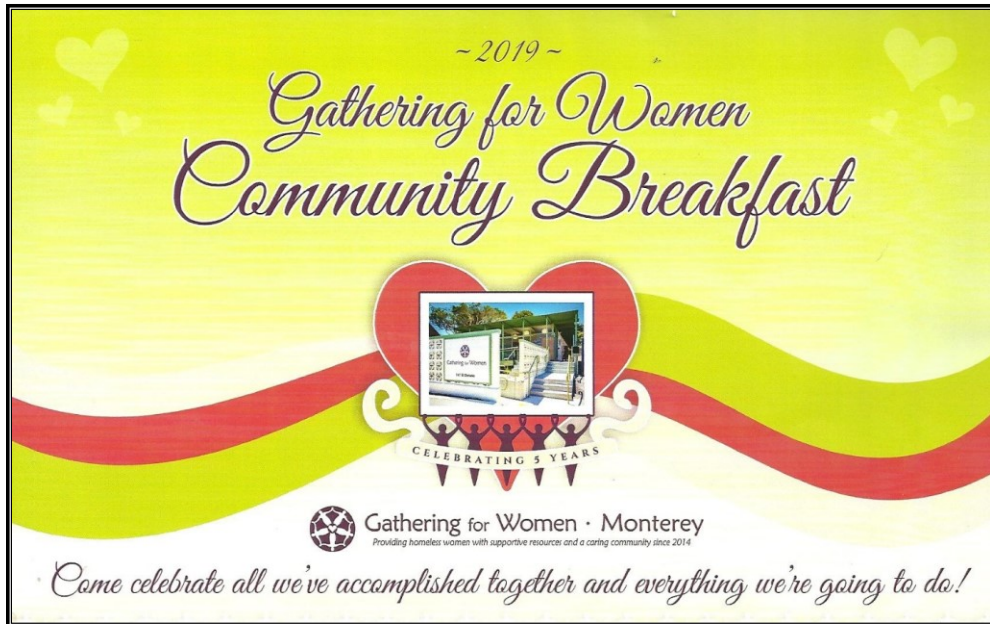


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

March 15-21, 2019

PENINSULA PULCHRITUDE - Part 11



MORE HELP FROM 'HEAP' (TOILETS ON TIRES AND TINY HIGH RISES)?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

COMPETING for their slice of the \$10 million in HEAP funding is keeping the Seaside Boondoggle Busters busier than Olympians in exercise mode before the Games begin.

If agreement is reached on various projects that could relieve homeless crises in Seaside, the "Team" (including the city manager, city attorney, homeless committee, mayor, city council and staff) will apply for funding for more than just the shelter for 35-50 homeless women and children that's already on their drawing board.

If granted funding, the county-owned facility at 1292 Broadway will be rehabilitated and administered in partnership with Community Human Services and the Gathering for Women.

Safe Place For Women And Children

The doors will be closed at 7:00 p.m. except to working women authorized for late arrival.

Next morning, guests must vacate the premises by 7:30 a.m.

Children will go to school during the week, and adults will be transported back to the Gathering for Women day center at 147 Eldorado St., Monterey during the week.

It's a shelter, not a home, but it's a start! Weekend whereabouts remain to be resolved.

Additional potential projects like portable sanitary facilities and even tiny laundry units might be transported around Seaside, thus showing other peninsula cities what they, too, can do to mitigate growing signs of homelessness in "Paradise," such as feces underfoot on beaches and trails.

One-tenth of Monterey Peninsula students were homeless, according to statistics shared by the Monterey Peninsula Union School District last week.

Current estimate of homeless women on the peninsula is 600.

Of 932 women served in 2018 by Gathering for Women, 250 claimed Seaside as their home.

The proposed sanitary facilities equal Olympics gold in comparison to the normal bronze-level plastic port-a-pots at public events and alongside roads.

Toilets On Tires And Tiny High Rises?

For instance, a Power Point at the March 7 Seaside City Council meeting showed top-quality tiny-room mobile toilet and shower units on platforms with wheels with fat rubber tires; a similar unit contained mobile laundry facilities.

Also, potential mini-apartments were stacked on acreage near Seaside High School in a Lego-style high-rise honeycomb. Not exactly beautiful like Honolulu, Hawaii, but equally viable where ground space is sparse and the sky is the limit.

April 1 is the deadline for submission of peninsula cities' applications for the HEAP continuum-of-care funding under administration of the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers in Marina.

The Church-Home Concept

Meanwhile, is the church-home concept an alternative to housing? Seaside has 35 houses of worship and 35,000 residents, equaling about one religious institution per 1000 residents.

Churches like Oceanview Baptist host I-HELP programs as substitutes for homes. Guests sleep in the sanctuaries after being served a free dinner each night.

What Is A Church Home?

In his March 10, 2019 sermon "No Place Like Home," Reverend Axel H. Gehrmann, co-minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula (UUCMP) questions what home actually means. Rev. Axel writes:

"Last September Elaine and I moved from Pacific Grove to Seaside. We found a little house for rent up the street from Seaside City Hall. . .683 square feet. Cozy. . . . It took a while for us to settle in and figure what to put where...

"Now it looks like our place, we know our neighbors, and it feels like home.

"But I still have a vivid memory of how unsettled I felt while we were looking for a place to live, and uncertain whether we would find one, whether we would have a home.

"...UUCMP has been supporting the I-HELP Program (Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program) for quite a while.

"...There is a dramatic rise in homelessness along the coast and rural areas, which continues to rise each day.

"...The US Census Bureau says over 40 million men and women live in poverty, and many of them are essentially an illness, an accident or a paycheck away from living on the streets.

"What is a home? Is home a place where angels tread, like heaven, heaven on earth?"

“Is home a memory of the past, or a dream of the future? Or is it something in between?”

“Perhaps the greatest tragedy of homelessness is that without a home it is so much more difficult to be fully and deeply ourselves...”

“A real home is a wonderful, precious place. A place of connection with family and friends. A place of connection to our own hearts, a temple of the soul.

“...I find this church (UUCMP) really is a home for some of us. And what I like best about it is that it aspires to be a home for all of us—a place where anyone who enters will feel welcome. A place where everyone is accepted and respected...”

Is the Unitarian Universalist church at 490 Aguajito Road, Carmel, a metaphor for the City of Seaside?

If yes, the spotlight recently highlighted women. At its March 7 city council meeting, Mayor Ian Oglesby proclaimed March 8 as International Women’s Day. By this time next year, the HEAP-funded shelter made possible by the Seaside Boondoggle Busters will hopefully be open, setting a peninsula-wide precedent.

How Can You Help?

If you’re unsheltered and in search of a place you feel needed, wanted and at home, visit the house of worship that most appeals to you. A church, temple or synagogue might provide sustenance you need until you’re again in a home of your own.

If you have a home, but want to help the homeless, you may wish to support the Gathering for Women whose second annual Community Breakfast falls on the date of its 5th anniversary.

The event is Thursday, April 4, 2019, 7:30 a.m.– 9:00 a.m., Ferrantes Bayview Ballroom at the Monterey Marriott Hotel, 350 Calle Principal, Monterey. The event is sponsored by Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. Tickets are \$40.

Details at www.gatheringforwomen.org, 831-241-6154.

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CREDIT: Flyer: Gathering for Women’s Second Annual Community Breakfast to be April 4 at the Marriott Hotel in Monterey.

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