

PAGE 2

# HEAVENLY Father!

By Lawrence Hollins

Heavenly Father, full of grace, Bless this lady's beautiful face Bless her that tends to curl I thank you, Lord, for bringing her into my world Bless her eyes that shine so bright With a smile on her face and the dimples on both sides.

I thank you again, Lord, for taking your time, From her beautiful legs to her beautiful feet

I thank you again, Lord, for taking a piece of my rib And making this beautiful woman just for me.

So Heavenly Father, full of grace, There's that walks no one on this turf, This dirt, this place called earth Can ever take you place In the name of your son, Jesus Amen, amen, amen!

# LOVE LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

#### By Curtis Bradford

As a person who has lived and worked in the Tenderloin and Central South of Market communities for well over a decade, I have a message for my community about the recent actions of the San Francisco Redistricting Taskforce.

First, to my beloved Tenderloin & Central SoMa family and friends. I'm sorry. I'm sorry because I know you trusted me to be a voice for you in this process. You asked me to fight to secure justice for you and to protect you from harm brought against you by a political and financial elite of this city. I'm sorry for the real harm and suffering that this taskforce will cause in your daily lives. I wish I could have done more, but I promise to continue fighting for and with you forever and as hard as I can. this taskforce against the people of this city.

The Tenderloin will still support our neighbors in Central SoMa as well as deepen our connections with the rest of our allies in our new District 5. We look forward to working with Dean Preston, our new Supervisor for the Tenderloin, as we continue to advance our movement for justice and equity for all our residents, housed and unhoused.

Finally, I would like to end with the famous words of 19th century reformer and abolitionist Theodore Parker, words which also inspired Martin Luther King Jr.: "I do not pretend to understand the moral universe, the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways. I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. But from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice."

## DONATE TO KEEP STREET SHEET GOING !



SCAN ME

coalition.networkforgood.com

## WANT TO GET Involved?

### **VOLUNTEER WITH US!**

PHOTOGRAPHERS & VIDEOGRAPHERS & TRANSLATORS & ARTISTS & WRITERS & POETS & COMIC CREATORS & COPYEDITORS

## **DONATE!**

LAPTOPS & DIGITAL CAMERAS & AUDIO RECORDERS & SNACKS

#### CONTACT: QWATTS@COHSF.ORG

## **COALITION** 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.

Editor, Quiver Watts Interim Editor, TJ Johnston Vendor Coordinator, Emmett House

Coalition on Homelessness staff also includes Jennifer Friedenbach, Jason Law, Olivia Glowacki, Miguel Carrera, Tracey Mixon, Carlos Wadkins, Kelley Cutler, Tyler Kyser, Ian James, Yessica Hernandez, Solange Cuba

Our contributors in this issue include: David Solnit, Lawrence Hollins, Curtis Bradford. Olivia Glowacki, Tracey Mixon, Jade Arellano, Kenneth Madrigal, Joe Smith, Tonya, and Robert Gumpert. In the May 1 issue Jordan Davis' name was misspelled. We regret the error.

Graphic design assistance Jess Clarke Red Star Black Rose

**WRITING:** We are always looking for new writers to help us spread the word on the street! Write about your experience of homelessness in San Francisco, about policies you think the City should put in place or change, your opinion on local issues, or about something newsworthy happening in your neighborhood!

**ARTWORK:** Help transform ART into ACTION by designing artwork for *STREET SHEET*! We especially love art that uplifts homeless people, celebrates the power of community organizing, or calls out abuses of power! Cover dimensions are generally 10x13 but artwork of all sizes are welcome and appreciated!

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Have a keen eye for beauty? Love capturing powerful moments at events? Have a photo of a Street Sheet vendor you'd like to share? We would love to run your photos in Street Sheet! Note that subjects must have consented to being photographed to be included in this paper.

I'm sorry also to the broader communities of color, marginalized residents and the most vulnerable members of our city. I'm sorry that we haven't been able to protect you from the violence that this taskforce inflicted with malice against you.

Don't give up. You are not alone. I see you, I hear you, even if this taskforce was deaf to your tears and cries. Yet something amazing has happened. They sought to divide us and set us against each other. They have failed. New alliances have formed between our communities citywide. We have become a new force, united. We have become a force that will ultimately bring down the very political and financial elites that have weaponized Stay strong. We are together, we are strong, we are JUST. And we will win in the end!

To the four of the nine taskforce members who displayed an actual moral compass, human compassion, sense of justice and truth, thank you for your leadership and principle. I support you and thank you for your attempts to secure justice for all of San Francisco.

Curtis Bradford is a co-chairperson of the Tenderloin People's Congress, an organization that is now in the newly assigned District 5.

#### VISIT WWW.STREETSHEET.ORG/SUBMIT-YOUR-WRITING/ OR BRING SUBMISSIONS TO 280 TURK STREET TO BE CONSIDERED

#### FRONT PAGE COVER ART CREDIT

This poster by David Solnit is part of the Western Regional Advocacy project campaign "Housekeys not Sweeps."

Sweeps fracture communities, displace people, and damage physical and mental health.

https://wraphome.org/housekeysnotsweeps/



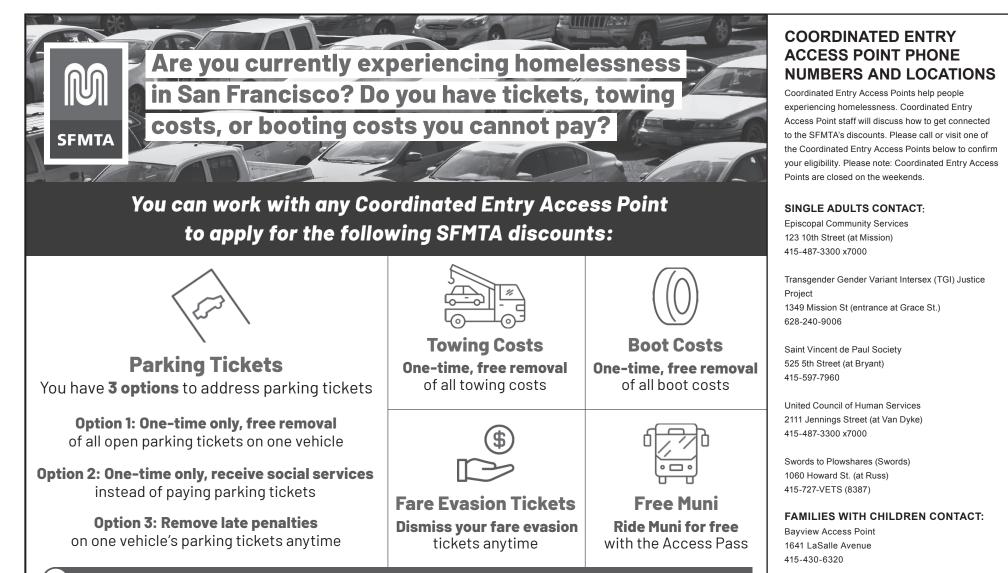
MAY 15, 2022



## **REST IN POWER** LAMAR SEYMORE **TENDERLOIN OUTPATIENT CLINIC**

The Tenderloin sadly and unexpectedly lost an important member of the community on April 21, 2022. Lamar Seymore had been a full-service partnership therapist and intensive case manager at the Tenderloin Outpatient Clinic for over 14 years, during which time he provided outreach and case management, as well as individual and group therapy to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Through his life's work and dedication, Lamar assisted clients on an everyday basis and made life-changing contributions to residents of the Tenderloin. He will be deeply missed by his clients and his fellow co-workers. He is survived by an extensive loving family and many Bay Area friends whom he adored, and we send our love and condolences to them.

Lamar's booming voice, beautiful smile and contagious laugh will be forever remembered.\*



STEP ONE - Determine if you are eligible for SFMTA's discounts

You are eligible for SFMTA's discounts if:

1. You are currently experiencing homelessness in San Francisco.

2. You have worked with a Coordinated Entry Access Point in the last 6 months. Coordinated Entry Access Points help people experiencing homelessness. Staff will discuss how to get connected to SFMTA's discounts.

Please call or visit a Coordinated Entry Access Point to confirm your eligibility. **Contact information for the Coordinated** Entry Access Points is on the back of this flyer.

#### 2 STEP TWO - Apply for SFMTA's discounts

You can apply for these discounts online, in-person, or by mail. To apply in-person, visit SFMTA 's Customer Service Center at 11 Van Ness Avenue (open M - F from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

If your vehicle was towed, go to AutoReturn at 450 7th Street (open 24/7).

To learn more and apply, go to <u>sfmta.com/IncomeDiscounts</u> or call 311.

If you are not experiencing homelessness but have a low income, you may be eligible for other SFMTA discounts. Learn more by calling 311 or go to sfmta.com/IncomeDiscounts

Central City Access Point 37 Grove Street 415-644-0504

Mission Access Point 2871 Mission Street 415-972-1281

#### YOUTH 27 OR UNDER CONTACT:

Huckleberry Youth Programs 555 Cole Street 415-386-9398

3rd Street Youth Center and Clinic 1728 Bancroft Ave 415-713-4782

Larkin Street Engagement and Community Center 134 Golden Gate Ave 415-673-0911 x352 The SF LGBT Center 1800 Market Street 415-865-5612

# WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST... DON'T WAIT UN **Photos by Kenneth Madrigal**







On Wednesday May 4, homeless and formerly homeless moms, children, and individuals converged on San Francisco's City Hall to deliver one message, loud and clear: "Our mothers need housing." The action was designed and carried out by unhoused members, mostly moms. In planning the action, they talked about how being homeless is literally breaking their mental health and came up with the slogan "Don't Wait Until We Break"

Age-old sayings tell us to save "mothers and children first" in any crisis or catastrophe. This is not some patriarchal old wives' tale, but rather a survival strategy for the human race as a whole. It's not that men can save their own or that women need more protection, it's about keeping our human lineage and the realization that primarily women, or moms, have done the job of childrearing and all that goes with it. Without them, we would be lost as a society and likely would not survive.

Our so-called "progressive" city of San Francisco would like for you to believe that family homelessness is rare and not an issue. However this is not the case, as there is at least one unhoused student

in every San Francisco classroom with more than 20 students. Families experiencing homelessness are largely invisibilized because of the unique risks they face: homeless families, if found, fear facing Child Protective Services involvement, which can lead to the traumatic removal and separation of children from their families. All to say, families know how to hide. Families here rely on the informal support of their families and friends to make it by, but it's not always an ideal situation. Sometimes this means staying indoors in the only available space, maybe with an abusive partner, or a family member who might be

engaging in child-inappropriate activities, like using or selling hard drugs at home. Our city does not pour adequate resources into solving family homelessness. Our politicians and elected officials often focus on who is most visible to tourists or others spending money in the city. This means the incarceration of homeless folks with no other place to go, or conservatorship for people with mental health and substance use issues. This is one reason why Proposition C: Our City Our Home is so important, as it earmarks 25% of all Proposition C-funded housing for homeless families.

PAGE 5 MAY 15, 2022

SIREEL

# OR EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF? I U DE BREAK! BY OLIVIA GLOWACKI AND TRACEY MIXON



Like most local governments in the United States, San Francisco holds an austerity position on our budget. Although we have a budget of around \$13 billion, less than 5% goes to the No. 1 issue in San Francisco: homelessness. Our wealthy city touts solutions to homelessness, where "A Place for All" is nothing but a holding cell or concentration camp for poor people. To poor people on the ground, waiting for a home, desperately calling the Homeless Outreach Team and leaving voicemails, showing up to Espiscopal Community Services' office at 123 10th Street to endure a grueling vulnerability assessment, which

ultimately often ends up with no housing or sense of permanency in the city that was once theirs. This is often felt as a process in which every man must save himself because there are not enough resources or placements for people. And they're not wrong. In the United States, we see a scarcity of resources for our most vulnerable people - our seniors, our children, our single moms, our folks with disabilities, our immigrants, our gender-noncomforming siblings, our folks engaging in clandestine work to survive. For mothers, they must go through a vulnerability assessment even to get shelter, and rarely is there any housing to offer, and when there is, it is a short two year rental subsidy. At the same time, we are seeing increases in tax breaks and profits for corporations and individual millionaires and billionaires. To our folks on the street, some who are waiting years, or even decades, for a place to call their own, this is not just a decision arrived at after a series of tedious City budget meetings, this is a matter of life or death.

When Coalition on Homelessness members embarked on the journey to City Hall to hold a rally in honor of our homeless moms, we lobbied the supervisors' offices like there are lives on the line, because there indeed are. For so many families who are scraping by and for so many more who are surviving the best they can, we shouted this year's Mother's Day slogan, "Don't Wait Until We Break!" - a plea to our City supervisors and mayor to fund housing for our families because as sailors facing a shipwreck tell us, save mothers and children first. They will carry us on to uplift the next generation. They will carry us to a time where no one is without a home.

# WHERE'S THE CARE IN THE PROPOSED "CARE COURTS?"

#### by Jade Arellano

In early March, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Court program, which would create yet another separate court for poor and unhoused people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. Governor Newsom has explicitly discussed CARE Court as a tool to address street homelessness, and the proposal is consistent with a string of bills nationwide that seek to increase the power of the state to institutionalize unhoused people under the pretense of "compassion." The devil is in the details, and the only real investments in this proposal are in the court system. By broadening and bolstering the structure for bringing people under court-ordered "Care Plans" while doing nothing to increase the capacity of treatment programs or access to housing, this proposal simply reinforces the mechanisms that continue to produce unequal, unacceptable health outcomes in our communities. Funding systems of oppression over voluntary treatment and truly affordable housing will not "end homelessness."

#### What does the proposal say?

According to the bill text (running as two identical bills in the assembly and senate) the CARE Court process begins when a "specified individual" petitions to refer someone to the court. The list of "specified individuals" is alarmingly broad, and it includes "family members, first responders, including police officers or outreach workers, the public guardian, service providers and the director of the county behavioral health agency." The court then reviews the petition and schedules a hearing.

The three central criteria for the CARE Court program are that someone a) is on the schizophrenia spectrum or has another psychotic disorder, b) that they "lack medical decision-making capacity," and c) are not receiving any other treatment. If the judge decides in the hearing that a person meets these criteria, the court will mandate a "Care Plan." This Plan will allegedly be developed jointly by the individual subject to the Care Plan, a court appointed "Supporter," and the county behavioral health department.

The Care Plan can last up to two years and can consist of forced treatment and medications, including longacting injections. The bill also mentions a housing plan, but housing is defined to include interim/bridge shelters and will only be offered "as feasible." Since there is a state-wide housing crisis, the probability that people will be offered actual housing is slim to none.

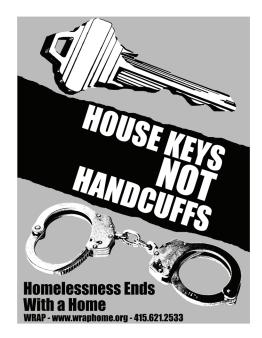
If someone fails to complete their Care Plan, the next step is for that person to be referred to a conservatorship, where a representative of the state is given authority to make all life decisions for that person, indefinitely. A conservator can order a person to continue forced treatment and medication, tell them what shelter they must accept, and control other basic decisions like how to spend money.

#### Reading between the lines: A carceral ultimatum

CARE Courts do not seek to provide care, but to weaponize it. Newsom talks about outdated, abusive conservatorships and state hospitals as the reason that we need this "upstream intervention," but his CARE Court upholds and intensifies the carceral history of mental health policy in California. Like the numerous system-expanding courts created to address social issues before – Mental Health Court, Substance Abuse Court, Homeless Court etc. – CARE Court simply promises to create a channel for people that politicians and business owners consider a nuisance to be disappeared into a never-ending cycle of criminalization and state bureaucracy, while simultaneously funding the courts to do "social justice" work.

The state's proposal to conserve people rises to a shocking new level of warfare against the poor and dispossessed, threatening to strip them of every bit of human dignity and right to self-determination. People with disabilities, unhoused people, or people who use drugs are not the "problem" – the cause of this crisis is solely based on our government's refusal to utilize our vast resources to ensure that health care and safe decent housing is available for all of us who need it. Programs like CARE Court will never solve social issues rooted in structural inequality and systemic racism because the criminal justice system is the executioner of the status quo.

As people with lived experience, frontline service providers and organizers have attested all along, the primary obstacle to accessing treatment and housing isn't lack of followthrough on behalf of "broken" and "service resistant" individuals. Rather, it is a complete and overwhelming lack of capacity in any program they apply to. This program will simply formalize a carceral ultimatum: "participate" in (forced) treatment or face the possibility of conservatorship. Meanwhile, the defunct system of coordinated entry and ramshackle service provision remain as major barriers. And in areas where access to treatment is historically worse than others, namely Black and indigenous people of color and rural communities, this disparity will manifest in increased conservatorship and incarceration of marginalized people.



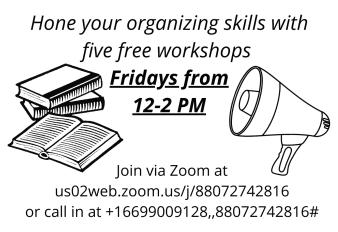
#### WE DEMAND REAL CARE, NOT COURTS!

There are many ways to transform our mental health system that are not predicated on incarceration and institutionalization. We need deep state investments, not just in expanded crisis stabilization such as acute diversion units and psychiatric urgent care, but also peer support programs, open residential treatment programs that serve individuals with co-occurring diagnosis and multiple languages, residential care facilities, cooperative living programs, reimagined board and cares, supportive housing and residential step-down housing. In other words, a mental health treatment system that meets individuals needs with a diversity of offerings that ensure people with mental health issues have agency in garnering the services that work for them.

In order for Newsom to address the issues he professes to care about and truly create a new paradigm in providing treatment for people to achieve healthy and positive outcomes – the only defendants receiving a court order would be our federal, state and local governments requiring them to provide homes for all in need. House keys not handcuffs, nothing ends homelessness like

a home! 🗖

## Free School 2022



**5.20** - Trauma Informed Leadership

## Escuela Solidaria 2022



**5.20** - Liderazgo en Situaciones de Trauma

PAGE 7 MAY 15, 2022

STREET.

# **SURVIVING TRAFFICKING**

#### By By Joe Smith and Tonya

Inside of California's homelessness crisis, another crisis gets little attention: sex trafficking. In some cases, experiences of sex trafficking push people into homelessness. In other cases, being homeless makes them more vulnerable to sex trafficking. It can be a matter of life and death.

Tonya is a woman in her 50s who lives in a tent in Sacramento. She shared her story of sex trafficking in her teens to bring awareness to an issue that is too often ignored because its victims are often already part of overlooked communities. Here is her story in her own words, lightly edited and condensed for clarity. When Tonya was 15, a young guy pulled up alongside her while sitting at a bus stop in Sacramento. He asked if she wanted a ride.

I can only remember bits and pieces of this - it's been a long time.

We went to a female's apartment. I found out later down the road it was his "main girl." We went to his place, and everything seemed ok. I remember at one point that I was trying to call my family, and he came in and said, "Who are you talking to?" I told him I was calling my family. He took my phone and beat the shit out of me and said I would never see them again.

At this point, I had to make him believe that I was ok with all this so he would drop me off places and not have someone watching me.

When a customer walked in (to the parlor), they had to say something to let the staff know they wanted a girl. First, you paid them, picked a girl, and then you had to pay the girl for whatever you did with them. Back then, I always had this mean look on my face. I didn't have to have sex with any of them; they wanted me to either masturbate in front of them or watch while they played with themselves. Other times I had to steal money from the other girls so he (the pimp) would think I was working. After a while, they would let me go to the store by myself. I told the guy at that store that I would come in and ask him to call a cab one day. I had gotten to know him by then, and he agreed without asking any questions. When the day finally came, I was shaking. He called the cab; I got in and had him take me home. I didn't say shit to anyone about what happened.

One day while I was at a pay phone, his "main girl" saw me. She accused me of stealing from the other girls. I said, "how did you let him do what he did to me?" I ran back home... When I went home after I left the place, I was scared for a long time. I would not leave my house for about three months. After that, I never went back to Broadway. I don't know why I never told anyone. It took a long time for me to trust anybody that came around me. I guess I didn't want to be judged.

This experience lasted for about six months of Tonya's life. While she doesn't know whether this experience caused her homelessness, she is sure of the lasting psychological effects it has had on her life. Every day she experiences anxiety and lives in a constant state of hyper-awareness of her surroundings. Trust is difficult. Sharing her story has brought back many painful feelings and memories, but she wants to share her story to raise awareness of the many perils of sex trafficking and the long-lasting effects on a person's life.

Experiences like Tonya's are all too common among people experiencing homelessness, according to advocates at Women Escaping a Violent Environment (WEAVE) and Community Against Sexual Harm (CASH), two Sacramento-based organizations that provide crisis intervention services, counseling, and advocacy for victims and survivors of sex trafficking. attract victims through deceit) or female perpetrators recruit their victims from these situations because often no one will come looking for them. Many are from black, brown, and indigenous communities. Their disappearance is explained away by law enforcement or society in general by saying that they just ran off, or their absence is not even considered.

Homeless youth are vulnerable to sex and labor trafficking because they tend to experience a higher rate of the primary risk factors to trafficking - poverty, unemployment, a history of sexual abuse, and mental health issues.

Sawan Vaden, a Program Administrator for CASH, describes homeless youth sex trafficking as "being moved from motel to motel - never being able to stay in a home." Young homeless LGBTQ and Trans folks may find themselves on the street because of a lack of acceptance by their families and engage in sex for survival.

WEAVE and CASH help folks who are ready. Both use peer support and outreach to community partners. CASH offers a drop-in center. WEAVE and CASH offer trained staff with various experiences and expertise to engage victims. Survivors can receive assistance with counseling, medical, psychiatric, and housing support.

Both WEAVE and CASH work with law enforcement agencies to prosecute criminals. Prosecutors have stepped up efforts with law enforcement to go after the real criminals in sex trafficking: pimps, panderers, massage parlors and the customers.

The real victims—the exploited—can increasingly get services and assistance through robust funding allocations made by the State of California to organizations like WEAVE



Sawan Vaden, a Program Administrator for CASH,

mentally, and emotionally. In California, Governor Newsom signed into law AB-262. This law clears a path for trafficked individuals to have their criminal record sealed and destroyed. This "clearing" of a person's record can happen in months, allowing an individual to move on with their life without the burden of a criminal record.

WEAVE, CASH, and Tonya agree that there is more work to do. State and local laws must require more robust penalties for the offenders. Regional code enforcement offices and prosecutors need to shut down massage parlors that are a front for trafficking activities. LGBTQ and Transitional Age Youth service providers, nonprofits, and community-based organizations need to continue working with organizations like WEAVE and CASH to outreach to the homeless population. Law makers need to develop more progressive policies and laws like AB262 to move people from the difficult experiences sex trafficking has caused to a place of greater stability.

If you or someone you know may be the victim of trafficking, reach out to WEAVE at 916-920-2952 or CASH 916-856-2900 before doing anything and when it is safe to do so.

One of the other girls in the house decided to take off one day. The main guy finds out where she is, and he and his friend want her back. So I was told to come along.

They said I was to get in the front seat while they got her in the car, and I was to drive straight back to the house fast. When we got to where she was, they jumped out and snatched her up. She was screaming from the back seat to crash the car, but he told me that I would get my ass beat if I did.

I don't remember much, just that when we got back, she got beat.

Ũ

Advocates from WEAVE and CASH describe how women and men experiencing homelessness are lured in by the promise of housing or safety - something that life on the streets hasn't given them. They remain captive because of fear, shame, and guilt for their actions, which they may believe society will never understand.

There exists a stereotype that "blonde girls are being stolen out of suburban malls," says Beth Hassett, Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director of WEAVE. "This is just not what we are seeing."

More likely, sex trafficking victims come from the foster system, poor or underserved communities, or abusive homes. Romeo pimps (men who and CASH. Instead of handcuffs and shame they are being recognized by prosecutors and legislators for the damage done to them physically,



Beth Hassett, Executive Director of WEAVE.

Tips can be made to the National Human Trafficking Hotline 24/7 @ 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733.

And, of course, if you are in immediate danger, please call 911.

(Both writers are recent graduates of Street-Based Journalism 12-week course, a collaboration between CalMatters, Homeward Street Journal and Street Sheet. This story, a product of that course, was originally published in Homeward Street Journal earlier this year.)



MAY 15, 2022



SAT. MAY 21, 2022 11am - 3pm Aquatic Park Bocce Courts (SF)!

\$25 registration per person & \$100 per team



<section-header>

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 3481 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94188



**Coalition On Homelessness** 280 Turk Street San Francisco, CA 94102 415.346.3740 www.cohsf.org streetsheetsf@gmail.com

# **RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



Belongings

What belongings mean to you? "Everything. They're all that I have. Yeah, it's all that I have. You have nothing else. You don't have a house, you don't have a car, so yeah, it's everything I have.

[When you lose everything] it's like the end of the world. I mean everything comes crashing around you. It's like you lost your best friend. Name: James (Kasper) Greene, 44 Without a home: Maybe 30 years Place: 13th Street near Folsom where he was visiting friends. Currently he lives in an encampment on Dore Street. Date: Photo: 13 August 2021 Interview: 15 August 2021