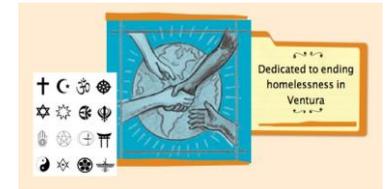


Ventura Social Services Task Force Faith Subcommittee

NEWSLETTER



Crisis and Bridge-Housing Shelter – Update

By Judy Alexandre, Chair, Ventura Social Services Task Force

As most of you may know, The Ventura City Council approved on April 10, 2017 the zoning ordinance (in the industrial area) that will allow shelter and services in the same location with a Conditional Use Permit. There are many steps ahead that must occur in order for a year-round bridge to housing shelter is completed:

- An appropriate property must be identified and secured
- The property/building will need to be designed, permitted and then developed
- A qualified operator must be identified. The City will send out a request for proposal (RFP)
- Funding needs to be obtained for development and on-going operations
- The approved operator (who may or may not be the tenant) will need to obtain the CUP for services
- The approved operator will need to develop a working relationship with local agencies that are providing services to our homeless neighbors
- The structure needs to be built

As you can see, there is much to do! The Faith Subcommittee of the VSSTF will keep you informed on a regular basis. We are planning to host a workshop to explore how the Faith Community of Ventura can become involved once an approved operator has been identified. Keep watching for further developments.

Additionally, we are working to “push” for permanent supportive housing and very low-income housing so that people can be housed upon leaving the shelter. Many developers have the provision of housing as a requirement for them to be willing operators/developers.

Thank you for your involvement. Together we will care for some of the ‘least of these’ among us, showing the love of God.

Seeking Shalom,

Judy Alexandre

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

NEW! Front Street Day Storage Program:

The City of Ventura is in the process of putting a storage unit on Front Street (behind the Vagabond Motel) for the storage of personal items for our homeless neighbors. The purpose is so that they have a safe place to leave their stuff while they go to appointments, etc. The goal is to have someone there from 8 to 10 AM and again from 5 to 7 PM (Summer hours) so that they can drop off and pick up their belongings. Volunteers are needed for this to happen. You can choose what day or days of the week and choose the morning or evening shift (or both!). Anyone who would like to volunteer or would like more information please contact: **Peter Brown** pbrown@cityofventura.net or **Ruth Owens** Ruth-groventura@roadrunner.com .

Thank you for your support!

Highlighting A Congregation – Introducing:

Unitarian Universalist Church
5654 Ralston St., Ventura, CA 93001

As a new minister in Town, I am still relatively new to Ventura. One of the things that attracted me to my congregation in this city was the interfaith cooperation on bringing an end to homelessness.

James Baldwin said, “Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor.” Being without a home as well puts even more challenges in the way of establishing a firm enough foothold to climb out of a deep hole. Too often, we create even greater obstacles with decentralized and far flung social service. It becomes nearly impossible for people without homes to find the help they need. A shelter with centralized services will give them a fighting chance, not just for shelter and security, but to address the issues that contribute to them sleeping in the streets.

My church is located alongside the Cypress Point corridor and we frequently see people with nowhere else to go. On a recent afternoon, I saw a man who had created a makeshift home for himself. Sitting against a cinderblock wall, he had marked off his space with a couple of grocery carts and used an overturned box for a table. He had created a temporary home that had its own warmth and a kind of dignity.

As humans, we all want and see home, security, warmth. We create it with whatever we have. Ventura needs a shelter for the homeless that allows easy access to the support and services they need to address the underlying issues of poverty, mental illness or addiction. For when such issues are addressed, people have the personal resources to create more lasting homes.

I am so pleased to have arrived here when Ventura is taking the steps needed to address homelessness in a proactive and effective way. There is much work ahead. I pledge the open hearts and willing hands of my congregation and others in the faith community to be active partners in this endeavor.

Rev. Dana Worsnop, Senior Minister
Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura

2016-2017 Winter Warming Shelter Summary

Over 700 end users spent 10,699 individual nights. We served over 21,000 meals. This year the WWS task force helped us to have a private and governmental social services representative every night at the shelter before folks went to sleep. This resulted in 12 families and 20 individuals being transitioned to temporary and permanent housing. We had over 40 individual volunteers who spent many hours working alongside WWS staff.

We would like to thank the following agencies for their help:

1. Salvation Army
2. County of Ventura Human Services – Homeless Services
3. County of Ventura Health Care Agency – Mobile Clinic
4. Ventura County Behavioral Health
5. Cities of Ventura and Oxnard homeless coordinators

We would like to thank the following Churches for their continued support:

1. Orchard Church – 2 weeks’ worth of instant oatmeal and financial support
2. Missionary Church – Men’s group bi-weekly breakfast
3. Unitarian Church – Volunteers, bagels and financial support
4. Mission Church Ventura – Chaplain services, volunteers and financial support

Steven Karnazes, Manager/Operator
Winter Warming Shelter 2016-2017

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our Resources for Ending Homelessness book needs to be updated. If you attended our Partners for Change Workshop in 2015, your congregation may be in our book. You can check on the Ventura Social Services Task Force website here: <http://vsstf.org/misc-docs/misc-docs.htm> This will take you to the Miscellaneous Documents page, and the first item is the Resources for Ending Homelessness. Click on that link to see the book in PDF format. If your congregation is listed, please update your page. If not, please consider adding your congregation to our list of resources. Here are three things that we hope you will share with us:

1. What is your congregation's involvement in homeless issues? Please share your contact person's name and email/phone number.
2. What organizations related to homelessness does your congregation support with volunteers and/or finances? Please give an estimate of the level of volunteer and/or financial support you provide.
3. If there were a workshop to discuss the faith community's future involvement in the Ventura Transition-to-Housing Shelter, would you wish to be notified?

To send updates or add your information, please contact:

Ruth Owens - Ruth-groventura@roadrunner.com

Thank you for your help in this endeavor. The faith community in the City of Ventura is powerful! Working together we can truly be partners for change and see an end to homelessness in Ventura.

Respectfully,

Pam Marshall, Chair

Faith Subcommittee of the Ventura Social Services Task Force

FREE EMERGENCY DENTAL TREATMENT EVENT IN PORT HUENEME

- On **Monday, June 19, 2017 from 9 AM to 3 PM** at the Oxnard/Port Hueneme Office:
305 E. Port Hueneme Rd.
Port Hueneme, CA 93040
800-734-7454 or 805-488-1112

This annual event provides free dental treatments including: fillings, extractions, toothache treatments, and cleaning of infected gums (one area).

All treatments will be provided at **no charge** to as many people as can be seen on a first-come, first-serve basis. One emergency treatment per patient. No appointments.

For questions call:

800-734-7454 or 805-488-1112

Family Promise* of West Ventura County

Helping homeless children and their families get back in to a home by providing support services and temporary shelter in the Ventura and Oxnard Communities.

We are currently soliciting candidates for our Board of Directors. We also need Host and Support Congregations. To find out more contact: **Robin Lerner, LCSW, Vice President: 805-794-2416 or email at msrs11000@gmail.com**

Our website: www.FamilyPromiseWVC.org

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HOMELESS PERSONS COUNT 2017:

The results of the 2017 Point-In-Time Count of homeless people in the County of Ventura are in. Below is some of the information for the City of Ventura:

Total number of homeless people counted = 301 (this is 1 more than in 2016)

Total number of unsheltered homeless people = 190

138 were men

47 were women

1 was transgender

83 were chronically homeless (essentially on the streets for over a year with any disability)

12 were veterans

52 were victims of domestic violence

27 were aged 62 or older

52 have mental health problems

37 have substance abuse problems

71 have no income

Here is the link for the complete report: <http://www.venturacoc.org/> scroll to 'News & Announcements'. Even though the numbers are going down every year, there are still a lot of people who are in dire need of housing and help!



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.