

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

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Column #7



Fr. Michael Reid

THE FUND FOR HOMELESS WOMEN: FATHER MICHAEL'S LABOR OF LOVE

By Wanda Sue Parrott

THE TALL MAN who dresses in casual chic, speaks like an orator, and sports both clerical collar and broad smile, was fondly called "Father Michael" during his six years of parish ministry at St. Mary's by the Sea Episcopal Church in Pacific Grove.

Following his resignation as associate pastor on Sept. 30, Michael Reid is gaining recognition as Monterey Peninsula's fulltime "Friend of Homeless Women." *Cedar Street Times* asked about his new career path:

Q: What is your job title and name of your new organization?

A. Nothing has changed in this regard. I remain a co-organizer of the Fund for Homeless Women (along with Kathy Whilden and Marian Penn). This is a totally volunteer position. We do not get paid. Additionally, all of the Fund's expenses are paid by us (the organizers) or through grants we solicit specifically for administration.

One hundred percent of donations to the Fund goes into the Fund to support programs that meet the needs of women who are homeless on the Monterey Peninsula. This is a labor of love. There is no new title or new organization.

Activities of the fund have continued to increase in frequency and intensity to the point at which I needed to choose where to focus my time and attention. Consequently, after a great deal of thought and prayer, The Fund for Homeless Women became my main ministry. I am still a priest.

Q. Do you foresee a warming shelter in 2015 for homeless women and/or men and women in inclement weather?

A. Absolutely.

Q. There have now been two fundraising brunches given by Friends of Homeless Women for the Fund for Homeless Women, a field-of-interest fund administered by the Community Foundation. How much money was raised at the first brunch in 2013 and what impact did it have?

A. I believe the brunch raised approximately \$34,000, a spectacular amount for the first event of its kind. The brunch raised funds, increased public awareness, and galvanized a movement of concerned community members around this important cause. It encouraged and empowered us all to continue to attempt to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

Q. If there were any major improvements since the brunch in 2013, please list at least three.

A. Community members will have contributed over one quarter million dollars to address the needs of women who are homeless on the Monterey Peninsula through both an endowment and spendable components of the fund. Dedicated to shelter, safety and community, The Fund is already making a difference in their lives.

With \$50,000 our first round of grant making supported the opening and operations of programs like One Starfish and The Gathering Place for Women. Shelter Outreach Plus and Community Human Services received funds to increase their ongoing programs for women. St. Mary's and the Unitarian Universalist Church were given grants to help meet the emergency needs of unsheltered women to help keep them safe.

We are currently reviewing grant applications for our second round of grant making and hope to award approximately \$100,000 in January 2015.

Q. What is your top priority for 2015?

A. The Fund for Homeless Women is committed to shelter, safety, and community. In collaboration and partnership with our donors, service provider agencies and public servants, we will continue to raise funds and public awareness that contributes to the advancement of these objectives and continue to endeavor to make a difference in the lives of women who are homeless in our community.

Q. How much money did the 2014 brunch raise?

A. \$22,000 and rising.

Q. Any further comments about the brunch?

A. It affirmed that strangers and friends can come together for the greater good and leave a lasting legacy for generations to come. And it reaffirmed the truth that when women get together to do something, anything, they do it beyond expectation.

Q. How can people contact you?

A. My e-mail address is: reidcdsp@yahoo.com

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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 or call 831-899-5887.