

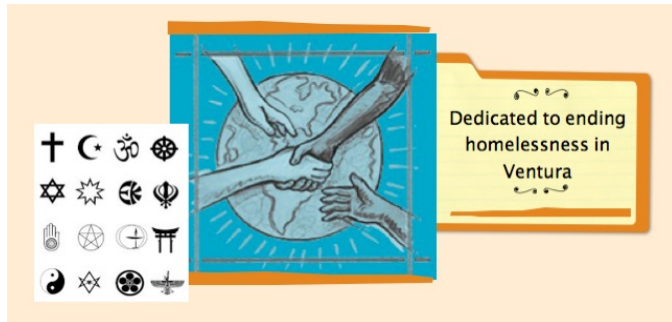
NEWSLETTER

Faith Committee

Ventura Social Services Task

Pam Marshall, Chair, Faith Subcommittee

Judy Alexandre, Chair, Ventura Social Service Task Force



Thank you and let's keep up the momentum.

As many of you recall, the Ventura Social Service Task Force and its Faith Subcommittee held two Partners for Change workshops where we explored the problem of homelessness in Ventura, what was happening, what congregations were doing and what was needed for change. Together we have made a difference.

Our efforts helped to stimulate the city to host a workshop in April 2016 (we filled the room at the Derby Club.), and over 200 people attended. Many of you were there. Thank you! This led to the city council meeting in August. Again, you were there...over 100 of you.

CITY COUNCIL RESPONDED:

The miraculous happened: a 7-0 vote to move forward with possible zoning changes, crisis and bridge housing with services, to join the county Pathways to Home initiative, and to implement the city's own housing element. A committee representing law enforcement, the city, county, the chamber, the medical community, local businesses, social services, advocacy groups, and the faith community has been formed to help move efforts forward. It meets monthly. This committee is to present to council in March, 2017 a plan to deal with gaps in services, housing and shelter.

Dear Faith Community,

The Ventura Social Services Task Force and its Faith Subcommittee are sending this newsletter to keep you and others with whom you choose to share it updated with regard to efforts to end homelessness in the City of Ventura, including important recent actions by the Ventura City Council and city staff. In times that are so difficult for many, especially our homeless neighbors, we want to encourage, support, and share ways in which the various houses of worship and their participants, individually and together, are taking action on behalf of some of the "least of these." It is our desire to bring Shalom to Ventura for all of its citizens. Shalom is a state of inward and outward peace, good welfare, the absence of strife, the wellbeing of community and personhood, safety, a coming together. May you know the blessing of Shalom and have the willingness to pursue it for others. ----- Judy Alexandre

THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

Ventura seeks to provide all housing types along the continuum of care, including crisis, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing and extremely affordable housing. In addition, it is vital that all supportive services are available and provided to individuals at the appropriate level regardless of the type of housing they are utilizing.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

The special committee is committed to seeing that the above happens, and your support is needed.

- 🗣️ Please speak to the issue of all types of housing and services at city council meetings during open mic time on the 1st Monday of the month. We can gladly provide talking points, or you can speak to ways your faith motivates your desire to seek an end to homelessness. We want to all send the same clear message. We also want to know who is speaking so please let Pam Marshall (pojcat@verizon.net) and Ruth Owens (Ruth-groventura@roadrunner.com) know if you plan on speaking. We desire to be coordinated.
- 🗣️ Please keep alive the conversation about the plight of those who are homeless and the need for all of us to be part of the solution; share your heartfelt thoughts wherever it is realistic for you to do so.
- 🗣️ Please write letter to local newspapers (VCSTAR, Breeze, or the Reporter). Again we can supply talking points. Each letter should only highlight one or 2 points. We want to know who is writing so please let Judy Alexandre, judyalexandre@gmail.com know when you submit a letter.
- 🗣️ Complete [click here](#) to complete an anonymous survey regarding concerns about and solutions to homelessness. Your answers will help us craft plans and public meetings.
- 🗣️ Attend the faith subcommittee meeting at 3pm on the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Church of Christ at 5401 Bryn Mawr. (Note: because of the holidays, our meeting in December will be on 12/14).

GOOD NEWS

Showers of Blessing

A program now functioning in Santa Barbara is possibly coming to Ventura. This program provides mobile showers for our homeless citizens. The Ventura Interfaith Ministerial Association (VIMA) is taking leadership to bring this needed service to the city. For information or to be part of efforts to bring Showers of Blessing to Ventura, please contact Harold Cartlidge from the Unitarian Universalist Church (805-653-6775/ HCartlidge@aol.com) or Kris Bergstrom pastor of Church of the Foothills and point person from the Ventura Interfaith Ministerial Association (krisbergstrom5@gmail.com).

There are currently very few places in the city where someone who is homeless can take a shower. However, we have recently learned that the Aquatics Center at Kimball Park (805-654-7511) allows showers for anyone paying a \$3 fee during specific hours.

UPCOMING EVENTS



INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING

All are invited to this year's
Interfaith Thanksgiving

Service. It will be **Thursday, November 17 at 7 pm** at the Church of the Foothills at 6279 Foothill Road in Ventura.

Take a Hungry Person to Lunch



Thursday, November 17, take this opportunity to break bread with someone who is homeless and to get beyond the stereotypes and fear and see how interesting and talented many of our

homeless neighbors are. Meet at 10:30 am at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura at 5654 Ralston. To sign up or get more information, contact Kathy Powell at kathypurpleprincess@gmail.com or (805) 910-8860

11th Annual Homeless Persons' Memorial Service



Each year the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura and a broad group of interfaith ministers hold a memorial service for all those who have died homeless during the year. Services this year will be

Sunday, December 18, at 3 pm at the Gazebo in Plaza Park in Ventura. All are welcome. For information, contact Sue Brinkmeyer (818-281-6249) or suebrinkmeyer@earthlink.net.

More Good News:

River Haven gets lighting

Earlier this year teacher Rich Smith and a group of STEM students from Buena High school developed a plan to put solar lighting at River Haven. Rich attends Orchard Community Church. This was mentioned by Judy Alexandre at the Faith Subcommittee where Lynn Geller from Temple Beth Torah was also in attendance. She took the information to her husband, Alan, an engineer. He began to work with Rich and with The Turning Point Foundation (the agency that leads River Haven). The Temple was able to raise the necessary funds for installation.

As a result of this wonderful collaborative effort, River Haven will have solar lighting and the students will have had a great real-life experience.



SPREAD THE WORD

This is the first of what is planned to be a bi-monthly newsletter. We will be providing information from the special committee on homelessness, information on low income housing developments, and highlighting different agencies and faith communities.

Please ask your friends to let us know if they would like to be added to our email list and, of course, please spread the word and the information.