

## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

September 1, 2017

Column #151

### Dining without Dollars—Part 12



*“This is Monterey Beach.  
We, the homeless, see and think  
just like the tourist and locals do—  
This place is paradise.”  
Photo and text by Tiffany S.  
From “What We See--Photographs by  
Women without Shelter”  
On exhibit through Sept. 4, 2017  
Monterey Museum of Art—Pacific St.  
559 Pacific St.  
Monterey, CA 93940*

### IF FAIRY TALES COULD COME TRUE, WOULD PRINCE CHARMING FEED YOU?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

**GROWING** up challenged, being rescued by Prince Charming, and living happily ever after is a fairy tale little girl have been fed since story-candy was invented.

“I’m homeless because of those lies,” a 70-something One Starfish Safe Parking Program participant said recently. “Do you know why?”

“Tell me, please.”

“If girls were taught the truth, a lot of them might never marry.”

“What do you mean by truth?”

“Girls should be warned that Prince Charming can be a heartbreaking tomcat who strays and sprays. Others become bores. My husband turned into a wife beater. I reacted by nearly killing him with a butcher knife. My naïve belief in love is now limited to dogs.”

“Do you get lonely dining alone?”

“I’m not alone except by choice. True, I sleep in my car, but often have dinner with the Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program for Women at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Monterey. Many women in I-HELP and Gathering for Women were victims of broken dreams.”

“If it were possible to warn them, what would you say?”

“If fairy tales could come true, would Prince Charming feed you?”

### Victims Of Broken Love

A blonde mother of four speaks openly in “What We See--Photographs by Women Without Shelter,” program that is available at the Monterey Museum of Art. Tiffany came here from Modesto.

Tiffany and I met last spring at an I-HELP for Women dinner. Her “Homeless in Paradise” photo illustrating this column ends this Dining without Dollars series.

Tiffany’s homelessness began after she lost two loved ones (men) in twelve years. By 2014 she was in deep depression.

Tiffany holds both a bachelor’s and master’s degree. She was a grant writer and business plan creator before depression took its toll. She moved first to Seaside, but says, “Now I only move around the City of Monterey. It’s safer to be homeless in Monterey. There is less drug use and less trafficking.”

### **Real Life Prince Charmings**

Women aren’t the only victims of broken love.

I’ve met some real-life Prince Charmings among the men of I-HELP whom I’ve come to know over the past four years. They were loyal loving husbands who were devastated by the loss of their wives and wound up in I-HELP, sober and working their ways back up.

As Kenny Ray explained it recently while escorting a busload of I-HELP men to my church, “We’re a team.” They dine together at night and go separate ways by day.

### **Breaking Bread Together Or Alone**

Kathy Whilden, a co-founder of the Fund for Homeless Women, recently commented that the 2017 Point in Time Census indicates the local programs that evolved during the past five years to help the homeless women of the Monterey Peninsula “are working.”

They include the umbrella social arm, Friends of Homeless Women, and the Fund for Homeless Women, Gathering for Women, One Starfish Safe Parking Program and I-HELP for Women.

Whilden says the 2015 Homeless Census & Survey indicated half the homeless people in Monterey County were women.

In comparison, the 2017 Homeless Census & Survey shows only 37 percent of the county’s homeless population are women, a significant drop of around 13 percent in the past two years.

Meanwhile, whether the homeless of the Monterey Peninsula choose to break bread together, or eat alone, the Food Bank for Monterey County serves as surrogate breadwinner, providing free food if and when Prince Charming falls short.

Mark your calendar, and contact Melissa Kendrick, executive director, for details: [mkendrick@food4hungry.org](mailto:mkendrick@food4hungry.org), phone 831-758-1523.

### **Monterey Peninsula Food Banks Schedule**

Carmel Valley Village: Rippling River Apartments, 53 Carmel Valley Rd., 10:30 a.m.-11 a.m.; Fri., Sept. 1; Fri., Oct. 6; Fri., Nov. 3; Fri., Dec. 1.

Marina: Marina Library, 188 Seaside Ave., 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.; Mon., Sept. 4; Mon., Oct. 2; Mon., Nov. 6; Mon., Dec. 4.

Monterey: Shoreline Community Church, 2500 Garden Rd., 10 a.m.–11 a.m.; Fri., Sept. 1; Fri., Oct. 6; Fri., Nov.3; Fri., Dec. 8.

Pacific Grove: St. Angela’s Catholic Church, 161 9th St., 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.; Mon., Sept. 4; Mon., Oct.2; Mon., Nov. 6; Mon., Dec. 4.

Seaside: St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 1475 La Salle Ave., 9 a.m.-10 a.m.; Tues., Sept. 5 and Thurs., Sept. 21 (10 a.m.–11:30 a.m.); Tues., Oct. 3 and Thurs., Oct. 19 (10 a.m.–11:30 a.m.); Tues., Nov. 7; Tues., Dec. 5.

Meanwhile, at last week's Pasta with the Pastors fundraiser for I-HELP, Tiffany spoke about her bout with homelessness and announced what sounds like a fairy tale beginning. She got married.

Congratulations, Tiffany. May you live happily ever after!

Next week starts a new series: Homeless Hotspots

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Photo by Tiffany S. From "What We See," exhibit at Monterey Museum of Art— Pacific St.; used for educational/illustrative purposes only; no copyright infringement intended.

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