

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #48



WHEN OUR HEART IS IN A HOLY PLACE. . .

At last, I-HELP for Women is coming!

By Wanda Sue Parrott

STARTING in November, the Interfaith Homeless Emergency Lodging Program (I-HELP) sponsored by Outreach Unlimited of Marina will include women. The long-awaited news was announced by Karen Araujo at the Pasta with the Pastors fundraising dinner to benefit I-HELP Aug. 27 at San Carlos Cathedral in Monterey.

The combined efforts of advocates resulted in this victory, especially the Fund for Homeless Women whose grant money made it possible.

Starting with 14 women, 25–30 homeless women should gradually receive services men have been getting uninterrupted every night for the past 23 years: *nomadic shelter and nightly meals, provided to people currently experiencing homelessness on the Monterey Peninsula, by a network of committed congregations and dedicated community groups.*

The inclusion of women followed last year's push to save I-HELP after sponsor Shelter Outreach dropped the program in Feb. 2014. Through concerted efforts of volunteers, described in the Unitarian Universalist hymn as having "hearts that are in a holy place", St. Vincent de Paul became interim fiscal sponsor until newly formed non-profit Outreach Unlimited, 501 (c) (3), IRS #383934212 took over after Jan. 31, 2015.

Amazing Grace Works Wonders

Officers of Outreach Unlimited are: Bob Glick, Chair; John Clark, Vice-Chair; Natalie Fryberger, Secretary; Karen Araujo, Treasurer; Paul Klein, Member-at-Large; Morley Brown, Member-at-Large. The holy-place hymn describes the good works they do:

*When our heart is in a holy place
When our heart is in a holy place
We are blessed with love and amazing grace
When our heart is in a holy place.*

Copy this link in your browser to hear the inspiring song: www.youtube.com/watch?v=anNaBX5CRgA

Homeless People Sleep Here Each Month

Three faith-based organizations where homeless men have been fed and offered safe sleeping over the years are pictured here. Lack of space prevents picturing them all.



First Presbyterian Church of Monterey, 501 Eldorado St., Monterey, I-HELP participant and long-time site of Homeless Outreach meetings whose Notes by Sandy Larson compile homeless-service-sector happenings in digest form. Most meetings are the third Monday of the month, but next meeting is Mon., Oct. 19, 1 p.m. Contact slarson2130@gmail.com.



St. Mary's by the Sea Episcopal Church, 146 12th St., Pacific Grove, hosts I-HELP sleepovers and Friends of Homeless Women, who generally meet the last Wednesday each month, 10 a.m. The meetings are open to the public. Next meeting will be Wed., Sept. 30, 10 a.m. Contact Kathy Whilden at wildini@aol.com.



The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula, 490 Aguajito Rd., Carmel, will host I-HELP for Women one or two Tuesday nights a month, and has long hosted I-HELP for Men on Sunday nights. It will also provide parking space for the One Starfish Safe Parking and Supportive Services Program. Contact Suzanne Schmidt, 831-241-6382, suzschmidt@yahoo.com.

I-HELP Who's Who

Supporters read like a "Community I-HELP Who's Who" list that will grow as I-HELP for Women expands. Present I-HELP for Men congregations are:

All Saints Episcopal Church; Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Monterey Peninsula; Carmel First Presbyterian Church; Carmel Mission Basilica; Carmel Mission Middle- and High- Schoolers; Carmel Valley Community Chapel; Christian Church of Pacific Grove.

Also, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Fort Ord Ward; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Monterey 1st Ward; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Monterey 2nd Ward; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seaside Ward; Church of the Wayfarer; Community Church of the Monterey Peninsula; Community Missionary Baptist Church; Congregation Beth Israel; Cypress Community Church; Faith Lutheran Church.

Others are First Presbyterian Church of Monterey; First Presbyterian Church of Monterey Super Youth; First United Methodist Church of Pacific Grove; Knights of Columbus; Lighthouse Baptist Church; Marina United Methodist Church; Mayflower Presbyterian Church.

Finally, Ocean View Baptist Church; The Only Way Outreach Ministry; Ord Community Chapel; Our Lady of Refuge Church; Sanctuary Bible Church of Carmel Valley; St. Angela Merici Church; St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church; St. Francis Xavier Church; St. Mary's by the Sea Episcopal Church; St. Phillip's Lutheran Church; Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula.

Additional supporters include: California American Water Company Employees; Carolyn Gray & Friends; Mardelle and Stephen Mercurio; Monterey Sunrise Rotary Club; Pacific Grove Rotary Club.

Sneak Peek Into The Near Future



Monterey United Methodist Church, 1 Soledad Dr., Monterey is the first church in City of Monterey where homeless individuals may sleep in their vehicles as part of the One Starfish Safe Parking and Supportive Services Program slated to go into effect in Monterey in November. I-HELP for women will, hopefully, follow. Contact Rev. Cindy Storrs, cindykstorrs@gmail.com, 831-402-5067.

Secular hearts in a holy place include photographer Bob Sadler of Pacific Grove who is revising his "Inherent Worth and Dignity. . . Living Portraits" showcase presentation of homeless I-HELP men, and Harold E. "Country Boy" Grice of Salinas, who is writing this Readers Theater one-act play that might feature homeless women as performers. A snippet from the "We Ain't Homeless" campsite follows:

MISS KIM

Hello, ladies. I'm Miss Kim from Homeless Housing. . .

GRANNY ANNIE

And I'm Granny Annie, oldest lady here,
so I speak for us all:

We ain't homeless—just temporarily outa of room.

MISS KIM

I see by your campsite that you sleep in tents and sleeping bags. . .

GRANNY ANNIE

We are the houseless hussies.

You'll see us on the street.

Our covers are many and varied--

worn shoes upon our feet--

But we ain't homeless--just temporarily outa room.

MISS KIM

I'm not here to harass you . . .

GRANNY ANNIE
We meet in certain spots
away from your eyes' critique
'cause we don't like criticism
just 'cause we're seen as unique. . .
Tell her, ladies!

CHORUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN
We ain't homeless—just temporarily outa room.

GRANNY ANNIE
So tell it to her, ladies,
What Miss Kim needs to know.

HOMELESS MAGGIE
We stay where evening finds us
'Cause we got nowhere else to go. . .

HOMELESS RUBY
I was once a wife with kids and a husband,
But now I just wander the streets . . .

HOMELESS KEISHA
We dumpster dive for food
And find what we can for eats.

CHORUS OF HOMELESS WOMEN
We ain't homeless—just temporarily outa room.

How does it end? See the play! Stay tuned.

Contact Karen Araujo at I-HELP at 831-251-8663, www.WeHelpIHELP.org, P. O. Box 1447, Marina, Ca. 93933.

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For details about programs, or to book presentations, contact Wanda Sue Parrott at 831-899-5887 or amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com.