

Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless Consumer-Community Advisory Board (HCH CCAB)

All-In Listening Sessions

During the week of 12/5/16, The HCH CCAB carried out three listening sessions, at FUMC in Hayward, SHP in South Hayward and at CJ/JC in Oakland. A total of 46 persons experiencing street homelessness participated, and 18 observers and collaborators participated. Below are the major themes that emerged from the listening sessions. Following that are the typed notes from each session, as well as findings from each of the questions discussed.

Major themes that emerged from All-In Listening Sessions:

- There is tremendous diversity among persons experiencing street homelessness, and they cannot be characterized, pathologized, or generalized.
- Persons experiencing homelessness have skills, talents, experiences and input to provide to society, and feel that their ability to contribute to society is systematically denied to them, and that they are trapped in cycles of poverty and homelessness that are hard to exit.
- Most participants were born and raised in the neighborhoods they in which they are now homeless.
- Most participants believe homelessness is solvable, through the construction of adequate affordable housing, and that if not for the housing crisis and unaffordable rents, they would not be homeless. They are not homeless by choice.
- Sufficient sleep is a fundamental biological need and human right that is described by participants to be systematically denied to them, resulting in poor health, early death, and impact on their ability to access stable housing.
- Safety and personal security is of tremendous importance to participants. Participants reported extremely high levels of violence carried out against them on the streets, by housed persons, by other homeless persons and by law enforcement personnel. They do not have safe places to go, either in the day or at night.
- Street-living participants want to stay in shelter programs that meet their needs. However, these programs are few and far between, and in general not available to them.
- Friendship and affective relationships are crucially important to persons experiencing street homelessness, and homelessness negatively impacts their ability to have healthy relationships. There are valid reasons for a person on the streets to *avoid* relationships/friendships and be alone, but people are aware of the harmful impacts of avoiding relationships. Pets are an extremely important asset for persons experiencing homelessness.

- Persons experiencing street homelessness report high levels of malnutrition and poor nutrition, inconsistent with the amount of energy required to survive on the streets. Participants spoke of day-long walks just to access breakfast, lunch and dinner meal sites, and reported starchy, sugary, salty, bready food that is filling but not nutritious.
- Participants reported low confidence in the ability of cities and shelter providers to address their needs. Participants will believe promises when they see them: through sustained outreach worker visits, resources, etc.
- Participants overwhelmingly reported that they are treated unfairly by law enforcement due to their homeless status, and gave many examples.
- Most participants want to work, support themselves, and give back to society, but face many barriers to being able to do so.
- In the absence of accessible, safe shelters, many persons experiencing street homelessness live in small encampments, for safety. They experience harassment from police, businesses and housed citizens, lose possessions frequently and must move about frequently. They believe that with legal status, basic supplies (toilets, water access, storage, trash, security) and self-help standards they could establish encampments which could be reasonably healthy and tolerable for neighbors.
- A growing phenomenon described is that at many visible encampments, housed persons illegally dump their own trash, leading many to believe that homeless encampment create trash. Participants spoke of the need for themselves to make more efforts to clean trash wherever they are, to reduce visibility, enforcement and bad impressions on the public.
- Participants expressed a need for safe parking/sleeping spaces for “vehicularly sheltered” homeless persons, with behavioral rules and safety of prime importance.
- Persons experiencing street homelessness are very aware of efforts to create Tiny Home or Microhousing Villages, and are very enthusiastic about these projects, and would like to live in them.

What is needed in communities which is not there (major themes)?

- Safe, accessible warm shelters.
- Legal and supported encampment spaces.
- Helpful and supportive health-oriented outreach providers.
- Healthy, protein-rich food in soup kitchens and food programs.
- Safe places to be during the days, to rest, read, bathe, charge phones, etc.
- Places to go and do work, day labor, or even volunteer.
- Police and health providers who are adequately trained/interned in skills needed to protect and serve persons experiencing homelessness.

HCH CCAB All- In Listening Sessions 2016 Notes of questions and responses by site.	First United Methodist Church Hayward	South Hayward Parish	OAKLAND	COMBINED
	Site is in downtown Hayward, after breakfast meal. 13 persons experiencing homelessness participated. Some are doubled up, some on streets, and some getting assistance from Downtown Hayward Street Team	Site is in South Hayward, before food pantry. 13 persons experiencing homelessness participated, 8 of whom slept on streets last night, 5 who stayed last night in winter shelter sponsored by SHP.	Site is Causa Justa/Just Cause office on 32 nd and San Pablo Ave, N/W Oakland, easy access from Berkeley, and near shelters and encampments. 20 persons experiencing homelessness participated. 2 were staying in shelters, 3 in hotels, 8 in sanctioned encampment, 7 on streets.	Total of 46 persons experiencing street homelessness, representing Oakland, Berkeley, Albany, Hayward.
What would you need to:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay/get healthy? 	Safe place to be, housing, money, a good physician, food. "My health declines on the street". What would I do if I lost my medical?	A safe place to sleep. Sleep is a biological necessity. Blankets, warm shelter, food, vitamins, medications, hygiene (toilet, bath). We struggle hard on the streets, but we are not healthy.	A warm, safe place to sleep. Sleep deprivation is torture. Our eyes are always open and that is making us sick. Mobile health clinics/services. Trained doctors who can provide street care (rotate new interns to street care?). We wear ourselves out trying just to survive, can't thrive, move forward to health. Need safety zones to be healthy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need safe, warm places to sleep. • The biological imperative of sleep. • Bring health care services where folks are. • People struggle hard, but the streets take their toll on bodies. Participants had poor health, poor teeth, looked older than they were.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Happier /satisfied? 	To be acknowledged as a person on the streets by others – to be cared about, noticed, acknowledged, looked in the eye.	Employment, things to focus the mind on, keeping busy doing meaningful things. It is mind-numbing to walk from one side of town to another just for church food or a weekly shower. Access to basic human needs like toilets, bathrooms with <i>mirrors</i> .	Safety. Own space for relaxation, storage of our things. Reading glasses. Be able to charge phone 3x a day. Less greed, self-interest, selfishness in world. Services that actually benefit persons in poverty, rather than those who provide services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal safety. • A place to be. • Human contact, acknowledgement, • Sustaining activities beyond survival requirements (work, activities). • Access to dignity: Toilets, showers, mirrors.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Income? 	Showers, clean clothes, mailing address, information re: resources, training, readiness, skills building work/hire programs, day labor, mailing address, motivation/desire. "We would like to work doing things that will improve our situation -- ex: fix up abandoned buildings."	Decent clothes, access to hygiene, toilets, showers, mirrors. Transportation, bus passes, bike repairs. Couldn't there just be places you could go and just DO work, it is so good for health and recovery to do constructive things with mind and body and get paid.	Health & personal safety, sleep is the foundation. You have to be healthy enough to seek help! Transportation, skills, a place to work from. There are many penalties and barriers for trying to improve your income/situation (SSI, GA, HUD, food stamps, IHSS). Homeless folks are hardworking and helpful and have myriad of skills, but the work environment is ill suited to ability to do good work. SSI doesn't make ends meet. ATM and debit cards cost \$ each time used, Can't get food stamps on SSI. Cycles of poverty are constantly reinforced against us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A place to work (Day labor, easily accessible meaningful work) • The basics to support hygiene: Showers, clothes, toilets. • Transportation • Address barriers that reinforce cycles of poverty (punishment for making money on SSI, GA, HUD etc). • Acknowledge that SSI is not a livable income.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companionship/friendship/family ? 	Very important: friends and family help for motivation. Many hard, bad experiences with CPS. Religion and faith is important	"I hate being lonely" homelessness is intensely lonely. I need people to talk to and count on. Access to hygiene (showers) would make us more human and feel more friendship. There are families out there, but our day-to-day needs are most urgent. Pets are important: Have services for pets, shelters, food, vets, tags.	Pets. They are hard to take care of but always eat first. Need more support for them. Friends keep us human, are really important. Humans are hard-wired to love and be loved. Homelessness destroys that -being on guard constantly takes away our ability to love and be loved, and causes poor health in so many levels. Community, safety, health and security are all intertwined for us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companionship, friends, family and community are essential. • The state of homelessness destroys affective links between people and makes them sicker. • Pets are important and should be supported.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would be most helpful to get off the 	Ability to stay focused on goals instead of having to struggle with daily, short-term needs and	Access to income (work, subsidy, additional help) day labor, easier, more supportive GA, SSI, food stamps while	Affordable housing. Probably to reach that, need additional income, stipends, subsidies, housing counselors. Many need extra support services. But it's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to affordable housing. • Access and support for work • Safe and easily accessible shelter.

<p>streets? List:</p>	<p>challenges. Additional income to help with rent, or housing subsidy and availability. Ability to just go and start working somewhere. Ex-felon services (or even ex-misdemeanor services). 90% of participants grew up in the area.</p>	<p>on SSI, affordable housing. Emergency Shelter that is safe and accessible. 60% of participants grew up in area.</p>	<p>all about affordable housing. Many of us grew up in these very neighborhood we're homeless in now.</p>	
<p>What is your personal safety like? What makes you safer/protected? POLL: Have you been attacked or threatened?</p>	<p>Half have been victims of violence on streets. Participants have been knifed, robbed, raped, beaten. Can't go to cops for protection, victims are blamed. I feel safer by myself, behind locked door. There are no shelters in Hayward to be safe in. Cops will often refer us to Mervyn's building (abandoned), which is dangerous and scary.</p>	<p>Over 50% have experienced violence, including shot at, robbed, raped, rousted violently by police. Police have not been helpful (except for a few examples), nowhere to go when attacked. Need safe place to sleep, car park, feel constant threat all night and day.</p>	<p>About half have experienced violence on streets. Robbed at gunpoint, raped, stabbed, dog killed, etc. "Poor stealing from the poor" Need safe places where you can be, rest. Too much "turf". Have to know where your own "safe places" are. We forget about role of police is to "protect and serve" they in general only harass, and don't help when we are victims. We have to watch out for our own. Need to have City/County "Safety Squads" that actually protect and serve, look out for homeless. Need to train police cadets real outreach & people skills, BEFORE they are given guns. Have them do rotations doing community street outreach, like doctor interns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless persons experience a constant and heightened level of violence against them. • A feeling of safety is a important need of persons on the street. • Persons experiencing homelessness do not feel protected and served by the police or law enforcement.
<p>Do you get enough nutrition? Are you hungry? Malnourished? VOTE: undernourished</p>	<p>50% feel they are malnourished. Hayward does not allow free food distribution at parks, city property. There are food resources and enough to eat, but you spend your days walking from one church meal to the next. Storage, cooking challenges for homeless. Dental problems.</p>	<p>Large majority feel undernourished, unhealthy. Not enough healthy food, lots of cakes, pies, but not enough proteins, mostly bread, high salt and starch. No access to cooking facilities. Pantries give food which folks can't cook. Long walks from one food program to another. Would love to cook, share food with others.</p>	<p>Over half feel malnourished. Most cheap food is starchy, sweet, salty. Shelter and church food is plentiful, but poor. "I hardly eat. When I do, I get full too fast. Food I like is not served." Dental neglect affects nutrition. Hunger makes me drink alcohol, it's cheap and filling and often replaces food. Almost no access to clean drinking water. Water almost same price as alcohol. You spend less money buying booze than on food.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people experiencing homelessness manage to get enough food, but are still malnourished. • Shelter/soup kitchen food is high in starch, sugar, salt, bread. Filling but not nutritious. • Dental problems affect nutrition • Access to clean drinking water
<p>How do you the police and City and the criminal justice system treat you? POLL: Have you been treated Unfairly?</p>	<p>Some cops are OK and many not. They raid and destroy property when camps are raided. Why destroy property? To prevent us from coming back? We are scattered, disbursed and not able to join together. Smoking ordinances are unfairly only enforced against homeless. If you look homeless (backpack, etc) you will be jacked up. Churches which provide support services/food are harassed. City should rescind anti-food, anti-car sleeping ordinances. 95% feel they have been treated unfairly by law enforcement.</p>	<p>Homeless people are treated rudely by City and police and businesses. Can't be visible, try and be invisible, and that has an effect on your soul. Can't park car, can't charge cell phone, can't access water. Get jacked up often. Even sleeping quietly, police will come and flash lights and sirens to roust. Frequently police will just throw their possessions away, especially if they aren't being guarded. What good does that do? Most all feel like they had been treated unfairly because of homelessness.</p>	<p>CalTrans is a huge perpetrator of violence against street dwelling persons in Oakland, seizing and trashing belongings without proper notice. Many campers have received tickets (\$350) for trespassing and dealt with lengthy court processes. Singled out for sobriety checks, warrant checks, etc. Trying to fight against CalTrans, by taking photos. No enforcement against the many housed people who dump garbage at homeless encampments. Most all felt treated unfairly because of homelessness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants feel they have been unfairly treated by law enforcement because of their homeless status. • Persons experiencing street homelessness report frequent raids, seizure and destruction of personal property. They are not usually able to get possessions back without legal help. • Participants also described disparate levels of law enforcement activity (searches, tickets, warrant checks, "move along... or else") based on the perception that they are homeless.
<p>What would you need from the city/shelter/homeless system/providers?</p>	<p>We need secure shelter. Food services, and security for persons on the streets. Outreach to keep an eye out for people who are vulnerable. Employment services, drug/alcohol</p>	<p>Affordable housing. Safe places to park. A decent shelter program. Thermal underwear, warm clothes, place to sleep, rest, relax during the day. Somewhere to do gainful activities</p>	<p>Providers should listen to our needs – safe spaces, legal encampments, access to warm, safe places 24/7. Providers should make guidelines and rules explicit and clear – a lot of games goes on in shelter/programs. Ex: Are outreach groups are there to help us, or to carry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm, accessible shelter services. • Legal, safe places to camp and be. • Access to toilets and hygiene facilities • Safe, warm places to be during the day. • Access to affordable housing

	programs. Washing machines, places to get together, like CAN/blue house used to be before it was forced to close.	(work, learn, build, write, etc).	out abatement (warnings) for City? We need low income housing access, assistance with rent, income, pet support, more security and safety on streets and in shelters/programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplies (clothes, toiletries) Need clarity as to the difference between City abatement services and homeless outreach.
How does the shelter and homeless system treat you? VOTE: Helpful?	There IS NO shelter system in Hayward, that is a problem. Church programs/pantries are nice people, but doesn't meet needs, there are no washing, storage, toilet spaces for folks. There IS NO system. Participants feel hopeful, but not confident.	There are good, caring people at church programs, who look you in the eye and share freely. But they can do very little to change the larger situation, and get a lot of harassment from the City. The City does much more to roust homeless persons than to help. Lack of confidence in City's ability to treat homeless well.	"Like cattle." Many reported having to shuffle from place to place, improper referrals that don't work out, or are to unsuitable programs. Lack of accurate knowledge/descriptions of resources out there. Discussion of bad reputations/experiences of almost all major homeless services providers. What accountability is there for homeless providers? Most have low confidence in shelter/homeless provider system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants were in generally skeptical that their needs and voices are having an effect, or in this or other efforts (survey) to survey homeless needs. They have seen efforts come and go without change. Many, especially in Hayward, said there is no identifiable "Homeless Providers" only City & business on one side and beleaguered church providers and homeless persons on the other. Many feel that many street homeless are unaware or suspicious of providers, and for good reason.
Would you stay in a decent shelter program?	Yes! If one existed here in Hayward.	Mostly Yes. The only shelter is not accessible to us.	Participants discussed the compromises you must make to access and stay in shelters (two participants had to leave the session early to maintain their bed). No privacy, little own space, rules, guidelines always in flux, safety concerns. Some participants would NOT stay in a shelter under any circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most all surveyed would stay in a decent shelter program. Long discussions, though, around what makes a shelter "decent." There are also many valid reasons why some persons experiencing homelessness do not or cannot stay at shelter programs.
What makes a shelter program decent?	Accessible when needed. D/A recovery services OPTIONAL. You can be there all day. Washing, cleaning facilities, behavioral health D/A treatment services. Place to relax and regroup. Storage spaces. No bunk beds. Support folks who are working (late hours, etc), Longer stays needed, case management, good food, let residents help cook and be involved. Sunrise village example of good place, with some faults.	Do not require payment of rent. Let folks save \$. Open during the days; flexible to people's schedules. Background checks on shelter providers. Only require D/A treatment for folks who want it. Require, enforce respectful behavior Don't have barriers/deterrents to shelters. Allow pets & provide pet care and food. Allow safe parking	Warm and safe, nourishing food. No restrictions of when you come in, or to skip a few days and come back. Come when you need. Open during the day. Pet friendly. Safe space, give personal/private space to folks. Make rules clear and fairly enforced. Don't make people pay rent if they have strange restrictions. Don't require certain services like recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ease of entry Safety, warmth and good food. Make MH or substance treatment services voluntary – not required Open during the day Storage spaces Private space for residents If rent is charged, treat as a tenant, not a client. Able to come in late or miss a few days
If you had to live on the streets what would be rather be alone or with people around you? Why?	Depends. Some wanted to be alone because can't trust others, and groups attract attention. Some can only look out for themselves, too complicated with others. Some need to have others around for protection, safety.	Split. I trust no-one. People steal from you. I need people around to make sure I'm ok (diabetes), for safety, depression, fear of being alone. Being with other homeless persons attracts attention from police and businesses, I can't "fit in."	Split. I want to have people I know and trust around me. I don't trust anyone. I want to live in a community like the Albany Bulb We're trying to build community at the encampment now, but it's hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many participants are deeply conflicted as to whether they want to be alone, or with friends/associates, while on the streets. Being with others gives sense of safety, community, humanity and can make life easier. Being alone gives personal security, ability to "pass" as non-homeless, don't have to deal with stealing, or deal with other people's issues.
What might be a good size of an encampment?	Smallish, 4-8 persons. Need to keep it clean, have access to toilets and washing facilities. Security and trustworthy residents, small huts in	Imagining "formal" campground like locations, with spaces, sections, rules, and privacy. Shared cooking spaces and toilets, hygiene.	I need around 200 sq feet. Dumpsters and trash haulaway. Communication between residents. Water system (toilets, washing, showers). Help with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given a lack of shelter and housing, most persons interviewed would like to live in an encampment, provided it were: legal/tolerated by police

What would a good encampment look like?	parking lot?	Some are skeptical, as other homeless people will steal from them.	accessing services Communication with police, fire dept for OUR safety. Deal with housed persons dumping garbage. Self-Organization and self-help Safe power (for phones and lights).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not too large 8-15 folks • Access to toilets, water, trash removal • Shared cooking spaces • Agreed upon, enforced rules and structures • Communication with police, local businesses/residents
Would you want to live in a legal encampment with rules but run by the residents?	Yes, we would like that but it sounds totally unrealistic given the political climate in Hayward.	Yes communication is important – must be able to see if someone is sick, or has problems, need a committee/council to deal with bad behavior.	“I don’t think that would work” police would destroy, and also you would have to know well the persons you live with. It could work for a small encampment of folks that know each other, and was protected from raids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants skeptical that self-organized homeless encampments can be feasible. • But if it were possible, most would try this.
Would you want to live in a legal encampment with rules but run by the City?	Also sounds unrealistic – concern that city control of an encampment situation would be controlling and challenging to mental health. Would one sanctioned encampment mean heightened enforcement at other non-sanctioned sites?	Yes sounds interesting. But about a third of participants would rather stay indoors, in a shelter program. That’s what the city should be funding, providing. Worries that a city-sanctioned encampment would be “built to fail.”	Well if the rules were reasonable... Would provide safety, and access to water and hygiene, trash. The rules would have to be very strong, and that might present a barrier to a lot of folks. There would have to be more than a few different types of camps with different moods, types. And with strong self-government of residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants would appreciate the structure and safety of a “sanctioned” encampment run by City/County. • Skeptical that a city-run encampment would meet needs of majority of street homeless – would have to be multiple sites, and would require a strong commitment by City/County staff to follow through and carry out correctly.
What do you think of people living in cars?	Strongly supported need for legal car sleeping in Hayward. Vehicular sheltering in safe, organized parking areas, with rules, temporary. There are many car challenges (registration, repairs, gas) so it would be difficult, but it is absolutely necessary – many participants live/lived in cars and experienced harassment.	This is very much needed. We don’t have cars anymore because couldn’t upkeep, but would have really used legal parking. Must have rules: No noise, no parties, stealing, drugs. Must have access to restroom, and cars must be operational/moving.	Good idea, but really not an issue to these participants, none of whom own cars and are in a more urban situation. “But talk to the folks down on San Leandro Blvd with their campers and such” there it’s needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong need expressed for legal, safe car camping lots for “vehicularly homeless” including structure, services, rules, especially among Hayward participants.
What do you think of Tiny Houses & Villages?	Yes very supportive. Knew about proposed Tiny Villages. Would live in village setting (6-12 micro units, with shared facilities) for longer-term transitional, ie 1-2 yrs, hopefully something permanent to transition to.	Very familiar and supportive. Shared villages with shared facilities, and longer term OK, you should be able to stay until you are independent or stable and can move on.	Very interested and supportive. “Totally” interested in tiny houses clustered around shared facilities, people would live in them for years if they could. Also asked about all the vacant Housing that is out there and how to prioritize that.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were very familiar with the idea of Tiny Home/Microhouse villages and strongly supported the idea, with most all saying that they would live in them if available.
Who should get priority housing?	Kids, families, elderly, vets, disabled, people working, people that are actively involved in improving their/community situations. Leave no one behind.	Homeless first, street-homeless. Make more shared housing, smaller shared places. Prioritize fragile, vulnerable aging, disabled, women and children. Remember that Hayward is much poorer than surrounding Alameda Count and “affordable” housing is often not affordable here.	<i>Did not discuss: Instead discussed “What Can Homeless Persons Do To Improve Their Situation”:</i> Work harder to get along with each other, develop structures for governance and self-help. Stop piling trash around encampments, worry more about cleanliness. Help folks who have cluttering problems. Also make efforts to clean up around encampment and streets, even though most trash and dumping is done by housed persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost everyone surveyed could point to other persons who should be prioritized over them for access to limited permanent housing. • Oaklanders chose to discuss the steps that street homeless persons can take to improve appearances, especially in regards to trash and litter.
What are the most important things to you for people to know about you and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s all about housing. We’re sleeping on the streets, on multiple wait lists, 4 yr+, and things feel worse than ever. • Why spend lots of \$ on new 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of “affordable” housing is not affordable, especially for disabled. • The East Bay is the 2nd most expensive place in the country to rent. We are just the ones who are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public: Don’t assume homeless folks are homeless by choice of fault. • We are not drug addicts or alcoholics any worse than housed folks. • It’s so difficult to access or stay in a home in these 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons experiencing street homelessness are human, are important parts of society, are extremely diverse, and have gifts and strengths to offer to society. • It’s all about housing: We are on the

<p>other people experiencing homelessness?</p>	<p>buildings and stuff when people are living in the streets? Know about Mervyn's building – it's empty & dangerous but could be used to house folks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're homeless, but not helpless. • We need help now, not in two years. • You can volunteer to help. • All we need is a hand up not a hand out. • Look us in the eye. We're people. • Join the Hayward Hunger and Homelessness Task Force! 	<p>squeezed out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our personal safety/environment is important. • People look down on homeless people but we are special and have gifts. • Don't just walk past us, look at us. • Many think homeless are criminals – not true. They think homeless are making society worse, that's not true. • It could happen to you -- I never thought it would happen to me. • Have empathy, stop stereotyping us. • Don't assume we have a "bad attitude" • We all know, or have relatives who are homeless • Walk a mile --or more --in my shoes • Become an advocate, become visible for us, because we can't be visible. • I'm so frustrated! • Don't be paralyzed – homelessness isn't impossible to solve – be visible, and participate • Don't use police to solve the problem of homelessness • We need showers and toilets downtown and everywhere, which are staffed and cleaned – not just for homeless but for everyone! 	<p>times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wake up at 5am to walk to a breakfast place etc., experience our world in our shoes. • <i>But housed people can't really experience our world in one day or one hour. The state of homelessness is so pervasive, mentally and physically. Can you imagine what it feels like to have <u>nowhere</u> to go? That there is <u>no</u> end in sight?</i> • My history is now what I am now. • Be aware that we are as much a part of society as anyone. • The City/County should be held accountable: Homelessness is unacceptable, is solvable, and they are not doing their part. • Gentrification and homeless is shameful – we grew up here! • There is some addiction, alcoholism, mental health issues, just like in housed persons, but we are mainly here due to economic reasons. • We are not criminals. • Many of us are educated. • We have spiritual, educational and aspirational needs that are difficult to address and meet on the streets. We have many gifts to offer society, but people are blind to our gifts. • There is endemic discrimination and racism in our society and homelessness is one face of that. • Provide work/franchising opportunities to homeless persons and you will see what we can do! • We are citizens like anyone else. • Foster kids need more solid foundation and help. • Many people who are homelessness don't look like it. • Change the laws that criminalize people experiencing homelessness. • There are hidden treasures in the homeless population. 	<p>streets because of a housing shortage, not because of personal character defects, or because we "want to."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless persons are not much different from housed persons, and most anyone can end up on the streets (there but for Grace go I). • Look us in the eye – we are people. • It is almost impossible for housed persons to understand the immensity of trauma that a person on the streets really experiences. • Homelessness is solvable – that is an obligation of our society. • Homelessness and persons experiencing homelessness should not be criminalized. • Most of us want to work and can work. • Disabled and elderly persons need more support than a \$830 SSI check, which is unlivable. • Often "affordable" housing isn't. Make sure it is.
---	---	---	---	---