

# NEWSLETTER

## VENTURA SOCIAL SERVICES TASK FORCE – FAITH SUBCOMMITTEE

Volume 2, Issue 5

*Dedicated to Ending Homelessness in Ventura*

November 2017

### CALL TO ACTION

Many of you were involved in the effort to obtain year-round shelter with services in Ventura by coming to City Council meetings and participating in workshops and the City-wide workshop in April 2016.

### THANK YOU!

Since then, despite efforts from the Ventura Social Services Task Force, a city sponsored stakeholders' group, the passage of Measure O (Sales Tax Initiative) and the involvement of the County Continuum of Care, very little has happened to alter the current status of shelter development. After pressure from the VSSTF and its subcommittees the City of Ventura did approve \$300,000 to be used to acquire or develop a site for this shelter. Currently, no site has become available in the permitted zone.

Another Winter Warming Shelter: As of today (November 10), a final contract to be made between the Cities of Ventura and Oxnard and the County of Ventura with the Ventura National Guard Armory is still in process. This will be another year of a very expensive winter shelter. The operator of the Winter Warming Shelter has not yet been named.

Thus far, potential operators have said that they would only consider operating a winter shelter if it could become (or be developed into) a year-round shelter to housing. Housing must become part of the overall plan if we are to have an experienced shelter operator. In addition to the shelter, we are asking you to support the planning and building of extremely affordable and very affordable housing.

So, once again we are asking you to step up!!!! We need your voice as a moral conscience. We need you to write letters, to rally on the steps of City Hall as a joint effort of

the faith community. We need you to speak out at council meetings on the first Monday meeting of each month. VSSTF has requested three times to have the shelter issue put on the Agenda for a meeting. This has not yet happened as of November 10th!

Look for an announcement of a specific date for a rally. In the meantime, please ACT.

- *Judy Alexandre, Chair, Ventura Social Services Task Force*
- *Pam Marshall, Chair, Faith Subcommittee VSSTF*



**NOVEMBER 11 -19<sup>TH</sup> IS  
NATIONAL HUNGER AND  
HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS  
WEEK**



**NOVEMBER 2017  
NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH  
AWARENESS MONTH**

# Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

All are welcome to attend this service of  
Thanksgiving:

**Temple Beth Torah**  
**7620 Foothill Rd.**  
**Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, at 7 pm**

Sponsored by:  
Ventura Interfaith Ministerial Assn.



**FOOD SHARE**

Ventura County's Food Bank

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual CAN-tree Drive!

**December 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**  
Figueroa Plaza Downtown Ventura  
(across from The Mission)  
Sponsored by: Gold Coast Health Plan

Sign up your team to build your CAN-tree together!  
Donate and build or host your own food drive and build!

Interested in building a CAN-tree December 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>?  
Please visit: [www.foodshare.com/cantree](http://www.foodshare.com/cantree) to get more  
information or contact **Jennifer Caldwell, Events  
Manager**, at [jcaldwell@foodshare.com](mailto:jcaldwell@foodshare.com) (805) 983-7100  
x129



## Coffee and Conversation

E. P. Foster Library  
Topping Room  
651 E. Main Street – Ventura

**Monday, November 20, 2017**  
**9 am to 10 am**

Topic:  
**Child Development Resources (CDR)**

*The Coffee & Conversation Series, sponsored by Ventura  
County Libraries, covers a wide range of topics presented by  
local non-profits & social-service agencies. A different topic is  
presented every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the Month. The series is free  
and open to the public.*



## Ready to do a virtual run?

**SwiftCause.org** is hosting a virtual run to benefit  
**Step Up Ventura through November 12, 2017.**

You can run or walk wherever you want, whenever you want,  
raise money, and win nifty promotional products with the logos  
of both Swift Cause and Step Up Ventura.

Learn more at <http://swiftcause.org/stepupventura/>  
and help homeless children connect, heal, and learn!



## 12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HOMELESS PERSONS' MEMORIAL SERVICE

INTERFAITH  
BUILD DAY



11/18/2017



What: Building Homes!

When: 8 AM - 2 PM

Where: 125 N Hayes Ave, Oxnard

Who: Faith Based Organizations of

Ventura County

Contact:

[www.habitatventura.org/volunteer/](http://www.habitatventura.org/volunteer/)

or call 805-485-6065 for more  
information

*To affirm the inherent worth and  
dignity of every person and remember  
those who died homeless in Ventura  
County this year*

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Sunday - December 17, 2107 - 3 PM  
Plaza Park - Downtown Ventura

- Reflection
- Inspiration
- Music
- Refreshments



*Sponsored by:*

***Lift Up Your Voice to End Homelessness***

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura**

[www.liftupyourvoice.org](http://www.liftupyourvoice.org)

**818-281-6249**

\*If you are a clergy member and would like to participate please contact Rev. Dana Worsnop at (503) 312-0401

\*\*If you know of a person who passed away last year on the street, at a home or the hospital who was homeless, please contact Kappy Paulson at [kmpgen@sbglobal.net](mailto:kmpgen@sbglobal.net) with as much of the person's identifiers as you know (name, age, birth and death dates, city identified with, etc.).



### This issue's Human Story:

Our friend Yvette was one of the people some years back who was taken out of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Canal encampment in Oxnard. She and her partner were given a brief bit of time in a motel and some case management. Yvette had seemingly had a bit of a turbulent life, but she had been a very good student and went on to UCLA for college. She worked as a civilian for a military base for a while with a security clearance. It appeared that addiction played a role in her life and had derailed her many times along with unbearable personal tragedies and mental health issues. Why this was so she could not quite piece together. One of the volunteers who witnessed the canal cleanup befriended them and walked alongside them, assisting with an old motor home and trying to secure a job for her partner. She was waiting on Social Security, which her case managers at Behavioral Health had suggested she apply for three years earlier. She was still in the appeal process and couldn't go to work without jeopardizing her case and really wasn't able to keep a full-time job. She and her family were many times at odds because all of this was so overwhelming.

On her birthday two years ago, at about age 50, she was informed she had been adopted at birth. Her birth family had been looking for her for years all with their mixed bags of issues. Now she felt a huge sense of betrayal and relief. "Is this why I am the way I am? Why did they give me up? Why was I never told when honesty was supposed to be the best policy in my family? Was this why things always felt strange?" As she would down the path she found out she was probably born addicted, which explained so much. Her birth father was dead but she had a sister and brothers and a mom.

It took another year to process that while still drinking and waiting for Social Security which was again denied and sent to Federal Court. Another person stepped in to help with repairs on the motor home and they struck out for Northern California to just one time kiss her birth mother. The mom was understandably afraid – she had given up

Yvette 50 years ago, she was a mixed-race child in a time when that seemed taboo and she had never told her family about Yvette (she had named her Melody). Time has passed, a church in Sebastopol allowed them to park there for a year. He has work, they were approved for a trailer on the edge of town – a new program model to help homeless people get started back on the road. Melody Yvette as she sometimes goes by now, was finally approved after over five years for Social Security and is figuring out her new family dynamics, seven months sober and attending Alcoholics Anonymous every day.

*Submitted by Kathy Powell (with permission)*



**Mission of the Faith Subcommittee of the VSSTF**

The Mission of the Faith Subcommittee is three-fold:

1. Outreach to the over 90 churches, synagogues, and temples in Ventura in order to increase participation in the Faith Subcommittee and in the mission to end homelessness,
2. Coordination among all of the faith groups providing assistance to homeless individuals so that government agencies, private service providers and faith groups can:

- Know precisely what services each provides
- Learn best practices from others offering similar services
- Avoid any unproductive duplication
- Refer those in need to others providing the needed service
- Learn what gaps in service exist and discuss who might best step in to fill each gap
- Share their needs with one another in the hope that greater coordination can allow each to do more and can lead to the most effective use of limited resources

3. Facilitate two-way education between the city-wide faith community and other entities, including the VSSTF, government agencies, and private service providers in order to:

- Increase awareness within each of area of need, and strategies or approaches that are proving effective (or ineffective) in reducing homelessness
- Ensure that those outside the faith community have realistic expectations of what needs the city-wide faith community can be expected to meet.