



MINIMUM SUGGESTED DONATION TWO DOLLARS.
STREET SHEET IS SOLD BY HOMELESS AND LOW-IN-COME VENDORS WHO KEEP 100% OF THE PROCEEDS.
VENDORS RECEIVE UP TO 75 PAPERS PER DAY FOR FREE.
STREET SHEET IS READER SUPPORTED, ADVERTISING FREE, AND AIMS TO LIFT UP THE VOICES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO.

STREET SHEET

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|---|--|-----|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| POETRY CORNER | 2 | BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE | 3 | MODERN DAY EUGENICS AND THE IMPACTS OF THE ONGOING COVID-19 PANDEMIC | 4-5 | MASS CAMP FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS IN NYC | 6 | STORIES FROM THE STREETS | 7 |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|---|--|-----|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|

DEFEND PEOPLE'S PARK!



DefendThePark.org



PeoplesPark.org

ABOUT THE COVER ART

People's Park was constructed without permission in 1969 to create a beautiful community on vacant University of California land. Protests about the Vietnam war and civil rights were against the system — the park represented a new chapter of resistance in which people began to build a new world worth living in. The issues connected to the Park are vital — people seek freedom to use and enjoy land, not just hold it for profit and greed.

An unspoken justification for UC's proposed dorm construction is to displace homeless people who hang out at the Park. UC has done everything it could to push homeless people to the Park, bias its students against the homeless by conflating poverty with crime, and try to make the park a festering eyesore by tearing out trees, the children's playground, freeboxes, gardens and other improvements constructed by Park users. It made its own bathroom inhospitable and prison-like with no soap or hot water (even during the pandemic).

As the capitalist housing crisis has worsened, pushing the poor and people of color further to the margins of Berkeley, the park has become an essential refuge and cultural center. It's time to organize and share the knowledge between the generations, the resources between the housed students and the unhoused, to plan the defense of the park from UC's colonial entitlement, and grow something together in a different way.

Visit defendthepark.org and peoplespark.org to take action to defend People's Park!

adapted from text on DefendthePark.org, originally adapted from Slingshot

POETRY CORNER

MY PROUD EGO

Aaone Enosa

My proud ego is yelling revenge,
But I know forgiveness is the best!
I don't want to jeopardize good things I've accomplished,
Lord please remove this devil from my ear that's evil and toxic!
I forgive my sister who stabbed me in San Francisco with a knife,
I'm just grateful Lord that you didn't allow her to take my life!
I felt that was a lesson for me to get it right,
To repent and take control of my life!
I've been through this life threatening experience to tell my story,
How you intervened Lord with
Endurance to keep me going
As long as I wake up you're not done with me yet,
You work everything out for my good and beautiful blessings is what I get!
Let go and let you Lord,
You are the key to every door!
I won't retaliate because now I know better,
I'll fight with my brain that will reel in big cheddar!
It doesn't make me a punk or even weak,
I did my time and made my name in the streets with my fists!
God gave me perhaps a last chance,
I'll fight with my head instead of my hands!
Let God fight my battles,
Instead of me fighting battles that don't matter!
Setting examples is the goal,
Glory to God for the cycle I immensely broke!!!

DONATE TO KEEP STREET SHEET GOING STRONG!



SCAN ME

coalition.networkforgood.com

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

PHOTOGRAPHERS
VIDEOGRAPHERS
TRANSLATORS
COMIC ARTISTS
NEWSPAPER LAYOUT
WEBSITE
MAINTENANCE
GRAPHIC
DESIGNERS
INTERNS
WRITERS
COPYEDITORS

DONATE EQUIPMENT!

LAPTOPS
DIGITAL CAMERAS
AUDIO RECORDERS
SOUND EQUIPMENT

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
Assistant Editor: TJ Johnston
Vendor Coordinator: Emmett House

Coalition on Homelessness staff also includes Jennifer Friedenbach, Jason Law, Carlos Wadkins, Miguel Carrera, Tracey Mixon, Laketha Pierce, Tyler Kyser, Ian James, Yessica Hernandez, Solange Cuba, Javier Bremond

Our contributors in this issue include: Kaveh Wadell, Fia Swanson, Cal Dooley, Revolt, Tariq Johnson, Sonya Katcher, Samel Laparan, Johanna Elattar, Andy Howard, People's Park / Defend the Park, Aaone Enosa

ORGANIZE WITH US

HOUSING JUSTICE WORKING GROUP TUESDAYS @ NOON

The Housing Justice Workgroup is working toward a San Francisco in which every human being can have and maintain decent, habitable, safe, and secure housing. This meeting is in English and Spanish and open to everyone! Email mcarrera@cohsf.org to get involved!

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP WEDNESDAYS @12:30

The Human Rights Workgroup has been doing some serious heavy lifting on these issues: conducting direct research, outreach to people on the streets, running multiple campaigns, developing policy, staging direct actions, capturing media attention, and so much more. All those down for the cause are welcome to join! Email lpierce@cohsf.org

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN OUR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS!

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

THE SAGA ON LIVING AND SURVIVING CONTINUES...

Tariq Johnson

The saga of living and surviving homelessness continues. Just when I got comfortable in my stabilization room it seemed like my past hit me again, it was like déjà vu. The bed bugs started to come out the ceiling on the fourth floor where my room was, and when I turned off the lights at night they began to bite. I was shocked cuz I knew this would be the beginning of a long fight. I started filing complaints, buying expensive bed bug spray, throwing things away. The eggs started popping up and I knew I had to move out of there.

They gave me a room downstairs, which was smaller, but no bugs. It had DirecTV, a brand new bed, space heater and fan. So once again my prayers were answered. I had a venous ulcer in my leg, so at least I didn't have to climb those stairs to the fourth floor any more. My room was right next to the garbage room so I kept it clean. I got an in-home care nurse to come and help me take care of the open wound on my foot, and having a refrigerator and microwave helped me heal, slowly but surely.

The problem was the rooms were both stabilization rooms. They let me stay there for a year, which was a blessing. But time flew by and I was not able to find housing or a shelter. Time was not on my side.

Shit! The blessing and curse of being forced back into homelessness hit me again. It was wintertime, and that's the worst time to be in the streets. I started using drugs again to get by—the street life put me back in survival mode. I put most of my stuff in a friend's garage. So all I had was a backpack with the bare necessities. I slept in BART stations to keep warm and dry. I was a heroin addict with the host of cocaine on my brain.

The only thing that rescued me from insanity was my faith in God and humanity.

It was a cold and wet winter night, with brutal non-stop rain for days. Me and a lady friend shared a doorway with a big umbrella and a tarp over a shopping cart. We had blankets, but it was the coldest night of the year and we were shaking and shivering. Then, a dude begged us to let him in. We looked at each other and decided, why not? Then another guy I knew for some time walked by and I had to let him in cause he didn't have a coat. He was shaking and shivering, too.

So we all got up under the tarp and even though the rain was coming down hard we were all dry. We built a fire by pouring hand sanitizer in a can, and put it in the middle of the circle. Everyone was laughing and joking, then this guy came by with a backpack of snacks for \$4. We all put a dollar in and it was like we were camping, and it was warm under the tarp. We all looked out for each other and we made it through the coldest night of the year. We all prayed and thanked God for blessing us.

As the sun rose the next day, we cleaned up our area and went on our merry way. It felt so good to come together with folks you barely knew and survive a storm and live to see the next day.

This gave me strength, faith, motivation and determination to become proactive in getting help with my addiction and getting off the streets. I got into the Salvation Army detox center and started putting in some work on my recovery. This opened a whole new life for me to stabilize and replace bad habits with good habits. This took time and daily

practice, praying, exercising, going to meetings and eating healthy vegetarian meals.

My biggest transition was getting my glasses, because I have a visual impairment which has been deteriorating over the past 10 years. My daughter and my son were really worried about me going blind. Even though we live miles away, this brought us closer together. We started communicating daily, and then the rest of my family started to reconnect with me. The family that prays together stays together, and the blessings begin to unfold.

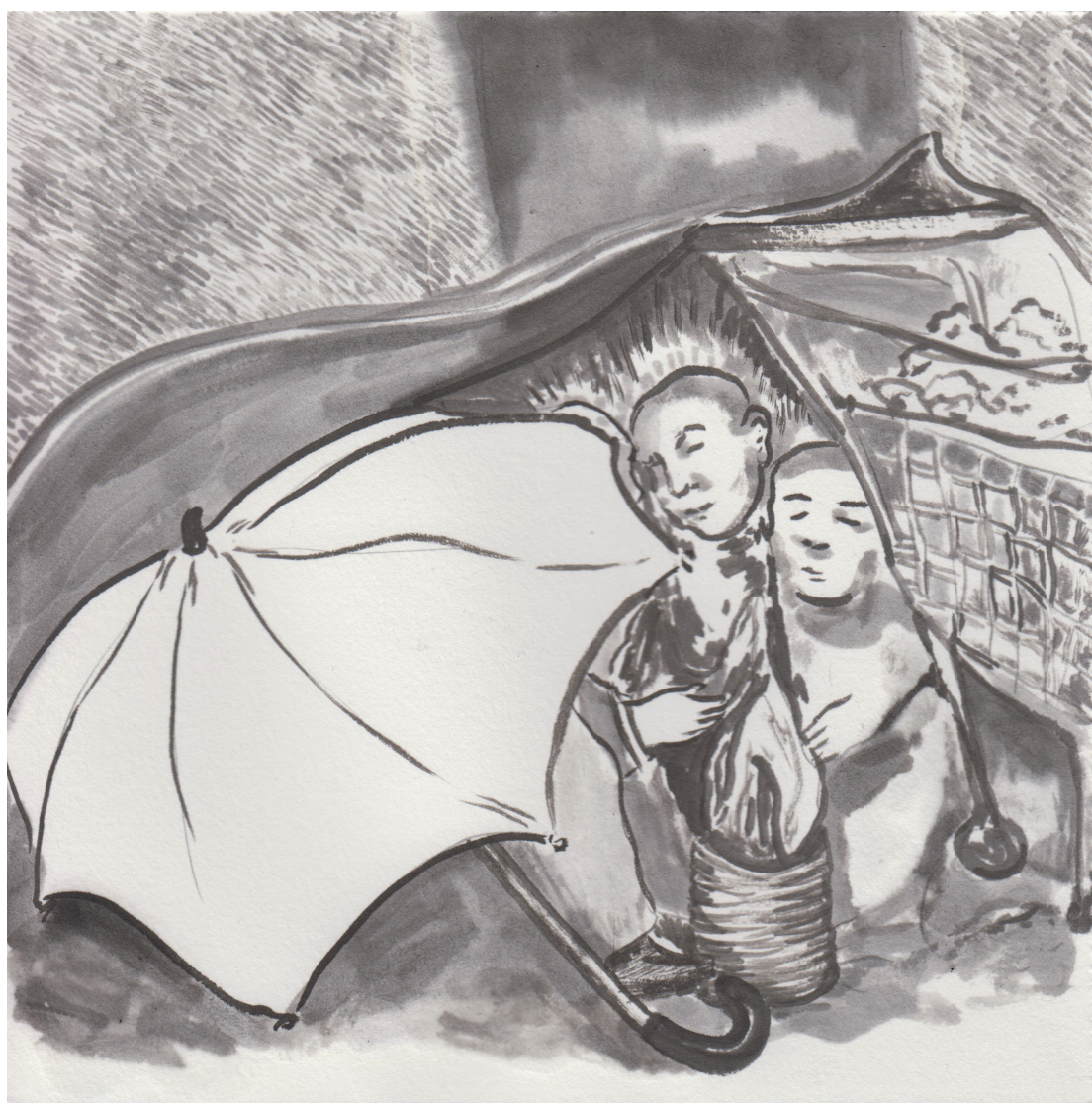
I began to approach life with a positive direction. One step at a time and one day at a time. Now I'm in a program called Positive Direction Equals Change. This has been a very instrumental part of me maintaining my perseverance, peace, faith, progress, prosperity, and purpose to

make this crazy, mixed-up world a better place.

I got a job working for a vegan catering company, and my body oil business is doing well and expanding. Now I have my own room with a shower and sink and toilet in it. I'm so grateful to lay in my bed, look out the window to see the stars shine at night and the sun rise in the morning. I really thank God for the love, peace, beauty, and happiness that he is showing me in this crazy mixed up world we live in! ■

The new beginnings of blessings came from what was a Curse with a blessing in disguise

Illustration by Sonya Katcher



**CONTRIBUTE
TO THE
STREET
SHEET**

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.

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

The MODERN EUGENICS

BY REVOLT

"If this pandemic has taught me anything, it's that it's not safe to talk about it."

I found myself writing these words to a burgeoning "COVID-conscious" friend group this week, feeling the gut-wrenching pain of yet another loss of community. In a time when the country has decided to somehow "move on" from a rampant virus that still kills and hospitalizes Americans in droves, it's hard to feel like reality has any basis in the rational. At the time of this writing, 3,272 people are being hospitalized and 358 people are dying in America from complications due to COVID-19 *every day*.

From threatening the man who fought to stymie the spread of this infectious disease to keep us safe, to a comedy sketch on Saturday Night Live calling the infection a "10 Day Vacation", to comedians like Trevor Noah quipping about Omicron as the "I don't give a sh*t about any of this anymore" strain, to even the President of the United States declaring he pandemic is over" - it's hard to feel like I'm living in the same world as my peers, or that medical science has any bearing at all in the world.

When will it stop, I wonder? When will COVID-19 apartheid be over?

Yes, I'm disabled. I'm not scared of dying from COVID-19, but I *am* scared of yet another disability robbing me of my "quality of life": Y'know, that nebulous concept that loosely translates to "not spending your days in agony."

"Disability" is a dirty word today, though, and in order to avoid uncomfortable realities, our leaders have concocted exciting new alternatives (note the sarcasm...). We now call it "comorbidities." You're more likely to die of SARS2-Covid-19 if you have multiple "comorbidities."

What the hell is a comorbidity, anyway? Something to do with a dark sense of humor? Vampires? Cohabiting with dead people?

No, it means "disabilities," or "disabling health conditions."

We also now have the phrase "*long COVID*." What the heck is *long COVID*? Do we call it *long diabetes*? *Long cancer*? *Long Lyme disease*?

We have words for this stuff. It's called being *disabled*. Chronically, seriously, permanently disabled. And it sucks.

I've lived with chronic, serious, permanent disability for many years now. Let me tell you, you don't want this. Permanent disability is a great way to lose your community, your life partner, your job. There is a reason why more than 3,000 of San Francisco's homeless population report living with a disability. However, no amount of disturbing facts of chronic disability from COVID-19 seem to budge us from our collective disassociation from the "Rona". UCLA conservatively estimates that due to this pandemic "...there could possibly be 2.8 million Americans who are in it for the long haul, with long-term temporary disabilities if not lifelong disabilities." 2.8 Million is a *lot* of people.

But according to the director of the Centers for Disease Control, it's encouraging news that we are sick or dying.

There is a word for this surreal, daily nightmare, in which people at the grocery store yell in my face for keeping three feet away from them at checkout. In which friend after friend disappears from my world because I cannot regularly text and I want to socialize while masking. In which social programs are repeatedly cut, or threatened to be outright eviscerated if a certain political party takes power again.

We have words for this stuff. It's called *eugenics*. Eugenics is the belief in a false so-called scientific superiority of one kind of human over another; it's the practice of atomizing and subdividing the human race into desirable and less desirable categories. It's one of the most common tools for

genocide and the erasure of cultures and peoples, especially during times of "peace."

Historically—just like today—eugenics was normalized in the United States and used to serve political ends, especially in the South. It was especially popular in the 19th century for developing a moral and scientific excuse to perpetuate the barbarism of slavery and the disenfranchisement of Black Americans. Developed by racist scumbag scientists, many of whom were the tops in their respective fields (like "eminent" scientist from Harvard, Louis Agassiz), they argued for polygenism, the idea that the races of humans were in fact distinct species, many with lower intelligence, more susceptibility to disease, etc.

Guess which race was always on the *top* of this hierarchy and which race was always on the *bottom*? Yeah, white supremacy looks the same in all ages and places. It must have been a real shock to these deplorable sadists when Frederick Douglass became one of the most influential speechwriters in American history, even after being born into slavery.

Eugenics was also very popular into the early 20th century with forced sterilizations (a nice word for violently surgically altering a person's reproductive functions without their consent) of black women. Later, eugenics turned up in the wackjob anti-Jewish theories of our favorite bunker suicide fascist, Adolf Hitler.

Eugenics has a long and ugly history, affecting and terrorizing people with disabilities of all races and genders. It is used by Mayor London Breed and her administration to forcibly incarcerate and remove the rights of free citizens who are homeless with psychological disabilities. They call it "involuntary residential treatment" and "conservatorship"; y'know, the fun fun thing Brittany Spears went through (sarcasm). Even today, it remains legal in 31 states (including California) to forcibly sterilize people with mental disabilities against their

will.

Eugenics and the killing of Black and disabled babies through sterilizations never seems to register as a concern for the so-called "pro-lifers." But I digress.

During these times of moral and political crisis, old debunked and horrible ideas have been returning to the fore. From universities that offer speaking engagements to their worst proliferators, to the completely unaccountable Big Tech companies that allow the spread of conspiracy theories, these archaic and dangerous philosophies have nestled into the craniums of would-be honest, moral, and compassionate citizens. A big thanks to politicians for doing their part in keeping social media companies unchecked (more sarcasm).

Sardonic joking aside, living through this nightmare is something else. Not a day goes by that I'm not reminded that many would prefer that I were exterminated; that they believe my community and I are such an intolerable hindrance, so unnecessarily deserving of life and freedom.

And whose freedom do we speak of these days? The freedom to infect. The freedom to be mask-less, vaccine-less (if only these people would extend their belief system to clothes-less, we might have more cool nude beaches again!) These are the same people who gave us the first polio case (a completely preventable disease) in nearly a decade.

Even the *suggestion* of wearing an N95 mask or hosting an event virtually is met with immediate pushback, open hostility, ghosting, protesting, and even violent vigilante-ism.



‘I AM LUCKY TO BE ALIVE’: POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS IN THE WAKE OF THE PANDEMIC

anonymous

When COVID-19 hit San Francisco, it made matters worse for all of us struggling to live on the streets. The cold, rainy nights with flimsy shelters, no balanced diet, no proper clothing and no money to help even in acquiring the cheapest commodities in the convenience stores are harder than one might imagine.

COVID made the streets so unbearable. At first no one knew what it was. We thought it was a mere flu, transmitted through air just like a cold, and that it would fade away in time. But this did not happen. Things got worse fast, and many of the neighborhoods started to shift. Those who were lucky were taken to hospitals, but some succumbed to the virus, in part because of their hard circumstances. There was confusion and fear among homeless communities, as we were told to try to avoid mingling, but this really wasn’t possible, especially given that most of us share tents and small food portions we manage to get. Because of these circumstances, the pandemic spread fast.

Many homeless people already have weakened immune systems, and as a result most were affected, knowingly or unknowingly. We ran away and tried to hide from police and medics, whom we thought had come to collect us and take us to a precinct, as fear spread among us with little knowledge of what was really happening. It was so difficult to distinguish help from harm. By the time most of us understood that it was COVID-19, many of our friends had moved to new cities, died or isolated themselves. In addition, new homeless people joined our numbers as a result of loss of jobs, especially when the lockdown was implemented.

Not everyone was infected the same way by the virus, and some people had a very mild experience. But this made it easier to spread the disease unknowingly. By the time you get really sick, you have already spread the virus on the streets. It did not take long before I became infected by a neighbor who never knew they were infected, too.

I am lucky to be alive today.

I suffered a lot of chest pain, a sore throat, weak joints, loss of taste and smell, and blurred vision. I

was so sick, but most of us who are undocumented would not risk being taken to a hospital for fear that we would be discovered. I had to survive the pain and torture of COVID-19 through hope. My friends made a lot of concoctions to ease the sickness. They introduced me to more drugs like cocaine, spirits and some lemon drinks that were supposed to help treat the flu. It worked in some instances, but others who were severely affected died.

But we had to survive. We had no relatives, no documentation, and very few friends to count on while living on the streets. Helping one another was a matter of do or die. In some instances we would watch at a distance as the bodies of our deceased neighbors were collected from different places—some from their tents, others from under bridges.

When I regained some strength after my infection, I saw many new faces on the streets. I had to find new customers for supplies after my debt had grown while I was sick and unable to supply my daily package of drugs.

At the same time, the pandemic also saw increased drug use and drug-related illnesses, and in some instances people who had been infected developed chronic illnesses like heart problems, diabetes and cancer. For us experiencing homelessness, I saw the medical services try their level best to save lives, but for those of us without documentation it was a risky affair.

I still struggle with pain from my COVID experience. My body’s general functions are limited, and I depend on medication for the pain. Besides, I have to keep selling to pay my ever-swelling debts while drug kingpins and territory conflicts make it more difficult to hit the set targets.

Life has become too hard. More urgent help is needed for unemployed, undocumented homeless and poverty-stricken families. COVID-19 has really made the streets even more risky, and the government and non-governmental entities should come to our aid as soon as possible. ■

“Now people realize we can do things differently.”

This was a common phrase friends told me during the course of the pandemic, trying to comfort me with the thought that virtual meetings and hangouts would become a regular occurrence from now on for people like me.

“Sorry to say, the ableists will get rid of it; it will go back.” I would tell them, knowing the extent of this country’s ableism and hatred for my kind.

What I didn’t expect, though, was how dangerous it would become to speak up. I’ve always spoken my mind, unless I have been too physically tired or sick to do so. But now, it has become a strategy for survival to stay silent. Every conversation about masking puts me at risk of a further destroyed support system: another ghosting friend, another dissolving community (or one I can’t access), another quitting care provider. I simply can’t afford it, and so I continue to shut myself in, away from society.

I’m lucky enough to have a roof over my head that allows me to do that, whereas disabled homeless people are at the continual mercy of this disease every day.

I’m deathly afraid of the smallest errands I run, moving around the grocery store with a laminated sign on the back of my wheelchair that reads “I’m high-risk for Covid-19, please allow some distance, thank you <3” (which is constantly ignored). I’m deathly afraid of losing all of my community and friends, who no longer have any interest in phone calls or virtual meetings. And I’m deathly

afraid of social assistance programs crumbling under the weight of increased policing budgets and a city politic looking more like Texas every day.

Dr. Dwinita Mosby Tyler gave an eye-opening speech about diversity fatigue, and how minority populations are tired of fighting for justice. We’re beat, worn out, and more than that, we are terrified for our lives. “What if white people led the charge against racism?” she posits.

I’d like to ask, “What if non-disabled people led the charge against eugenics?” Truth be told, I won’t be able to publish words like this for much longer if they don’t.

Maybe that’s a good thing for some people. Maybe they would rather my kind be exterminated so they don’t have to be faced with uncomfortable truths. But I believe most human beings are moral beings. I believe we all desire to experience happiness and compassion, that our hearts and ideas flourish in the levity of tolerance and diversity rather than under the consternation and paranoia of bigotry and policing.

“Love thy neighbor” doesn’t have to be a commandment; I think it’s something that human beings simply do by default if left to their common senses and goodwill, without coercion and manipulation. In the words of President Joe Biden, “And if we all do our duty—if we do our duty in 2022 and beyond, then ages still to come will say we ... heeded not our worst instincts but our better angels.”

Eugenics are our worst instincts, so who are your better angels today? ■



CAMP CITY:

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS ON NY RANDALL'S ISLAND

Johanna Elattar

The Randall's Island "Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center" opened on October 19, 2022, to house asylum seekers arriving in New York City. The New York Immigration Coalition quickly denounced poor conditions at the tent encampments on Randall's Island, and the decision to house asylum seekers in them. Now, Mayor Eric Adams is facing demands to find alternative housing options to protect the new arrivals.

The facility at Randall's Island is approximately 84,400 square feet, and features a barracks-style space filled with 500 cots, but it can—and probably will—accommodate double the number of cots if need be. On opening day, two buses loaded with asylum seekers arrived at Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. Although the buses held mostly families, only single men will stay in the Randall's Island facility. The arriving families were sent to the Row Hotel in Midtown Manhattan; there is still no word as to where single women will be housed.

Adams has branded the influx of asylum seekers a crisis. Many of the seekers are from Central and South America, and they're arriving in New York mostly by way of Texas. The camp at Randall's Island is being used as a "way station" for the migrants to rest, and to find help getting to their next destination. The destination may be longer-term housing in the city's homeless shelters, or transportation to yet another city.

Although the camp on Randall's

Island is called a "Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center," many critics say the city should be doing more to help this vulnerable population. New York's shelter system is currently operating near its capacity, and hotels are nearly full as well. The city had already rented space in hotels to use as an emergency shelter to house migrants. But, as tourism returns to NYC, hotels are raising their prices.

In recent months, New York has received more than 17,000 asylum seekers. Some asylum seekers have found housing with friends, and family, others have relocated to other cities. However, according to CNN, approximately 19,400 asylum seekers have ended up in the city's overcrowded homeless shelters. Officials who toured the barrack-style tent shelter on Randall's Island said the city is doing its best to provide housing for the asylum seekers since the homeless shelters are operating at capacity, and it is getting harder to find hotels that are willing to rent out large blocks of rooms to house the migrants and asylum seekers.

Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol spoke about the Randall's Island camp's great amenities, such as laundry service. There are Xboxes, WiFi and phones that will allow the residents to call internationally, and residents will be served three culturally appropriate meals a day.

But immigrant rights groups were alarmed by the visuals coming from the mass shelter, and voiced concerns that the asylum seekers

would be at risk due to the lack of insulation from cold weather and the distance from the island to necessary social services. The images of the migrant camp look strikingly familiar to advocates in San Francisco, because they resembled the mass shelter initially proposed by Mayor London Breed as a response to COVID-19 for homeless San Franciscans.

The camp for asylum seekers coexists with another shelter on Randall's Island: Just 350 yards away stands the HELP Meyer homeless shelter, a high-rise building that can be easily seen from the camp. The HELP Meyer is run by HELP USA, a nonprofit organization. Under a \$64.7 million dollar contract, the city pays to house 200 single men in 95 dorm-style rooms.

Mike, a 39-year-old man who now resides at a Brooklyn homeless shelter, agreed to talk to me about the conditions at the Randall's Island HELP Meyer. Mike had recently left Randall's Island after living at that shelter for a few months.

"The place was f---- disgusting!", Mike exclaimed, "It's run down, dirty, and you wouldn't believe the kinds of vermin that pretty much have taken over the kitchens. The bathrooms are filthy, no one ever cleans them, and every floor smells like p---- and sh-----. We had one TV in a common room with a couple of plastic chairs, and food that you can't even identify. One night, I got so sick from eating the food that I just ate a couple of apples, or whatever fruit they had for us, but I didn't eat the cooked food, if you

can even call it that!"

Mike continued, "The building is a high-rise, but you better take the stairs to get to your room because the elevator is nothing but a death trap! One time, these couple of guys were trapped in the elevator for days til they got them out. The beds are horrible—you're better off just sleeping on the floor with a blanket. I got back trouble, and the bed was making it worse. The place is overcrowded, you got fights breaking out everyday, I just couldn't stand it anymore. I had to leave!"

It seems clear that the City of New York is failing to provide adequate accommodations for unhoused New Yorkers as well as for those seeking asylum, and should be investing more in caring for all those without stable and permanent housing. On October 6, when Adams was asked about the shelters for asylum seekers and for unhoused New Yorkers, he said, "I'm never going to take away the resources that are for those New Yorkers who are in need of services."

The next day, Adams declared a state of emergency over what he's calling a migrant crisis, and he stated that the asylum seekers will be issued ID cards, and that there won't be any more admissions to the tent city. HELP Meyer did not comment on the conditions of the shelter and its residents on Randall's Island.

As of now, Adams is not taking any questions from reporters regarding the Randall's Island migrant camp or the homeless crisis in New York City. ■

BECOME A STREET SHEET VENDOR

STREET SHEET is currently recruiting vendors to sell the newspaper around San Francisco. Vendors pick up the papers for free at our office in the Tenderloin and sell them for \$2 apiece at locations across the City. You get to keep all the money they make from sales. Earn extra income while also helping elevate the voices of the homeless writers who make this paper so unique, and promoting the vision of a San Francisco where every human being has a home.

TO SIGN UP, VISIT OUR OFFICE AT 280 TURK ST FROM 10-4 ON MONDAY-THURSDAY AND 10-NOON ON FRIDAY

A STORY OF POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Samel Leparan

COVID-19 hit indigenous people and immigrants in San Francisco especially hard, leaving many in poverty and homelessness. Poor and homeless people were especially affected by the many restrictions and safety regulations that were enforced.

Kate had just traveled to America with a round-trip ticket to visit her uncle James in San Francisco. James had promised to help her get documents and admission to an American university. As a young girl from a humble home and a poverty-stricken family, she had worked as a maid to get her through school, so when opportunity knocked at her door she believed that her fortunes had turned and smiled at her. She traveled to America with the help of many friends, the church, and her uncle.

Her move was something many in her home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, could only dream of. But just two days after she arrived, all hell broke loose. There had been a coronavirus outbreak in the country. She was sure the outbreak would be over in time for her to catch her flight home, but this was not the case. Strict measures were enforced by the government to try and reduce the spread of the coronavirus. This meant that she had to stay put and wait for further instructions from the government.

Her uncle James would not follow the instructions, because he had to work and find money for rent and food, despite how risky it was for him to be going out during the lockdown period. He was among the first of many who were laid off immediately.

Kate says her uncle used to leave the house at night, and that he would come back with some groceries. But before too long he fell ill, complaining of chest pains, fever, difficulty breathing, joint pains and blurred vision. His symptoms got worse with time. By now her departure day had passed and he was the only one who could help her get back home when the regulations were relaxed. But her uncle's health deteriorated quickly and he was admitted to a hospital. It was so difficult to visit him because she was on an expired visa; the only way she knew to get any information about her uncle was through her uncle's friend whom she only knew by a nickname, Ras.

After a week, Ras stopped coming to inform her about her uncle, and she soon learned he had been arrested for possession of hard drugs. Kate asked her neighbor to check in on her uncle, but she came back with disturbing stories about how African-American people were being treated in the hospital. She said that when you got to the hospital

it was so difficult to see your loved one. There were so many rules in place and the only ones allowed in with patients were the doctors and the nurses on duty. She added that once a new patient was brought in, ventilators were taken from existing patients to help stabilize the new patients. All this remained rumor, because she never got an opportunity to see her uncle again. She tried communicating with him from home but she never got any form of reply.

Eventually she was evicted from the house where she had been living. At first she found a few places where she could sleep on the sofas, but when it became clear she wasn't able to contribute to the rent, she was abandoned. She began sleeping in the corridors and borrowing food to eat. Weeks passed by but she never gave up. She always went back to where she used to live with her uncle to see if he had returned, but she only saw an empty house until it was occupied with a new tenant. She lost her passport in the process of being evicted and she knew no one besides her uncle. She now believes her uncle is dead, and she has no way to prove otherwise.

Kate was left to fend for herself in the streets, new in the country, city and with no friends or relatives. While she was lucky not to get infected by COVID, it nevertheless

left her in misery and hopelessness. Now she is homeless, and she would do anything to get back to her home in Kinshasa. She got involved with some people who promised to help her, but instead got her into sex work and drugs, which she is now addicted to.

As Kate narrated this story to me a few days ago, she was in tears about having to spend years on the streets with no proper shelter, food, or money, no known contacts to call at home, and not even a passport to get help from anyone. She has only her home country ID, which she hopes will help her get help from her embassy, but because of her addiction no one will believe her story.

Kate's experience is a reflection of many other street poor and homeless folks who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Her story tells us how some institutions try to help while others are so hard to access. For Kate, COVID-19 brought her poverty and homelessness—others lost jobs, turned to selling drugs for survival, and experienced criminalization, addiction, institutionalization, and rejection from their homes and livelihoods. I hope this article can help the relevant authorities broaden their scope in helping those that were affected by COVID-19. Kindly stretch out your hand to help—it will positively affect many whose stories have yet to be told. ■

PART 2 OF THE SWEEPY TOWN CHRONICLES

CONCRETE JUNGLE

Andy Howard

Find Part 1 at streetsheet.org

Will was deep in thought as he lay in his makeshift lean-to on a makeshift bed. To understand his thought process and his frame of mind it is important to mention that there are a handful of solid core values that he will live his life by consistently, day in and day out:

1. Being true to his heart and being solid with his peers. For Will to be perceived to have let down a friend would be devastating, but to be perceived to have deceived twenty people who are now worse off as a direct result of his action or inaction is absolutely as bad as it gets for Will.
2. The power of positive thinking
3. Never ever focus on negative thoughts and/or revenge/avenge type activity
4. Do not complain about something multiple times without making a plan to change whatever it is that is

fueling a problematic situation Will meditated for 30 minutes and totally relaxed his physical and mental state so he could get a good night's sleep. Tomorrow was going to be a busy day and he would need all his strength to get through it productively.

Awake at 6 a.m. and feeling energetic and optimistic about the day's potential, Will got up, brushed his teeth, washed his face, ate some leftover food, walked a couple blocks and grabbed a coffee, then headed for the 14-Mission bus and got himself to the Tenderloin, where he would enter the Coalition on Homelessness, which would change his life and affect many others for a considerable time in the future.

When inside, Will met some of the friendliest individuals that he ever had in San Francisco. It is truly a special kind of person that makes a personal career out of helping homeless individuals living on the streets of a major city, for the

homeless are the true street-savvy, survivalist-minded individuals that make the concrete jungle their home.

People who have never lived on the streets sleeping rough in a major city with lots of crime have no idea of the daily activities that become insurmountable tasks when you are in that situation. ■

Sweep tight and come back for the next edition to find out how Will's life was about to change forever and thousands of lives would end up being affected as a result of that first visit to the Coalition on Homelessness.



DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE A PODCAST?

Listen to **STREET SPEAK**, the podcast answering your burning questions about poverty and homelessness in San Francisco. Created by the editors of Street Sheet, this podcast brings you the word on the street. Find the latest episodes on our website and wherever you listen to podcasts.



SCAN ME

MISSING PERSON!

Aquiles Candeas Leal has been lost since August 30, 2022.

He is Brazilian and came to visit me after 3 years without seeing each other. Please help me find him.

He is 25 years old and is 6-foot-one. He has black and purple tattooed eyes and has two bands tattooed on his left ankle and a mandala on his left calf. He also has a small cross tattooed on the middle finger of his right hand.

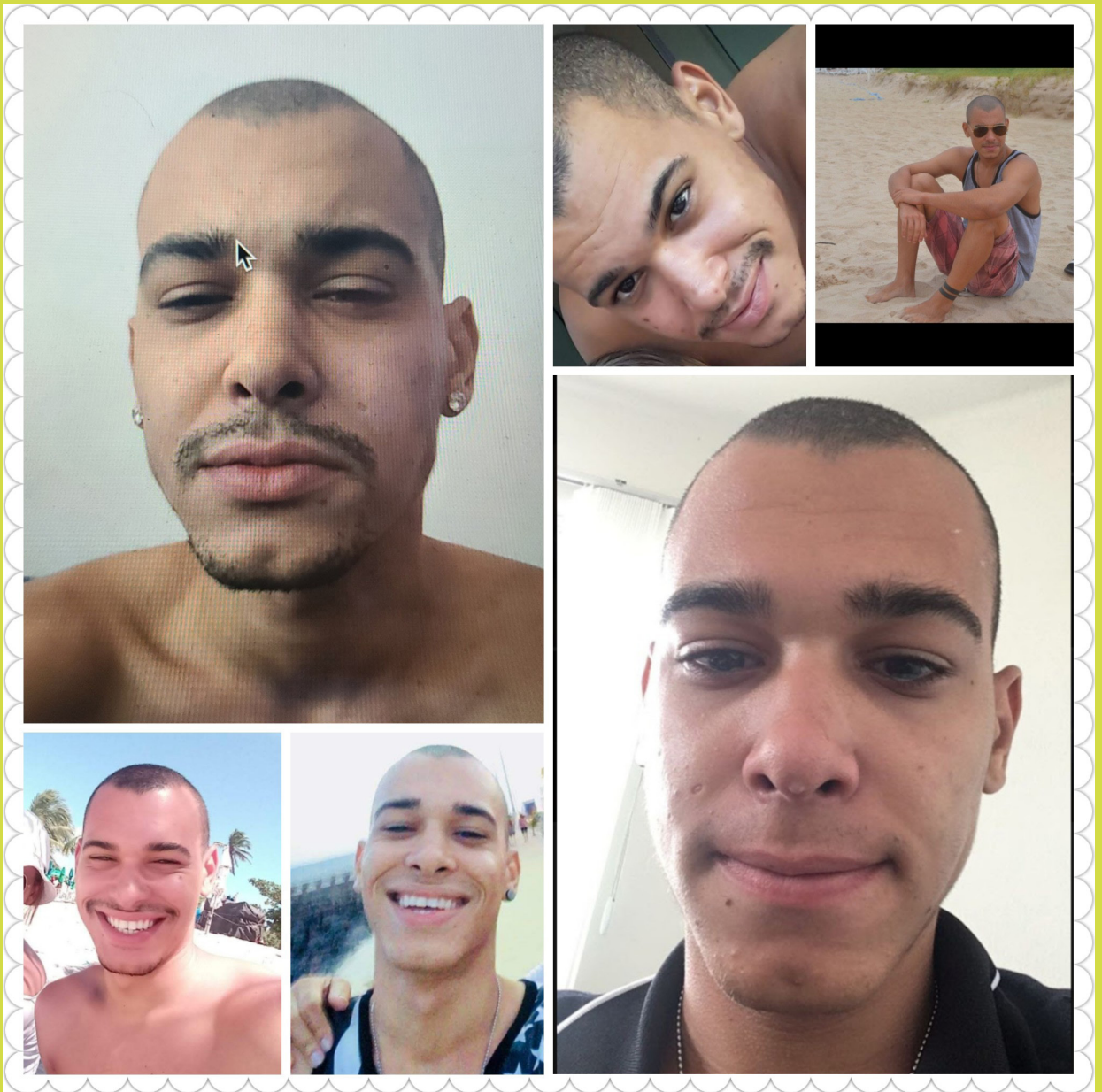
He doesn't have much facial hair, but he might have a little mustache and a goatee. His hair is short and he often shaves his head.

If anyone can help me find him, please contact me. I am his mother.

Viviane Candéas dos Santos

Phone number: +1 (407) 773-9254 (WhatsApp)

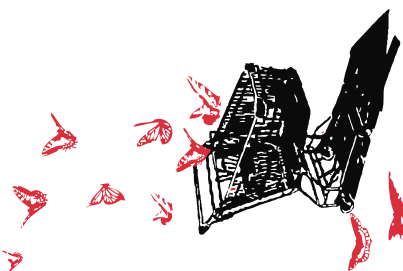
ncandeas@gmail.com



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



Coalition on
Homelessness
San Francisco

ANNUAL STREET SHEET POETRY EDITION

Now accepting submissions of poems
and artwork for our January 1st
issue! Deadline: December 15th

Submit by email to qwatls@cohsf.org
or in person to 280 Turk St

