

HOMELESS IN PARADISE
Week of May 24-30, 2019

PENINSULA PULCHRITUDE - Part 21



KNOCKING HOMELESSNESS OUT OF THE BALLPARK ONE HIT AT A TIME!!

By Wanda Sue Parrott

SLAMMING a homer out of the ball field is every baseball player’s dream. If local governments were ball teams, the metaphorical peninsula-wide “Homeless League’s” Monterey team won this week’s game!

Although the allegorical “Seaside Boondoggle Busters” kicked off the spring season by applying for hoped-for HEAP funding for co-partnering with Monterey County to host the Olympia Shelter for homeless women and children, the hypothetical “Monterey Matchmakers” stole the spotlight base on Tuesday when city council approved a Resolution that benefits all homeless people—men, women, children--and probably some of their pets.

Therefore, Monterey Matchmakers win the first end-of-spring-season hypothetical “Santa at the Bat Award.”

Why?

Winning With A Resolution

Monterey City Manager Hans Uslar’s recommendation that Monterey City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the transfer and appropriation of \$53,366 funding for the 2019 Monterey Homeless Challenge Recipients (Not a Project under CEQA Article 20, Section 15378 and Under General Rule Article 5, Section 15061), appeared on the Consent Calendar of the Monterey City Council meeting, Tuesday, May 21.

That means \$53,366 of Monterey Homeless Challenge money will be divided among these eight currently designated non-profit services/agencies that benefit the peninsula's homeless population:

Central Coast for Independent Living, \$14,000 for independent lodging;

Community Human Services, \$5,000 for the homeless young adult program;

Gathering for Women - Monterey, \$6,366 for meal services;

Interim, Inc., \$5,000 for hotel vouchers;

One Starfish Safe Parking Program, \$6,000 for operational support;

Outreach Unlimited - Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Programs (I-HELP) for men and women, \$7,000 for Navigational staffing;

The Salvation Army - Monterey Peninsula Corps, \$5,000 for transportation and hotel vouchers;

Veterans Transition Center, \$5,000 for transportation and hotel vouchers.

Second, the Resolution passed the same day Governor Gavin Newsom announced formation of a California Homeless Task Force, stating: "We've got work to do. This is a national disaster!"

Monterey's Homeless League has a head start as evidenced by the report on the City's website at <https://monterey.org/City-Hall/City-Council>. Excerpts follow:

"DISCUSSION"

by Jay Punkar, Administrative Analyst, City of Monterey

Started in 2014 by the City of Pacific Grove City Council as a way to help homeless individuals who desire assistance, the Homeless Challenge Fund is an effort put forth by local municipalities to contribute \$1 per resident conditioned on at least two other cities on the Monterey Peninsula also agreeing to join the program and contribute funding. The following provides a summary of the previous Challenge Funds that have been created and funding distributed:

2014 – In September of 2014, after participation by the cities of Pacific Grove, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Sand City, and Monterey, the Pacific Grove City Council distributed \$45,000 to support the One Starfish Safe Parking Program, I-Help, the Gathering Place and Salvation Army Good Samaritan Center, the Fund for Homeless Woman, and the Coalition of Homeless Service Providers.

2016 – Led by the City of Monterey City Council, the Cities of Pacific Grove, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Sand City, and Monterey again agreed to participate in the Homeless Challenge Fund program and raised a total of \$50,083.20.

City of Monterey staff conducted a thorough interview and application process to better understand the needs to homeless individuals and the service providers and to determine contribution levels.

As a result, funding was dispersed to Interim, Inc., Community Human Services, The Salvation Army-- Monterey Peninsula Corps, Pass the Word Ministry, Gathering for Women, Coalition of Homeless Service Providers, and Al and Friends.

At the November 6, 2018, City Council Meeting, the City Council adopted Resolution #18-206 authorizing the re-initiation of the Homeless Challenge Fund and allocating funding. Subsequently, letters were sent out to all of the area cities requesting participation.

By February of 2019, the Cities of Pacific Grove, Carmel-by-the-Sea, and Sand City all agreed to participate. On March 14, 2019, applications were mailed to over 20 local homeless and meal providers services. As of the April 1, 2019, deadline, a total of 9 applications were received. . . A panel comprised of Assistant Police Chief Bill Clark, Community Development Director Kimberly Cole, and Library Director Inga Waite was tasked with evaluating the applications and deciding on funding levels. . .

The panel is recommending funding for 8 of the 9 service providers. . . . Upon expenditure of the funds, each agency will be required to provide a written report to the City detailing the impacts of the funding and the services that were provided. . . . The service providers as well as their clients are always very grateful and appreciative of any funding they receive. This continues to be a positive program showcasing community collaboration with a goal of helping community members on a region-wide basis. . . .

Therefore, it is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution allocating \$53,366 to the above listed recipients as part of the 2019 Homeless Challenge Fund.

MVP Award

The Resolution passed 5-0 just in time for the summer season to begin as recipients of HEAP funding are announced and results of the 2019 Homeless Census & Survey are received for Monterey County.

Between the time the first challenge was proposed by former Pacific Grove City Councilmember Rudy Fischer in 2014 and today, the ante per resident of participating cities rose to \$1.25. Rudy continues to advocate for affordable housing. Thus, he is hereby dubbed winner of the Monterey Homeless League's first metaphorical Most Valuable Player Award!

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Photo of Santa at the Bat

*santa at the bat
symbol of the homeless league
metaphor for hope...*

haiku by Wanda Sue Parrott

Photo of Rudy Fischer, courtesy of Rudy Fischer;
Columnist Rudy Fischer kicked off the peninsula-wide Matching Funds Challenge to help combat homelessness back in 2014 while serving as a member of the Pacific Grove City Council. He now writes "The Big Picture" housing series for the Cedar Street Times.

This column appears in the weekly edition of The Cedar Street Times, Pacific Grove, California's Hometown NEWSpaper at www.cedarstreettimes.com .

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