

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #2



CONCERT TO BENEFIT HOUSING PROGRAM FOR SINGLE HOMELESS WOMEN

by Wanda Sue Parrott

A FUNDRAISING concert to benefit “Women in Transition” (housing for single homeless women) will be given by Shelter Outreach Plus and acclaimed Monterey-based blues band Red Beans & Rice on Sun., Nov. 9, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the Monterey Fairgrounds Turf Club & Patio, 2004 Fairground Road, Monterey.

The indoor-outdoor gala “Dance upon Injustice” will feature dancing, beverages, food (including the namesake red beans and rice salad) and a silent auction. Tickets are \$35 each; reservations are not required.

Supporting sponsors include: Silverie Properties, LLC; Eric Johnsen, MBA, Equias Alliance; Debby Beck, CRS, GRI, Sotheby’s International Realty; donors of silent auction items, and participants in the Donate Back Program.

Under the Donate Back Program, \$100 buys two tickets plus one ticket to be donated back, or \$500 buys 10 tickets plus 5 donated back. The tickets donated back are given to someone associated with Shelter Outreach Programs, like Mia, who might otherwise be unable to attend.

Last spring, Mia and her three children fled domestic violence. When they arrived at the Seaside shelter operated by Shelter Outreach Plus, she was pregnant, bruised, and exhausted. Six months after completing her customized development plan, welcoming her fourth child into the world, and moving into a home of her own, Mia states “Life is different for me now. . . My self-worth was so terribly low when I arrived at the shelter. . . now I’m not afraid.”

From Marina to Pacific Grove to Pebble Beach, 350 Monterey Peninsula women are currently homeless; unknown numbers of women remain unidentified victims of domestic abuse (physical violence and mental/emotional abuse).

According to Reyes Bonilla, Executive Director of Marina-based Shelter Outreach Plus, the largest provider of services for homeless and abused persons in Monterey County, “Every night nearly 200 men, women and children escaping homelessness and domestic violence stay under one of our roofs.”

Founded in 1978, Shelter Outreach Plus now employs 22 staff members and has more than 300 volunteers throughout Monterey County. In 2013, SOP emergency shelters provided housing and support services for up to six months to 489 adults and families; transitional housing programs provided housing and support services, for up to 24 months, to 193 adults and their families.

A start toward serving the most highly overlooked segment of Monterey area women without adequate housing is the Shelter Outreach Plus “Women in Transition” program slated to open in February 2015. Located in Marina, it will provide 12 to 18 beds to single women who have no children.

Shelter Outreach Plus is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, charitable organization whose ongoing programs include:

- ***Mobile Outreach to the street homeless.*** More than 700 homeless persons have been helped in 2014.
- ***Emergency Shelters for Women & Children, and for Men:*** More than 62 beds are provided every night.
- ***Transitional Housing for Women & Families, and for Men:*** Each night 45 units provide 135 beds.

Shelter Outreach Plus, founding administrators of the I-HELP for Men program, annually serves more than 2000 people experiencing homelessness.

For concert details, or to inquire about making donations for the silent auction, ticket donate back project, or forthcoming holidays, please call 831-384-3388 or send e-mail to info@shelteroutreachplus.org. Donations may be made at www.shelteroutreachplus.org. Mail address is: Shelter Outreach Plus, P. O. Box 1340, Marina, CA 93933.

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Photo courtesy of <https://www.pxfuel.com/en/free-photo-jmyya>.

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.