 matching fund which totals \$55,500. Another batch of second-round recipients will be presented by Kim Bui-Burton tot the Monterey City Council meeting on Tues., Nov. 1.

Marina In Motion

Marina city council member Nancy Amadeo, an honoree at the 2016 Outstanding Women's Event sponsored by the Monterey County Commission on the Status of Women, has lived in Marina for the past 28 years.

She is immediate past-president of Marina in Motion, a non-profit whose Part Three Camping between Marina and the Dump Whatever Happened to the Matching Funds Challenge? primary mission is to hold forums on issues of importance to the community. She helped sponsor the recent "Community Discussion on Homelessness" at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Marina, along with Supervisor Jane Parker and Father Jon Perez.

According to Nancy. "We are lacking a homeless program in Marina; however, our police department works with our homeless population and our churches doing outreach first."

"Enforcement is a last resort," Nancy Amadeo says. "Sleeping (camping) is banned in Marina. Overnight parking of RVs on city streets and parking lots is also banned." Marina currently has no emergency shelters.

I commented to Nancy via e-mail about the Matching Funds Challenge, "Marina never joined, so I presume Marina is handling the issue independently."

She responded: "Marina does not contribute to any fund to ameliorate homelessness. Council believes that they have done their part because of the number of non-profits that provide housing in Marina. We did provide the land for Interim to build Rockrose Gardens. All other housing came about as a result of the closure of Ft. Ord."

As a Marina council member, Nancy is "concerned about the unaddressed issues related to homelessness not just in Marina but throughout the region. The skyrocketing cost of housing, the increase in short term rentals that have taken housing off the market and driven up rents, and the lack of affordable housing are all issues that are not being addressed. And we need to provide a safe place for people who are living in their vehicles to sleep."

Marina's non-profits include:

Interim, Inc., Rockrose Gardens, 831- 649-4522. www.interiminc.org

Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I—HELP) for men and women. Contact I-HELP at P. O. Box 1447, Marina, CA 93933. 831-251-8663. www.wehelpihelp.org

Community Homeless Solutions offering the 12th Street Day Center (warm showers and washer/dryer) at 299 Twelfth St., Suite C, Marina. Contact CHS at P. O. Box 1340, Marina, CA 93933. 831- 384-3388

<https://www.facebook.com/Community-Homeless-Solutions-Shelter-Outreach-Plus-1599270760311473/>

Fr. Jon Perez says feedback from the homeless and RVers at the recent forum was very positive. "If we accomplished nothing else on Thursday, having our homeless felt heard was a very great thing." He says they were not happy with the Sheriff.

Anyone know why?

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