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STREET SHEET

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CITY TO SHUTTER SIP HOTELS AS DELTA VARIANT SURGES

Tj Johnston

The clock is ticking for unhoused people staying in San Francisco's shelter-in-place (SIP) hotels.

The 25 SIP hotels that have sheltered over 2,000 homeless people during the COVID-19 pandemic are scheduled to close operations, a few at a time, according to a plan published in June by the City's Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH).

Hotel Diva on Post Street, which the City bought and will convert into permanent supportive housing as part of the state's Project Homekey program, already closed down on August 1. Forty people who had been staying there moved to other SIPs, while five were pushed back onto the streets, and two were sent to medical facilities. One other tenant, who refused to leave, was arrested for an outstanding warrant.

Scheduled for September closures are the Chancellor, Epik, Tilden and Union Square hotels.

Under the HSH plan, the hotels and nonprofit organizations contracted by the city to run them will be given 90 days' notice before closure.

SIP residents will receive notice one week after the providers, according to the communications plan that HSH shared with the Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB). The remaining hotels will receive closure timelines later in the year.

Meanwhile, reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for non-congregate pandemic housing are scheduled to end on September 30, the final day of the federal fiscal year.

While the City and the federal government have a definite timeline, the future of people staying at SIPs is hazy. The SIP hotels have been operating since April 2020. Last December, amid intense public outcry the City had to scrap a plan to phase out the SIPs despite surging COVID-19 cases only after getting state funding to keep the program afloat and.

Now, as the City faces a surge of the more transmissible coronavirus delta variant, it's considering demobilizing the SIP program once more. But one critical question still lingers: Where do the residents go?

At a June meeting of the LHCB, then-interim HSH director Abigail Stewart-Kahn told the board that hotel staff were assessing residents for possible housing exits under the City's coordinated entry system. She said that many residents weren't yet "document ready"—that is, having ID, birth certificates and other paperwork that would expedite their re-housing process.

* * *

That's not what SIP residents have been telling RK Johnson, a

shelter client advocate for the Eviction Defense Collaborative. Based on their accounts, Johnson disputes the City's assertion that residents weren't document ready. Many tenants have papers, she said, but the City has been slow to place them in housing, so it has been shuffling them around.

"A lot of people are being told that they haven't been placed into housing, so they're being taken into another SIP hotel and also being relocated in congregate shelters," she said.

Tenants have also been receiving between two days' and two weeks' notice—far short of the 90 days HSH is giving SIP providers and more importantly far short of the notice tenants are supposed to receive. They are also given the boot with inadequate referrals to services.

"When they let them know [about closings], they give a dinky little paper with a list of resources, but the resources don't exist because of COVID," she said. "If it's not operating at full

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WHEN TENTS ARE REMOVED, THERE'S NO WAY HOME

Jennifer Friedenbach

The Healthy Streets Operations Center (HSOC) grew out of the Mission Police Station in January 2018, with the goal of clearing all the tents from the Mission District. It almost succeeded in that endeavor. But rather than reducing homelessness, the number of folks on the streets actually increased in the district, as did the misery of those who had their flimsy shelter and the bit of dignity that tents provided ripped away.

This August, Department of Emergency Management (DEM) director Mary Ellen Carroll gave the quarterly HSOC presentation to the Local Homeless Coordinating Board. Carroll painted a picture of a team whose primary goal is to help unhoused people, using a service-led model driven by public health. She described a process of removing tents that involves gathering data on unhoused people, offering shelter alternatives and identifying those unhoused community members in need of more serious medical attention.

The Coalition on Homelessness has been present at many, if not most, of these operations since the inception of HSOC, acting as legal observers and peer support for those being displaced. What we have seen time and again is that HSOC's operating procedures are not being followed. But even if they were, HSOC's approach is highly problematic, trauma-inducing and likely to exacerbate homelessness. Because we have seen the impact of these operations on our most vulnerable community members, the Coalition on Homelessness is calling for the immediate dismantling of HSOC.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

For decades, homelessness has been used as a political wedge in San Francisco elections, with politicians using enforcement to draw more conservatives and business interests to the ballot. As a result, our homeless response is inequitable and politically charged. One outcome is that the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) has had its trust among unhoused community members greatly damaged through years of being sent out alongside police and Public Works staff who are conducting sweeps to "clear" areas that are of political importance or that draw the ire of elite San Franciscans, rather

than being allowed the freedom to connect those most in need with the shelter options they want.

HSOC started as a police-led, complaint-driven coordination of city departments and resources designed to lower tent counts and break up large encampments. Later, in early 2019, the operations moved out of the police department and into the Department of Emergency Management, which oversees 911 response and leads the City's COVID-19 response.

While HSOC's leadership changed departments, its core purpose of moving people along hasn't changed. For unhoused community members, the cycle of being shuffled around by the City and having belongings trashed continues uninterrupted. These operations make it harder for people to find places that are well lit, or near people with whom they feel safe. For people with no other options, tents offer a modicum of shelter and privacy, and take the edge off the indignity of living in public spaces. While HSOC sometimes offers services before clearing encampments, it often has very little to offer, and relies on police or Public Works to simply clear an area. After an area is cleared, HSOC often removes bathrooms and constructs barriers to prevent people from returning, further limiting safe sleeping areas for individuals who have no alternative.

This is an inherently flawed approach. While HSOC frequently boasts its success in reducing the number of tents in San Francisco, this success is not reflected in exits from homelessness. Tents are not people, and removing tents does nothing to change the housing status of the individual who slept in it, and it leaves people on the street with even less protection from the harsh conditions under which they live.

Beyond this, HSOC has also significantly changed how the City allocates resources. In order to justify its operations, HSOC reserves shelter beds and housing resources for people whose encampments are swept. This means that the thousands of unsheltered San Franciscans who are not targeted by a sweep, but are in a better position to accept available services, are shut out of those beds. These resources are often directed to the most politically important areas, rather than those most in need.

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ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

STREET SHEET
STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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As SIP Hotels Prepare To Close, Where Will Tenants Go?

continued from page 1... capacity; it’s not helping the people who need those resources.”

Other times, tenants have been receiving information in fleeting moments during the hotels’ community meetings or from flyers posted on doorways to entrances and exits, Johnson said. Yet, providers and clients alike are given a scarcity of information from the City’s homelessness department and COVID-19 Command Center, she added.

Asked what the general public should consider about the closures, Johnson said, “There needs to be a period of patience, a period of understanding and a period of action, because the City won’t keep the SIP hotels open if they don’t feel like there is enough of a demand for them.” She added, “it will take the whole community to push on the subject and keep the hotels open—because I see the good in them. It’s not perfect, but it’s better than being swept on the streets and being targeted by the police and DPW.”

* * *

Susan Griffin was spared the physical hazards of homelessness, thanks in part to her seven-month stay at the Chancellor Hotel.

Displaced from her housing after an illness, Griffin spent a couple of months couch surfing and occasionally staying at hotels. Through connections at her church and the SF Homeless Outreach Team, she secured a room at the Chancellor.

“If I hadn’t gotten into the SIP, I would have been outside,” she said.

While at the hotel, Griffin worked as a receptionist at H&R Block during tax season. Between her earnings from the tax preparation firm and her Social Security payments, Griffin was able to save enough money to move into an apartment on Van Ness Avenue.

Griffin learned in November of the City’s initial closure plan that was eventually shelved, but there was also scuttlebutt among hotel residents of possible housing available.

“The rumor was that we were getting housing no matter what,” but there was no guarantee of a private bathroom like she had at the hotel — a step down from the SIP, she said.

“You’d get housing of some sort, but it was a homeless shelter type of situation. That was something I was not interested in doing,” she

said.

The offer would’ve been to move to a single-resident occupancy hotel, she recalled. Like shelters, SROs fit the City and state’s definition for congregate sites, which are considered high-risk environments. COVID outbreaks in SROs occurred in the spring of 2020.

It certainly would be a far cry from Chancellor, a historic boutique hotel built for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, located along a cable car line and around the corner from Union Square. On its website, Chancellor touts a menu of 12 different types of pillows for guests’ comfort.

Griffin might have dodged a bullet by moving into an apartment on her own. Compared with others experiencing chronic homelessness, Griffin had a relatively smooth entry into housing, but still her homeless episode was marked with uncertainty.

“It was frightening,” she said. “I was afraid of not having any sort of roof over my head. It was scary, frightening to be vulnerable.”

“Mr. Gutierrez” told Street Sheet that he arrived in San Francisco with a small boy’s dreams of moving to the big city. He doesn’t want his real name or his birthplace to be published, because would-be employers have passed him over when they learned of his unhoused status.

Mr. Gutierrez, 30, moved from the East Coast in 2019. He had several jobs doing kitchen work, construction and window washing. Last spring, the Homeless Outreach Team found him living in a tent on Turk and Jones streets and referred him to the Tilden Hotel.

Since living at Tilden, Mr. Gutierrez has enrolled in job-readiness programs at Code Tenderloin and Downtown Streets Team. He’s also focusing on earning his GED certificate and eventually becoming a caseworker or social worker.

“Ever since I’ve been at the hotel, I’ve been trying to find myself and how to better myself,” he said.

Less than one-half mile from his former encampment, Tilden seems a world away. It’s near Union Square, and offers amenities found in most tourist hotels, such as concierge service and a gym.

News of the hotel’s impending August 31 closure came to Mr. Gutierrez in a note last month. Still, he’s optimistic about a housing opportunity where he could get a subsidy covering half of his rent. As of press time, he didn’t know yet where the housing would be or his move-in date, but he said he hopes to remain in the City.

“I’m trying not to leave San Francisco, because I got a lot of opportunities. I’m still going to chase my goals because I’ll be rewarded for my patience,” he said. “There’s always a solution to everything if you want to find it.” ■

KIDS SPEAK THEIR MINDS On Returning to School, Navigating Housing Insecurity, and Surviving a Pandemic

Mateo F.C.

August is the time when parents get to have a break from their kids, and kids get to spend time with their friends. These were the normal circumstances before COVID-19 entered our lives. However, the pandemic has dramatically changed people’s lives, some for the better and some for the worse. Now that the vaccine is being distributed, the School Board is planning on reopening schools once more.

But through all of this, an important voice is neglected from this school decision making. It’s the voice of the youth, and in particular the homeless youth who are going to be going back to school next week. So I asked some about their thoughts on schools reopening, and about how they managed themselves through the pandemic. Here are their stories.

Nine-year-old Naomi, a future mathematician, is going into fourth grade.

She told me how happy her family was before the pandemic. They lived in Daly City at the time and she especially enjoyed not needing to wear a mask everywhere. When COVID began, it was really hard for Naomi to participate in online classes because her family had unstable WiFi. At first, she had to use her mom’s phone to make it to classes, but she got a computer later on. She says that understanding the material was especially challenging. Before, she could raise her hand and ask questions from the teacher directly, but she couldn’t do that anymore. Naomi’s big struggle, though, was with Zoom, because she and her family were notorious for losing the Zoom link for her classes.

Naomi says she is nervous about going back to school in person—not because of COVID, but because she is now in an entirely different city, in an entirely different school, and would be meeting classmates that she didn’t know before. Because of rent hikes, her mom could not pay the rent on their place in Daly City and was forced to leave. It took months of looking, but Naomi’s family finally found a place in the city.

Naomi’s older brother, Hector, is 14 years old. He is going into ninth grade and he likes P.E. I asked how COVID affected him and his family, and he told me that it affected his mom, who was struggling to find work and keep a stable job, which is what forced them to move in the first place. Hector has had a hard time making friends, both because of moving all the time as well as the impersonality of online classes. When I

asked him about his fears about going to a new school, I learned that he was already in school. He feels comfortable in school and is glad everyone there is masked and safe. Hector, even more than Naomi, is so glad that he is back in school so that he would have the opportunity to make new friends and ask questions of his teachers about things that needed to be clarified. He is bummed about COVID but he sees the bright side of it, and says that he got to understand his family more through it, and grew stronger from their support.

Naomi and Hector are both really excited about being able to go back to school. They feel that they will be able to advocate for themselves better by being in the room with their teachers and interacting with their classmates in person. They both had to move around a lot, and school is working to bring back the good old days for them.

But not everyone shares that opinion. Some actually prefer having classes online rather than go to school in person. Yessica is 18 years old and is a senior in high school. Before COVID-19, Yessica’s life was fine and generally had a chill vibe, with nothing really happening. When online classes started during the spring semester of her sophomore year, it was really hard for her: trying to get the teacher to clarify things, WiFi challenges, and just general difficulty. By her junior year, Yessica understood how to get by in school, but more importantly, she found a job that she truly appreciated at the Coalition on Homelessness. She attended school to get through classes, and not so

much to make friends—she had no choice in how school went, but her job was something she chose, and she found her home in the job she loves doing.

“Going to school, it’s a lot,” Yessica says. “I just feel online school works best because I am working.”

Yessica is concerned about COVID and is worried about the delta variant, and spreading it to her mom. Yessica really likes her job and said she wouldn’t do a job that she did not enjoy. Yessica has anxiety and feels that COVID gave her an opportunity to really look at herself and reflect on what she wanted to do, and she is thankful for the realization. Since she is about to graduate, I asked her what she wants to do after high school. She says she wants to get an associate’s degree, and sees a path as a social worker helping people who are homeless.

It is important for readers to understand what kids think about school reopening—especially kids who are often ignored but who are still striving for success despite all odds. Naomi wants to learn more about herself so that she can stay at home for a long time. Hector had to move from place to place but is striving to “learn new things and to make new friends.” Yessica lived in a Single Residency Occupancy (SRO) hotel and found her place in her work building coalitions to end homelessness. Each of them is striving for something, and I hope you, our reader, find something to strive for in these difficult times. ■



Title: Time and Again
(2019)
Artist: Emily Tranh

Emily's wide range of image making skills and fashion sensitivity adds to our photos a subtle touch of glamour. She keeps fashion and product images true to life yet with a high-end commercial look. Emily's work has been featured in Vogue Business, The San Francisco Chronicle/SFGate, The Guardsman, Etc Magazine, The Green Queen Magazine, amongst others.



Title: 16.1 million Dollars (2021)
Artist: Austen Zombres

Austen Zombres, 33, originally from Sonoma, ca. After exploring many mediums, settled on hand cut recycled collage about 10 years ago. Not only for the clean lines and bright colors, but for its sustainability and challenge. "Recycled collage, no paint or pen used. All lines and colors hand cut from paper and cardboard found in San Francisco " Working with these self-imposed guidelines: 1) Cardboard and paper must have no other practical use. 2) Must be discarded or will be discarded. 3) No paint, pen, or pencil in the finals piece of art. With few necessities, glue, and razor blades, the low cost of production is a key factor allowing me to afford the city I love. Bay Area culture and 90s nostalgia fill my arts, as well as local flora and fauna.



ARTAUCTION: Transforming Art into Action & Reconnect Through Resilience

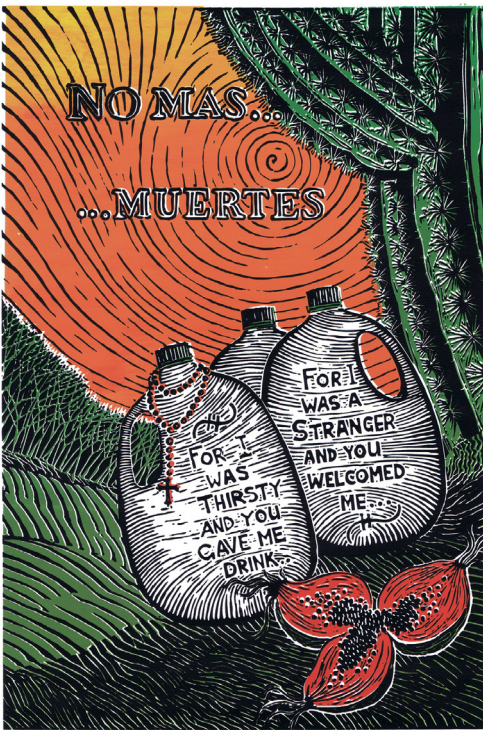
It's finally here! Starting September 9th the Coalition on Homelessness event will be held entirely online, which means you will have two weeks something for everyone- there will be powerful art at a variety of prices

The Coalition on Homelessness is a grassroots social justice organization and economic causes. Our bottom-up organizing model ensures the voice of the homeless is heard against homelessness. This work is more important than ever with the impact of the pandemic still wreaking havoc on our most vulnerable. But despite the challenges, we will be celebrating collective community success in garnering over \$1 million in subsidies, an additional 1,000 shelter beds, and thousands of units of public housing.

We have over 200 pieces from local artists who have generously donated to the event. Moreover, we will have over half a dozen raffle prizes in the Botanical Gardens, as well as a COH Swag bag which includes all of our newest merchandise (also available for individual sale) including COH branded hoodies, STREET SHEET face masks, and new COH iron on patches and enamel pins!

Show your support for the Coalition on Homelessness and enjoy this wonderful event as we reconnect in resilience. Registration is free and you can start viewing art today!

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Title: No Mas Muertes (2016)
Artist: Fernando Marti

Fernando Marti is a printmaker, community architect, writer and poet based in San Francisco. His etchings, linocuts, screen prints, and constructions explore the clash of the Third World within the heart of Empire, and highlight the tension between inhabiting place / reclaiming culture, and building something transformative. He brings his formal training in architecture and urbanism to his public projects, including his altar ofrendas. Fernando studied architecture and urbanism at UC Berkeley, and has taught design studios at Berkeley and the University of San Francisco. Today, he works on housing issues as co-director of San Francisco's Council of Community Housing Organizations.

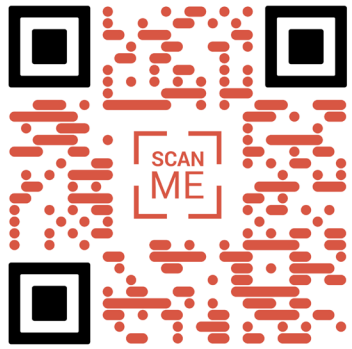


Title: Rene Yanez
Submitted by SF Poster
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will be hosting our 21st Annual Art Auction! To keep each other safe the to bid on the hundreds of beautiful art pieces on display. ArtAuction21 has which accommodate a variety of budgets.

ion dedicated to the elimination of homelessness and its social, political, ices of some of the most disenfranchised San Franciscans lead the fight nflux of over a billion dollars to San Francisco's homeless response system oite a very difficult year, we have accomplished so much together. This year ;1.1 billion in funding for homeless services including hundreds of housing ermanent affordable housing for our most vulnerable residents.

ed their talent and art to our cause and ask you to match their generosity in cluding a 20 person wine tasting at Total Wine & More, tickets to the SF



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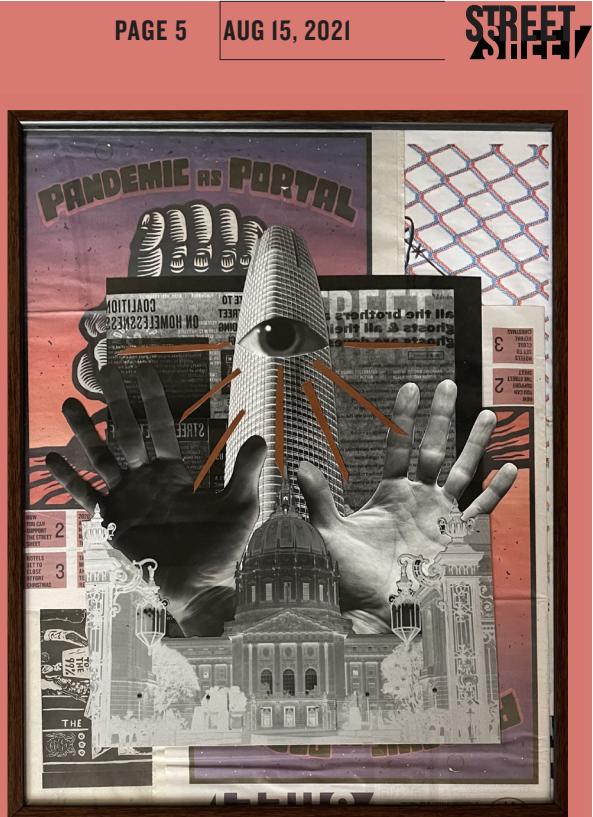


Title: El Beso (2021)
Artist: Patrich
Pinzza



Title: Petro Park (2015)
Artisti: Lauren Jade Szabo

Lauren Jade Szabo is a Los Angeles born artist who lives and works in Oakland, CA. She graduated with a BFA in Illustration from California College of the Arts with distinction, and received an MFA Fellowship from San Francisco Art Institute for graduate study in Painting, completed in 2018. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is in private collections in Europe and the United States. Szabo currently exhibits with SFMOMA Artist's Gallery and teaches Painting in the public education department at the San Francisco Art Institute.



Title: Street Beat 1 (2019)
Artist: Hunter Ridenour

Hunter Ridenour is a San Francisco based visual artist working in photography and collage exploring themes of the challenges being faced by many residents such as housing insecurity, the inequality of power in city government and human connection. Most recently his work focuses on the challenge of confronting toxic masculinity, misogyny and how to connect with men emotionally. He is currently pursuing his M.F.A. in photography at San José State University graduating May 2022.



Title: In Bar (2021)
Artist: Doug Rhodes

I believe art changes our perceptions of the people and world around us, broadening our perspectives in ways that cultivate greater respect for humanity and nature. I work mostly with acrylics, but lately I have been mixing photography and other media into my paintings, using real world subjects to create images of worlds I imagine. Currently, I find myself depicting humanity coming to terms with the immutability of Mother Nature: jungles overtake urban settings and cityscapes grow out of trees. My studio is in the Mission District on Clarion Alley, a location covered with murals and frequented by art-loving tourists from around the world.

HSOC FAILS TO FOLLOW EVEN ITS OWN INADEQUATE PROTOCOLS

continued from page 2...

TRAUMATIZING OPERATIONS

One way the Coalition on Homelessness works to ensure the human rights of those on the streets is through consistent monitoring of City operations that impact unhoused people, by sending staff and volunteers to talk to the people who are targets of sweeps. Our monitoring and outreach has concluded that the reality of ground operations is significantly divorced from what is described in public-facing documents.

Instead of encampment operations being based on the needs of people living on the streets, they are driven by the complaints of housed individuals. Even so, the City doesn't have enough shelter beds for the people they displace through sweeps. Our monitoring and reviews of internal HSOC emails reveal that shelter beds are only available for a fraction of encampment residents. Folks without viable options find themselves further destabilized and with nowhere to go. This contradicts what Director Carroll reported publicly when she said, "If we do not have enough shelter beds, we do not carry out the operation."

Public Works is supposed to follow its own "bag and tag" protocol, confiscating only unclaimed property and leaving a notice of where to pick it up. But on the ground, we have seen that the protocol is not followed in practice. Property is confiscated even as homeless people rush to gather their belongings, and we regularly field reports of stolen survival gear, medications and cherished personal items. Once property is confiscated, it can be impossible to retrieve it, as much of it is trashed instead of stored. We also see a clear connection between overdoses and the confiscation of Narcan during sweeps. When the City illegally confiscates property, it is not only inhumane—it is often fatal.

WHERE DO PEOPLE GO?

In her August report to the Local Homeless Coordinating Board, Director Carroll shared cumulative numbers of placements for folks displaced by sweeps. These numbers have been removed from public documents, but we were able to screen shot them during the live streamed presentation. The numbers focused almost entirely on success in removing tents. In total, HSOC stated that it encountered 4,648 "clients" between June 10, 2020 and June 30, 2021, and only 2,077, or 45%, were "placed." These numbers reveal a jarring and systemic failure: More than half of encampment residents were displaced to another street corner. Of those who were "placed," 57% were sent into congregate shelters or sanctioned encampments. About 40% were put in SIP hotels, which were made available for a very limited time.

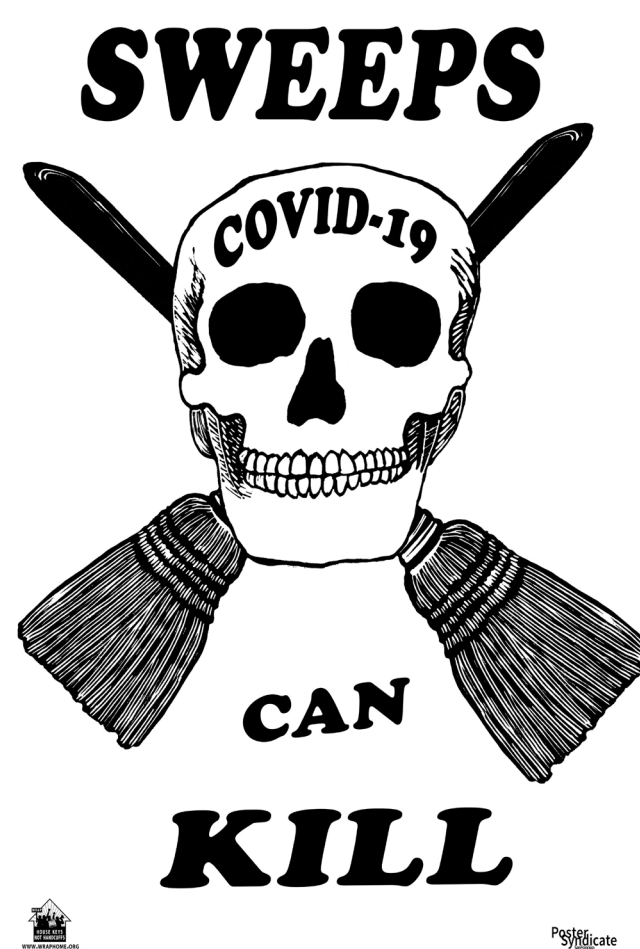
As we move through encampment sites, our outreach team asks residents whether they were offered any services, and if so, which. The majority report that they had not been offered services, while some folks said they were offered congregate shelter. HSOC claims that currently, the "acceptance rate" of services is only 30%. This number is highly suspicious, but it's also important to understand that the prevailing wisdom among service providers is that "service resistance" is a myth. When individuals do not "accept" services, it is a system failure: the offer itself is not meeting the need. Even outside a pandemic, placing individuals in congregate shelter is often inappropriate for a variety of reasons, including because they often lack disability accommodations. But as the delta variant ravages our communities, it is not difficult to grasp why someone might turn down an offer to stay in a large facility full of strangers.

"They offer shelter," a former HOT staff person told us. "But

everyone at HSOC knew that staying at MSC South would be more harmful physically and mentally than staying in the tent and they did it anyway. There are no ethical guidelines there."

Conversely, during the window when hotel rooms were made available, the acceptance rates of SIP hotels was about 95%. Hotels offered bathrooms, privacy and dignity. This acceptance rate further demonstrates that when the system responds to the needs of unhoused people, it can easily move people off the streets.

Unfortunately, SIP hotels were made available primarily to individuals who were being swept out of encampments, leaving in the dust those whom public health employees and other front-line service providers identified as most in need. In other words, if you were lucky enough to live in a tent surrounded by others in tents, you got a hotel room. If you were so destitute that you didn't even own a tent you were mostly screwed.



THE SHIFTING GROUND OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

In 2021, communities and governments nationwide are re-examining a police response to homelessness. The federal government now penalizes municipalities in McKinney Act funding applications for failing to abate criminalization, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness has created guidelines for cities to move away from sweeps and instead to collaborate with communities in relocating individuals to permanent housing. If permanent housing is not available, the guidelines suggest moving folks into temporary settings. The Obama administration's Department of Justice statement of interest in *Martin v. Boise* spelled out that it is a form of cruel and unusual punishment to enforce laws against camping, sitting and lying to those who are unhoused when no adequate shelter is available. The unhoused plaintiffs prevailed in the lawsuit.

The virus that causes COVID-19, and now its delta variant, makes displacing and criminalizing unhoused community members even more egregious. Congregate settings are currently not considered a safe option due to individual medical risks and public health risks. The CDC's Interim Guidance on Unsheltered Homelessness and Coronavirus

Disease 2019 (COVID-19) for Homeless Service Providers and Local Officials states that if there are no available housing resources for individuals then cities should "allow people who are living unsheltered or in encampments to remain where they are" to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

The shifting policies of the above institutions illustrate a growing recognition of the failure of policing our way out of homelessness and the need for a different strategy to address the growing crisis. So why, in 2021, is San Francisco still championing a police response to homelessness, led by HSOC?

GOING FORWARD

The very structure and intent of HSOC is deeply flawed. A focus on tent removal means that its work does not center on ensuring that the humans in the tents have a pathway off the streets. And the involvement of police in encampment operations guarantees a lack of trust from impacted communities. For these reasons, the Coalition on Homelessness has taken the position that HSOC should be dismantled.

We know from experience that encampments can be cleared with dignity and fairness. In 2012, San Francisco successfully carried out an "encampment resolution" at the King Street encampment in accordance with federal guidelines. After months of the City's failed attempts to criminalize and displace the camp residents, Bevan Duffy, who was then the Mayor's homeless director, got involved. He reached out to community advocates and camp residents for counsel, took their input to heart, and secured a church where the residents could relocate together, allowing them to stay with friends, partners and pets. He designated a storage container where belongings could be stored intact, and most importantly, created an exit plan for the church. After a stay in the church, residents were relocated to housing, with careful considerations for maintaining the relationships residents had developed through their experiences together.

This became especially important when Ian Smith, one of those residents and a contributing writer to Street Sheet, developed cancer. Thanks to the thoughtful relocation effort, Smith was able to spend the rest of his young life surrounded by friends who took care to preserve his writing and shower him with love in his last days. Throughout this process, there were no protests, and no roadblocks from the Coalition on Homelessness, because it was done right.

Going forward, any clearing of encampments should follow the precedent set in 2012. The property of encampment residents should be respected. The community should be brought in, not deliberately excluded. The City can begin by identifying a variety of new resources for individuals in an encampment, and then send HOT workers in to spend at least two weeks with encampment residents to deeply assess their needs. This should start by addressing garbage, water and medical needs so that assessment can occur without undue hardship. Police should not be involved. Paramedics should be called only if there is a medical emergency. Public Works should wait to clean until everyone is gone. And critically, given the history and trauma those in encampments have survived, there should be a system of accountability: All operations should be publicly posted and an independent human rights monitor assigned to witness every operation.

San Francisco can do this right. There is no excuse for forced relocation. As UCSF's Dr. Margot Kushel has written in response on how to combat homelessness, "There is no medicine as powerful as housing." ■

IN MEMORIAM: JANICE MIRIKITANI

February 4, 1941 – July 29, 2021

Janice Mirikitani, the beloved GLIDE Co-Founder and Japanese American Sansei poet, whose activism helped define the social justice culture of San Francisco, and whose verse illuminated her struggles with ethnic identity and personal adversity, died on Thursday, July 29, 2021. She was 80.

Mirikitani was a teacher, artist, and activist whose work and commitment to empower and give voice to the most marginalized has transformed tens of thousands of lives in San Francisco and beyond. As co-founder of the Glide Foundation, she played a seminal role in creating what many consider the nation's boldest and most unique fusion of social justice activism, social services at the raw edge of society, and the celebration of human creativity, all converging to break through traditional lines of race, gender, class, and creed.

"Janice was a force of nature," said GLIDE President and CEO Karen Hanrahan. "She was fearless and transformational in the honesty with which she loved us all and held us all accountable. Janice's legacy and her unique, powerful voice are all around us. It will continue to inspire GLIDE's work as we transform hearts and minds, and the landscape of poverty and homelessness, in San Francisco."

Mirikitani spent her entire adult life in a relentless pursuit of the kind of justice that brings the extreme and sometimes hidden needs in our society to the forefront of our attention. She did this

on three fronts: as a poet who rendered the rage of the oppressed, the incest survivor, and the invisible onto the page; as a teacher-choreographer who guided thousands of children, women, and men in the exploration of their own histories; and as Founding President of the Glide Foundation by ensuring those struggling the most in San Francisco had access to food, housing, recovery, medical care, and a place to grow.

Born February 5, 1941, in Stockton, California, Janice Mirikitani was incarcerated as an infant with her family in an Arkansas concentration camp during the mass internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. Following her family's release from the camp in 1945, the five-year-old Mirikitani moved to Chicago with her family and then to Petaluma with her mother. She has spoken publicly and through her poetry of these years where she endured emotional isolation, poverty, and the trauma of sexual abuse by her stepfather. Mirikitani is known as a

"Our ministry at Glide started by listening to people tell us about their needs, and by engaging those people in creating programs ... True leadership, we learned through the years, was about providing opportunities for those who might not consider themselves capable or educated but nevertheless had the passion, street smarts, and commitment to change — to emerge and develop as leaders."

- "Beyond the Possible,"
Janice Mirikitani



woman who can illuminate the horrors of war, lead a group of homeless women in writing their own histories, and confront institutional racism in public life – all while exposing the raw vitality, joy, and rage of speaking truth.

Mirikitani earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from UCLA in 1962 and her teaching credential from UC Berkeley. She also taught in the Contra Costa School

District for a year before pursuing a graduate degree in creative writing at San Francisco State University.

In 1965, Mirikitani came to work at Glide Memorial Church as an administrative assistant. There she met Reverend Cecil Williams and quickly became active in political movements for human rights and the 1960s anti-war and peace movements. Her exposure to the injustices of structural racism and sexism, particularly against poor people, propelled her activism.

Calling herself a "warrior of peace," as director of GLIDE programs beginning in 1969, Mirikitani shaped GLIDE's outreach and support for women and families facing challenges of substance abuse, domestic violence, single parenting, childcare, health and wellness, education, and access to employment. Under her leadership, GLIDE programs increased in size and scope. In 1982, GLIDE named Mirikitani Executive Director and President.

On January 1, 1982, Mirikitani married

Williams. Working closely together, they built GLIDE into a visionary, internationally known social justice leader, advocate, social service provider, and inclusive spiritual community.

In 2000, Mirikitani was appointed San Francisco's second Poet Laureate. Her works of poetry include "Awake in the River" (1978), "Shedding Silence" (1987), "We, the Dangerous: New and Selected Poems" (1995), "Love Works" (2001) and "Out of the Dust: New and Selected Poems" (2014). Additionally, she was the editor of nine landmark anthologies which provided platforms for writers of color, women, youth, and children.

Mirikitani and Williams collaborated on the book "Beyond the Possible: 50 Years of Creating Radical Change in a Community Called GLIDE" (2013). It describes GLIDE's explosive growth, from a struggling local church within the GLIDE Foundation to a nationally recognized social justice institution.

In "Beyond the Possible," Mirikitani writes, "Our ministry at Glide started by listening to people tell us about their needs, and by engaging those people in creating programs ... True leadership, we learned through the years, was about providing opportunities for those who might not consider themselves capable or educated but nevertheless had the passion, street smarts, and commitment to change — to emerge and develop as leaders."

Throughout her influential career, Mirikitani has been the recipient of more than 40 awards and honors, including the Governor and First Lady's Conference on Women and Families' "Minerva Award," San Francisco State University's "Distinguished Alumnae Award," the San

Francisco Chamber of Commerce's "Lifetime Achievement Ebbie," the American Book "Lifetime Achievement Award for Literature," the University of California at San Francisco Chancellor's "Medal of Honor," and the "Foreign Ministry Commendation Award" from the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Mirikitani's legacy of unwavering advocacy for the most marginalized lives on through GLIDE's bold strategic vision to reach more people in need with comprehensive services to help people off the streets, advance racial and social equity and build empathy to address large-scale issues across San Francisco. She will be remembered by many San Franciscans as a provocative, fierce-hearted, and enormously generous leader.

Mirikitani is survived by her husband, the Reverend Cecil Williams, her daughter, Tianne Tsukiko Feliciano and her husband Anthony, grandson Nicholas Feliciano, brother Layne Yonehiro MD, sister-in-law Susan Yonehiro, nephew Jason Yonehiro and niece Samantha Yonehiro, stepchildren Albert Williams Jr, Kimberly Williams, and step-grandchildren Kaya Grant, Albert Williams III and Zachary Williams.

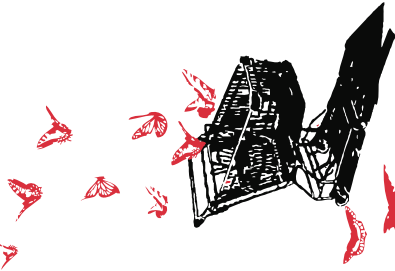
A public memorial service is scheduled for August 15, 2021. Seating is extremely limited at the memorial due to COVID safety protocols and guidance. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to join the livestream at 12:30 p.m. on GLIDE's Facebook page,

facebook.com/glidesf. In lieu of flowers, a GLIDE Memorial Fund for Janice Mirikitani has been established to support programs benefitting Women and Children.

Donations can be made in Mirikitani's memory at glide.org/honorjanice or by email to development@glide.org.

Coalition On Homelessness
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SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

AUG
28-29

DEGENTRIFICATION/ DECOLONIZATION SEMINAR

WHERE: SATURDAY 11-4PM, SUNDAY 10-3PM IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

This two day seminar is geared to bring/teach the medicine of hoarded wealth/inherited blood-stained dollars redistribution, settler colonizer decolonization, the ongoing violence of the Charity Industrial Complex, The Real Esnakkke industry and the revolutionary liberation of Community Reparations to as many folks as possible

ACCESS: register at www.racepovertymediajustice.org, Spanish translation available

AUG
5

400 STORIES FOR \$400 BILLION

IN-PERSON: Meet at 10:30 outside Speaker Pelosi's SF office to drop off the letters at 11 to Speaker Pelosi at the Federal Building in SF/ 90 7th St. Wear a mask, socially distance. RSVP at www.bit.ly/400forPelosi For questions: cynthiaal.cara@gmail.com/ 510-663-4086

IN-PERSON: If you cannot be in SF for the in-person event, you can still participate on Zoom at 10:30AM. RSVP at www.bit.ly/400forPelosi

The Long Term Supports and Services (LTSS) for All Grassroots Coalition will be meeting with Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office to urge her to SUPPORT and LEAD the efforts to win \$400 billion in funding for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). Over the last months, members of the LTSS for All Coalition have collected personal stories sharing why CARE is ESSENTIAL to them. These stories will be presented to Speaker Pelosi in person and on ZOOM. Help us urge the Speaker to LEAD on this funding and help us pass the \$400 billionin Congress

STREET-BASED JOURNALISM 101

a statewide collaboration between CalMatters, Street Sheet, and Sacramento Howard Street Journal

WE KNOW YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL.

The best journalism comes from those on the frontlines of stories, and no one is better equipped to tell the story of homelessness than those living it every day. This 12-week journalism course is designed to share introductory journalistic writing skills with those who are too often left out of the newsroom. Learn alongside a CalMatters inequality journalist and your fellow street-based journalists how to craft stories, conduct strong interviews and hook your readers.

INFORMATION SESSION

AUGUST 25 @3PM

All sessions will be held on Zoom. To participate please email us at streetsheetstf@cohslf.org. Spaces are limited and spots will be prioritized for those who have experienced homelessness and poverty.

12 WEEKLY SESSIONS

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

\$ Applicants who are accepted will receive a stipend upon completing the course \$ We may also be able to provide chargers and/or tablets for those without access, so please contact us!

