

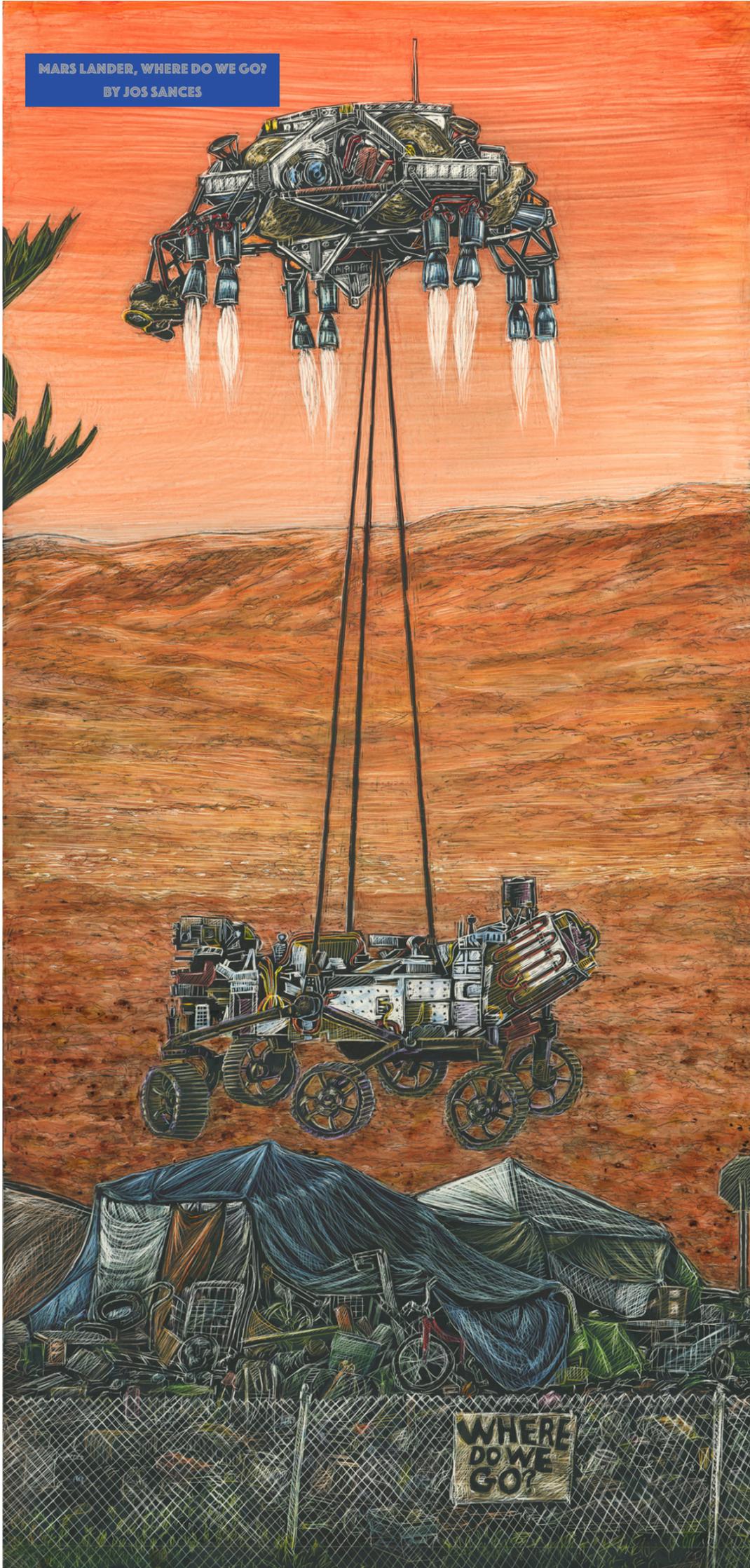
INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS SINCE 1989



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# STREET SHEET

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO LONGTIME STREET SHEET VENDOR ERIC "E-TEE". REST IN POWER.



MARS LANDER, WHERE DO WE GO?  
BY JOS SANCES

# ARCTIC CONSTRUCTION 2022

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THE IMPACT OF SIP HOTELS ON THE 2022 PIT COUNT	6	PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING TENANTS FIGHT BACK	7

# 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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# 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.

## AN OPEN LETTER FROM THE WOOD STREET COMMUNITY

August 23, 2022

Dear Governor Gavin Newsom, Mayor Libby Schaaf, City Administrator Ed Reiskin, Director of Caltrans Toks Omishakin, Caltrans District Deputy Director of External Affairs Cheryl Chambers, BNSF CEO Kathryn Farmer, and Alameda County Administrator Susan S. Muranishi:

We, the community of Wood Street invite you to join us in partnership in creating and implementing solutions that will meet the needs of the State of California, Caltrans, Alameda County, BNSF, the City of Oakland, and the residents of Wood street.

On July 22, 2022, Judge William Orrick stated that all involved parties in the Blain et al v. Caltrans et al case must work together to create a plan.

Our time in the streets, under freeways, and along the rails has taught us which City, State, and County interventions are most helpful and harmful. We have ideas and solutions that will not only make our lives better but will improve the overall safety and progress of the Oakland community at large. We welcome this opportunity to collaborate.

We want our voices to be heard, we want our ideas sprung from years of lived experience to have a seat at the table. "Nothing about us without us."

We live our struggle and therefore know it more intimately than anyone else and have the clearest understanding of how to resolve it. We are inspired, hopeful, and teeming with the possibilities that could be actualized through the combination of our ideas and the resources readily available to your agencies. This is not a bureaucratic exercise for us; our lives and wellbeing are at stake.

Over the years we have made conscious efforts to remediate the safety concerns held by ourselves, Caltrans, and Oakland at large. We are part of the history of Oakland. We are citizens of Oakland, we are builders, we are parents, we are chefs; and we have been let down by failed systems that put us on the streets. Nonetheless our investment in Oakland has not faltered. We have worked to remove debris buildup on Wood Street to reduce fire and health risks on top of meeting our survival needs day to day. In this way we have compensated for Caltrans and The City of Oakland's negligence and failure to work with us in the past. We have reached out numerous times to your agencies for access to dumpsters, fire extinguishers, sand buckets, hoses, and assistance creating markers throughout Wood Street so that emergency service providers can quickly respond to the locations of emergencies.

We urge you to join us in taking immediate action to remediate fire danger in the community as we work together to come up with long term solutions. Our immediate and long term proposals can be found in the document, attached with

this letter, that we shared with Judge Illman on August 1st, 2022 and which was also included in our briefing.

So many of us in curbside communities such as Wood Street have grown weary and let down by temporary band-aid solutions. Our fostered sense of community and stability is nearly impossible to retain when you evict us from our homes, destroying our belongings, to pile us into programs for a time, just to filter us back out into the streets. So many of the existing interventions tell us where we cannot go and cannot be. This is why we feel it is crucial for the city, the county, and the state to designate land in the long term for housing crisis solutions where we can be. We need land where residents can stay for as long as they need without fear of being kicked out on some arbitrary timeline. We need solutions that center, foster, and integrate the communities we have made for ourselves. That way these spaces can be governed by the residents' own pre-made social agreements while also giving us access to social services and amenities that will help us to thrive. Such as access to electricity, clean potable water, bathrooms and showers, regular medical care, therapy options, and consistent access to housing navigation.

The current temporary solutions are expensive and ineffective, we have long term solutions that work and are more fiscally responsible. For example, we calculated that with the 4.7 million dollars alone that the state granted the city to shelter 50 people temporarily on rented game changers land we could permanently house 120 people in refabbed shipping container homes with electricity and running water on designated land for long term living (ex. Texas Community First Village). Part of the land could also be set aside to create space for individuals who wish to continue living in their tents, RVs and other vehicles. We can implement the centralized cooking model we developed at Wood Street to cut down on individual private use of propane and other accelerants near people's belongings and homes.

With our social and sustainable living innovations combined with your agencies' social services and resources we together can create a stable base for people to live in a community that alleviates our focus beyond survival and empowers us to thrive. Through this court process we have been reaching out our hands in partnership, but have been dismayed to find your palms closed with finger pointing. We want your help in this struggle to make our communities caring, safe and self-sustaining. We have ideas and tools for its birth and with the aid of your agencies' resources we could create a more compassionate and humane road to housing.

In Solidarity and Love,  
 The Wood Street Community

## STEPS TO ADDRESS SAFETY ISSUES AND RESIDENTS' IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

### INCREASE FIRE SAFETY

#### Caltrans can:

- Remove trash & debris in coordination with resident leaders
- Provide several dumpsters spaced throughout Wood St
  - Just as Caltrans pays crews to do cleaning, could pay residents to begin cleaning their areas
  - Could allow residents to fill dumpsters themselves
  - Could bring cleaning crew in to work with residents to identify refuse
- Place pet friendly gravel on roadways to facilitate both clean up and emergency response efforts

#### Caltrans in coordination with Oakland Emergency Service Providers can:

- Establish marked zones within Wood st to help emergency personnel respond promptly

#### Oakland Emergency Service Providers can:

- Provide fire extinguishers and sand buckets to residents. Have hoses on sight.
- Hold fire safety and basic emergency response (CPR, Narcan use, etc) trainings

#### The City of Oakland and Alameda County can:

- Establish more centralized cooking areas like the area at Cob on Wood where residents can come together to cook so that individual use of propane and other accelerants is discouraged.
- Provide some centralized access to electricity so residents can charge cellphones and other necessary items
  - Would reduce residents' need to find electricity through other means
  - Would increase residents' ability to connect with service providers and thus expedite the housing navigation process
  - Could be done using solar panels

### INCREASE SANITATION & SAFETY

#### City of Oakland and Alameda County can:

- Provide access points where residents can get clean water throughout the camp
- Provide more regularly cleaned portapotties with handwashing stations to reduce spread of illness
- Provide a shower truck that visits different areas of Wood St frequently
- Provide solar powered lights throughout camp to increase safety

### WOOD ST RESIDENTS' VISION:

#### Land & Location

- Residents need another space to move to together as a community
- Proposal: 22 acre parcel of Oakland City land near Wood St or any other large parcel
  - Spacious - many people could be there and this would not lead to crowding conditions that lead to safety risks
  - Could be initially set aside for residents of Wood St, but in time could accommodate many homeless residents in Oakland.
- In the same neighborhood
  - Residents receive support from housed neighbors in their community who know them and care about them
  - Residents have jobs near Wood St and need to remain local
- Other options:
  - Parcels of land Governor ordered agencies to designate as possible sites for temporary encampments (Executive Order N-23-20)
  - Tax-defaulted land in Alameda County

#### Staffing

- The community should be led by its residents
  - Classes on manners and community building to promote being good neighbors
- It could function like a job training site
  - Contractors could help teach residents how to build the tiny homes, giving needed job experience.
  - Residents could be trained in the housing navigation process so that they can assist each other.

#### Resources

- Electricity
  - At a minimum, there should be charging stations for residents' phones and lighting for safety.
- Access to clean water
- Access to bathrooms and showers
  - At a minimum, well-maintained portapotties and shower truck present daily
- Access to regular medical care
- Access to housing navigation

### LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

#### Permanency:

- Short-term solutions DO NOT WORK
- When forced to move frequently, residents lose belonging, community, & can't build a sense of stability
- People need to be able to stay for as long as they need - not kicked out based on arbitrary timeline

#### Community:

- Plan must allow residents to stay together in community
- Community guidelines & governance should be crafted by residents - they know what works best & how they can thrive

#### Flexibility:

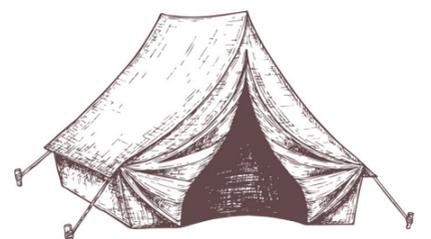
- No unnecessarily rigid rule structures like those found in shelters (No curfews, No visitation policies, No lockouts)
- Different living options (RV and Vehicular options, Tiny Homes, Support to transition to permanent housing like apartments, homes)

#### Property management:

- Return of taken property
- Management of stolen cars - but not cars that belong to residents that just need updated smog check / registration / other

#### Housing Options

- Space for RVs, boxcars, trailers
  - Part of the land could be set aside to create a community for individuals who wish to continue living in their RVs and other vehicles. Individuals could have a small, designated yard surrounding their RVs. Community guidelines could be in place to dictate spacing between RVs and yard maintenance.
- Tiny Homes
  - Tiny Homes are immensely preferable to Pallet Shelters. They are warmer, more secure, and can be customized to truly feel like homes. They could be spaced appropriately far from each other to prevent overcrowding. Could also use shipping containers - fire proof, can be customized.
- Community Center
  - There should be centralized community spaces where residents can gather, do their cooking, and access resources. This space could be far from any fire hazards. Centralizing cooking would prevent residents from needing to use propane/generators in their own spaces, reducing fire risk.



# NO CARE IN THE COURTS:

## Invest in Housing and Mental Health Services, not Criminalization

The CARE Court Governor Newsome is backing is dangerous! Senate Bill 1338 would establish "C.A.R.E. Courts" in California. C.A.R.E. Court has a \$65 million starting cost and claims to combat houselessness and support people with mental health disabilities, but provides no funding for permanent supportive housing or mental health services.

CARE Court can require participants to take medication against their will. If they refuse medication for any reason, or does not comply with any of the requirements issued by CARE Court, they can be placed under a conservatorship, in which treatment will be forced.

Can anyone among us, after watching the news for 10+ years, say, "What police need is more authority?" Are you kidding me?

I can hear the argument now, it's only the dangerous who will be affected. Putting aside for a moment the massive ignorance concerning mental health issues that position requires, without investing in real mental health solutions there will be no support for those this plan purports to serve.

I'm 52, and have never broken the law. During my third year in college, I got a ticket for speeding while trying to get to class, which I paid on time. The officer was nice, we had no problem, and that should have been the extent of my contact with police officers. But I have had at least ten very scary encounters with the police—every person of color I know had at

least a few. The thought of a police officer with this level of authority is frightening, much more frightening than an increase in crime numbers.

What Governor Newsome is doing is a very old and dangerous game. Some of us are old enough to remember Bill Clinton and the new Democrats, or something like that. And our current President, Joe Biden, who was a senator at the time, sponsored the The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, known as the crime bill, and also supported the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, a welfare reform policy that required people to work to receive welfare. These bills ruined the lives of so many people of color but also did get Bill Clinton re-elected.

No candidacy is worth the lives, liberties, and happy pursuits of anyone. How many people remember this quote, "the only thing in the middle in the middle of the road but yellow stripes and dead armadillos"? Jim Hightower said that, and never has it been more true. With all due respect Governor, what a foolish and reckless idea. Don't throw mentally ill people under the bus just to gain political favor!

I wish we didn't have term limits. Maybe you don't think Obama was liberal enough, maybe you don't like his drone policy, or his immigration policy. Maybe you thought he was too slow in accepting gay marriage, or compromised too much on taxes. But you know what else Obama always did? Win, win folks, that's what we need to do in 2024. And this third rate



photos for this article by Dan Foldes

attempt at getting votes is not gonna cut it! Even if it did, it's not worth it!

Street Sheet believes in the dignity and rights of all unhoused people. I was so happy to attend an action at City Hall protesting the CARE Court legislation. We gathered to learn about the proposal and how it would harm homeless people and people with mental illnesses.

The atmosphere was inclusive and warm. It was a relatively small crowd, about 35 to 40. It was more like a family picnic than a political rally. The speakers were passionate, as was the crowd. There was really good music, and amazing food. There were burritos for vegans, as well as for meat eaters like me. The burrito was so big I put half in my pocket and ate it for dinner. I wouldn't mind attending an action like this every day, that was fun, and informative. I moved to San Francisco in part to find community, and I certainly found it there.

James Burch, the director of the Anti Police-Terror Project spoke so passionately about the harm CARE Courts will do to those who are pulled into

them. But the best part of the event was that Burch's adorable kid led us in the chant, "Fight, fight, fight, housing is a human right!"

I also spoke with Tyler Kyser, Policy Director of the Coalition on Homelessness, after the rally. Being new to San Francisco I was naive and surprised that Governor Newsome was supporting this bill, but Tyler wasn't.

"This is a diversion, with no long term solutions," Kyser told me. "CARE Court will stand to cost upwards of \$65 million and doesn't fund permanent housing or permanent mental health services. This legislation will also dramatically increase involuntary holds that disproportionately harms BIPOC communities and will hand them over to the justice system."

Governor Newsome is just trying to hide mentally ill people from view. This bill does nothing to invest in housing or treatment that our communities desperately need! We have to stop settling. We need real candidates with real solutions, not this unconstitutional nonsense! ■



## 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



# In Person & Online Event

# ARTAUCTION22

## BENEFITTING SF COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

### In-person:

- LIVE AUCTION WITH FEATURED WORKS & SILENT AUCTION ART SHOWN
- OPEN WINE & BEER BAR
- COMPLIMENTARY DINNER
- LIVE MUSIC



MASKS REQUIRED!!!



### Online:

- SILENT AUCTION WITH OVER 100 PIECES OF WORK
- FREE FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME!



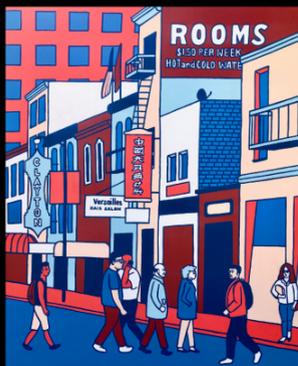
### In-person Details:

- THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2022
- 5:30 PM - 10:00 PM
- SOMARTS CULTURAL CENTER
- 934 BRANNAN ST. SF

### Online Details:

- BIDDING STARTS: SEPT 1 @ 12 NOON
- BIDDING ENDS: SEPT 8 @ 9PM

### THE ARTWORK



View and bid on over 100 pieces of art in our silent & live auction. There's a variety of pieces and prices so there's something for everyone!

### THE RAFFLES



At \$5 a raffle ticket, and with prizes like gift certificates to museums, food and drink, and more!

IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES REGISTERING, TICKETS, OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EVENT PLEASE EMAIL [OGLOWACKI@COHSF.ORG](mailto:oglowacki@cohsf.org) OR CALL HER AT THE OFFICE: 415-346-3740



SCAN ME

## SCAN TO REGISTER TO BID FROM HOME OR IN PERSON!

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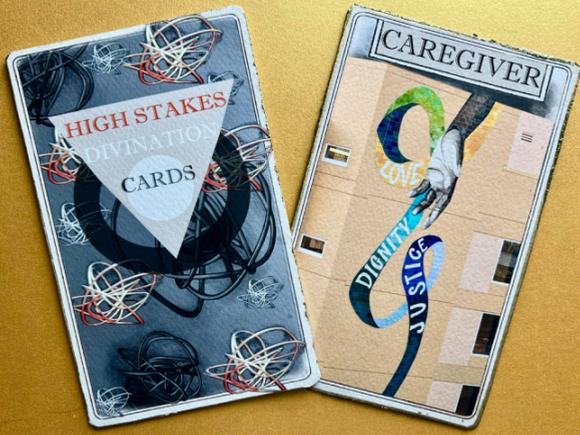


Title: Queen Amma  
Ixulxo Perez  
IG: @ixulxoperez

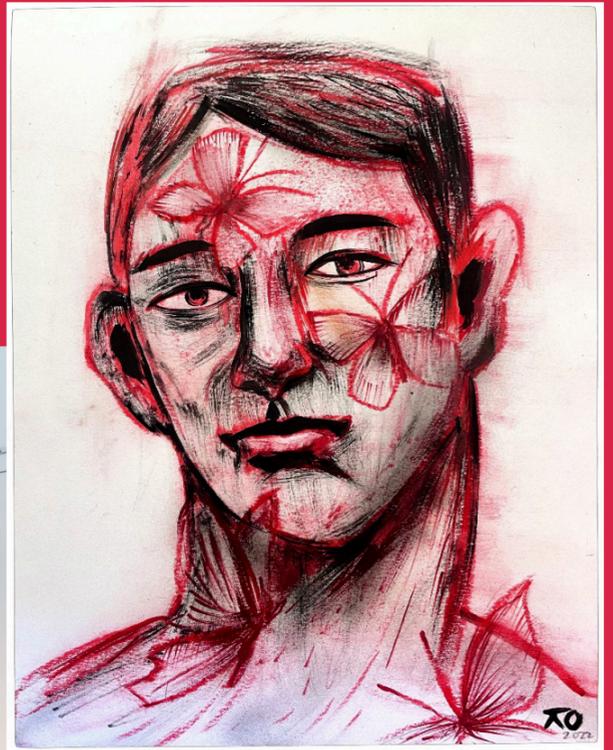


Title: Selma 1965 / Portland 2020  
Jos Sances - Poster Syndicate

Title: Profile V  
Joseph Abbati  
IG: @jabbati



Title: Metamorphosis  
Jun Yang  
IG: @junyarts



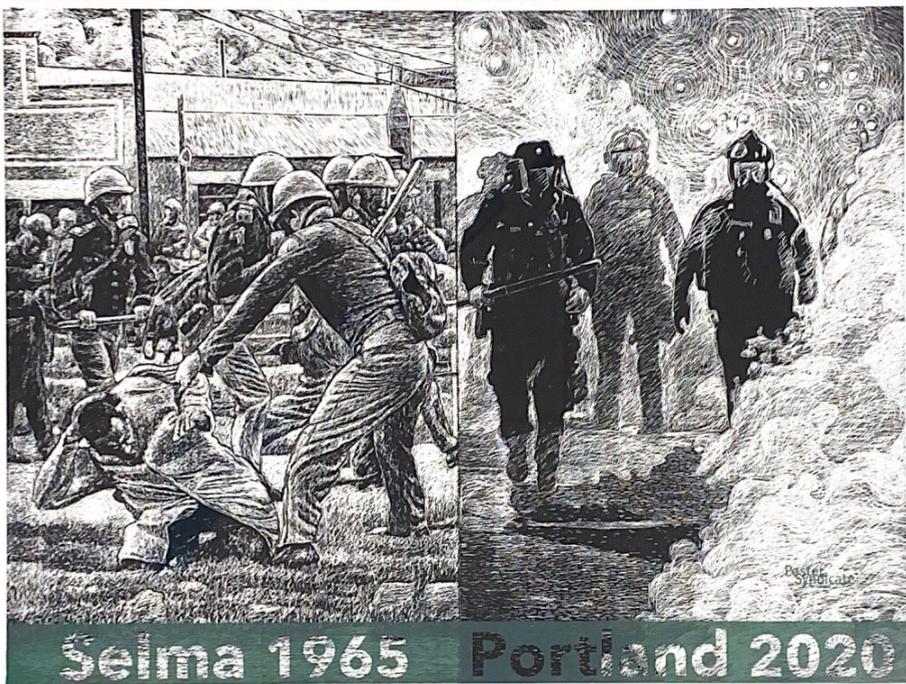
Title: Caregiver  
Johanna Poethig  
IG: @johannapoethigsilver



Title: Blue Cloud Over the Dogpatch Skyline  
Leslie Lowinger  
IG: @leslielowinger



Title: Free Palestine!  
Nick Derenzi  
IG: @nick.derenzi



Seima 1965 Portland 2020



Title: Time Has Come  
Ashleigh Castro  
IG: @optical\_instrument

# PIT COUNT 2022:

## JUST WHAT DID THE 2020 RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS ACTUALLY SOLVE?

Detroit Richards

San Francisco just released its first point in time (PIT) count of homeless and unsheltered people in the City since before the COVID-19 pandemic. A group of city workers and volunteers scoured the city on February 23, 2022, tallying those most vulnerable members of our community who live without adequate shelter in this prosperous City by the Bay. The findings of the PIT count make for sobering reading.

We are all aware that in 2020 there was an immediate and concerted effort to get unhoused people inside—or at least into ‘safe sleeping’ programs that connected them with services and provided them with a stable place to pitch their tents. It became apparent that the missing ingredient in change was simply the appetite for it to happen.

Shelter-in-Place (SIP) hotel programs were put in place in early 2020 after community members pushed for a solution that would allow vulnerable people to stay safe from the pandemic. The Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a plan to house people in hotels, leaving the mayor no choice but to open rooms to unsheltered San Franciscans. No one wanted people on the streets without adequate sanitary provisions, possibly spreading disease. When the issue of homelessness had to be solved to benefit rich people who could not buy their way out of risk from COVID, things became better fast. The slight but meaningful improvements shown in the new PIT report are a direct consequence of that year of compassion and increased resources being applied to the problems faced by those who live here but do so on streets and in parking lots and open spaces.

There was a 15% decrease in unsheltered homelessness in the period between the PIT counts in 2019 and 2022. This decrease directly corresponds to the significant increase in housing and shelter resources that was triggered in response to COVID in 2020, as well as housing opportunities funded by Prop. C. It proves that real change can be affected by putting resources into the kind of shelter that really helps people.

Total homelessness, both unsheltered and sheltered, decreased by 3.5% between 2019 and 2022, with a 9% reduction in homeless households with more than one person. These figures represent meaningful positive change in the lives of the people who were served by the SIP hotel program and Prop. C investments that came into play in 2020. But the numbers on the page can never tell the full story of the lives saved, the futures secured, and the dignity and hope restored to those who were assisted by these programs—including me and my child, who came inside in November 2020 after over five years unhoused, and entered the SIP hotel program.

San Francisco’s shelter system capacity increased by 829 beds—a 24% increase between 2019 and 2022. This expanded capacity is reflected in the 15% decrease in unsheltered homelessness. Seniors, veterans and families saw some positive change. Senior people were targeted by the SIP program due to being particularly at risk of severe COVID infection and

complications. Youth homelessness dropped by 6%.

I was surprised to see that family homelessness only fell by 1%, from 208 to 205 households. This reflects the long term economic damage wrought by COVID, and the impact of ever-spiraling rental prices in the Bay Area.

There is bad news just below the surface of these meaningful but narrow gains: Homelessness, like the rest of society, is subject to racial disparities and lack of equity.

While white people are under-represented in the figures, most communities of color suffer from homelessness at disproportionate rates. Black, African American and African people make up only 6% of San Francisco’s population, yet 38% of the 2022 PIT survey respondents were from these communities.

The Black community suffers disproportionate risks as a result of structural racism, including discrimination in housing, health services, extreme and devastating racism in the criminal justice system, and racism surrounding employment opportunities.

Hispanic/Latinx people made up 19% of the homeless population in 2019, but by 2020 that number rose to 30% of the unhoused population. American Indian and Alaskan Native people, as well as Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander people, also suffered homelessness at an increased rate. The racial disparities are being targeted by the City via various programs.

LGBTQ people were found to also be at increased risk of homelessness, with 12% of the general population of San Francisco identifying as LGBTQ but 28% of survey respondents belonging to this population. Also, LGBTQ people tended to experience their first bout of homelessness at a younger age than the straight/cis population, and reported a higher rate of HIV/AIDS-related illness.

The human toll of homelessness is evident in the numbers of homeless people who experience chronic and severe physical and mental health issues. It is clear that those most in need of assistance often end up suffering and struggling on the streets of San Francisco. In this beautiful,

rich city we live in, 39% of homeless people identify as having a disabling condition. The unhoused people who responded to the survey reported terrifying levels of food insecurity. We are failing to provide basic health care, sustenance and support to the members of society that need it most. People who are impacted by racism, homophobia and transphobia, who have grown up in the foster care system, or been impacted by domestic violence, often end up with nowhere to live, no health care and not enough food to sustain life, let alone health.

These figures paint a picture of a city that made huge strides towards providing long-term and meaningful assistance and shelter, but whose effort

has stalled without the force of a life-and-death pandemic driving the people with the money and power to act in meaningful and practical ways that make a difference. In order to make real and lasting change for vulnerable people suffering from both new and chronic homelessness, there needs to be a passion for change. Of course, when society sees a benefit to itself in making things happen quickly, as was the case in 2020, when getting people off the streets helped slow the spread of a deadly disease, then things get done. Now that the world is getting used to a “new normal,” that passion has somewhat dissipated, giving way to the old apathy.

The City counted 7,754 homeless people in February 2022. This number is a reflection of the situation, yet some unhoused families and individuals remained unseen and uncounted. It is estimated that as many as 20,000 people will experience being homeless in San Francisco over an entire year, which is one of the definitions of chronic homelessness. For every household in San Francisco that transitions from being unhoused to permanently housed, approximately four become homeless.

The resounding success of the SIP hotel program has made lasting and positive change for the kind of shelter provision available in San Francisco. The homelessness response system does aim to eventually make homelessness a rare and brief state, but in the meantime a combination of outreach and coordinated entry to assist people in getting into shelters

and linked up to help partly fills that huge gap between need and provision.

The SIP hotel program opened up 2,228 rooms across 25 hotels, but has been winding down since June 2021 and will end later this year. Over 1,200 participants of the SIP Program were helped into housing, and it is expected that another 700 more will be assisted into housing by the time the program ends later this year.

The SIP program worked; it worked for me. It is unfathomable to me that this fantastic program that has made such inroads into actually solving the issue of homelessness for so many people, including families with children such as my own, is not being expanded and protected. When the program closes down entirely later this year, I suspect San Francisco will see a terrible and inhumane rise in the numbers of unsheltered people of color, disabled people, seniors, families with children and members of the LGBTQ community.

In addition to the hotel program, and inspired by the SIP success story, there has been a greater emphasis on providing non-congregate and semi-congregate shelters, ranging from cabins to trailers and hotel-based emergency shelters. The safe sleep program has put in place safe parking for those who live in their vehicles and campers. There are answers out there that give people the privacy and dignity that is rightfully deserved, and help unhoused people make meaningful improvements to their quality of life.

The survey findings of 2022 are clear: The pandemic triggered a response which got many people off the streets. Providing non-congregate shelter and support works, but there are lingering and devastating disparities based on race, gender, sexual orientation and disability. In the end, the question that San Francisco’s affluent population needs to ask itself is whether it wants to punish addiction, bad luck and poor health, and perpetuate racism and homo/transphobia, or actually fix the issue of homelessness and get people inside, fed and cared for adequately so they can contribute to society and live meaningful and dignified lives? Ask yourself not what feels easiest, but what these statistics show works. If you are living inside and don’t want to look out at scenes of deprivation and suffering, if you are upset by the dirty streets and the people having to live their lives outside in full view, then it is to your benefit to push for non-congregate and semi-congregate shelter to be provided. We can solve these problems with compassion—not punishment, denial and cruelty.

Money is wasted when it is poured into programs and provisions that do not work. We now know what works. We made a leap and made these changes rapidly, proving the problem is not intractable, nor does it take a long time to fix. Homelessness is solvable if San Francisco wants it to be. That might sound idealistic, but as I sit here, inside, in my apartment, a SIP Hotel Program success story, to me it is an undeniable truth. ■

The numbers on the page can never tell the full story of the lives saved, the futures secured, and the dignity and hope restored to those who were assisted by these programs—including me and my child...



# STAY THE F\*\*\* OUT OF OUR LIVES

Jordan Davis

On April 26, the San Francisco Chronicle published an exposé on the conditions in single-resident occupancy hotels (SROs) used as permanent supportive housing (PSH). Many of us took a calculated risk in speaking to the Chronicle over a multi-year period concerning the issues we face every day, and many tenants felt a sense of being on the precipice of victory; we were winning and felt on top of the world looking down on creation.

However, those feelings of elation were short-lived. Supervisor Ahsha Safai—who represents a district that does not have any SROs used as supportive housing—decided to exploit our pain by introducing a charter amendment creating a flawed oversight commission without even consulting the affected tenants within a week of the Chronicle exposé. Many of us permanent supportive housing tenants were alarmed by the speed with which he put out this proposal and the lack of tenant input: His office would not even speak to us throughout the process.

There were two major problems with the proposal. First, the make-up of the proposed commission, like that of too many oversight bodies, would be majority mayoral appointments. The article implied that the mayor's office was responsible for a lot of the issues in PSH, so tenants have no reason to trust mayoral appointments to advocate for their needs. Just two years ago, voters approved two commissions, one over the Sheriff's Department and the other over Public Works, neither of which were not mayor-majority, because it is clear that mayoral appointees will not represent the broader communities the commissions are meant to protect/support. This will lead to no real oversight—only long meetings that result in bad policy.

Another issue: One of the mayor's seats on the commission was to be reserved for a representative of a merchant or neighborhood group. These groups have never cared about our interests, have no knowledge of our traumas and programmatic issues and only have an interest in keeping us out of public spaces. At worst, these associations even doxx-people—I should know: I have been stalked by a so-called “neighborhood council” that enabled transphobic Nazi stalkers who made my life hell for over a decade.

Despite our organizing efforts against it, and despite the fact that Supervisor Safai ignored us, condescended to us, and misrepresented his proposal as having community support, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved what is now on the ballot as Proposition C. Anybody who cares about us supportive housing tenants must vote against it.

To add insult to injury, notorious slumlord Randy Shaw, who runs the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, advocated in July for a vast expansion of sober housing, and called for redirect-

ing “Our City, Our Home” funding for this very purpose. Many supportive housing tenants take issue with housing that forces sobriety, which has classist and ableist undertones. Shaw, for his part, never consulted with the Our City Our Home Oversight Committee on his proposal. Safai even quote-tweeted his statement the next day.

Then, Rev. Amos Brown, a conservative former Supervisor and close ally of Mayor Breed, wrote an op-ed in the San Francisco Examiner claiming that the solution to the issues in permanent supportive housing and lack of accountability is to get the Black faith community involved. It should be evident that any faith community's involvement in homelessness response and PSH would lead to a false solution that penalizes tenants, and that Rev. Brown's proposal will drive a wedge between the Black and LGBTQ communities, both of whom have disproportionate experience with the homelessness response system.

Between all those incidents, and various demagogues crowing about a “housing-earned” approach, there is a pattern of people proclaiming that they know what's best for us when they don't. And to them I say: “Stay the Fuck Out of Our Lives”.

We need a rights-based approach to these crises. We need to address the issues in a direct manner rather than putting more restrictions on everyone else. We need people to stop treating us as a monolith, and we need for any solution to be by us and for us.

I know that there is a certain urgency to these issues, and from the outside looking in, it may seem like the government is being overly rigid. However, equitable and workable policies can only be created by engaging the affected communities—in this case, permanent supportive housing tenants—as equal or even senior partners. We live in a city that has a strong mayor system of government, and that has led to a culture of great pronouncements where the devil lies in the details. The only way that there can be lasting change is if we are at the center of a deliberative process.

Board of Supervisors, when you come back from summer break, I say to you, “stay the fuck out of our lives”—that is, unless we invite you, and you agree to treat us as equal or senior partners, we set the vision, and you turn it into workable policy. Treat us like adults who deserve, at the very least, the rights of any other tenant. We live in places where we have been subject to habitability and accessibility issues, and we need real solutions, not paper tigers. ■

*Jordan Davis (she/her) is a permanent supportive housing tenant who pushed for and won 30% rents for permanent supportive housing tenants; she can be reached at 3orightnow@gmail.com.*

# HOMELESSNESS AND IMMIGRATION

Kiara Gabriel

Young, energetic, and full of life, all I wanted was the best for my family and me. After completing high school back in my country of birth I wanted to study abroad. I always dreamt of the USA or Australia if plan A did not work out. In 2016, I started doing my applications and I was determined to achieve my dream. Luckily, I had all the support I needed and after so many applications finally I got a response for a US Sponsorship. This was good news and I was so excited that I would even have the chance to get on a plane. 2017 was probably to be the happiest of all years I have been on this earth.

It took me a few months through the whole process from application up to admission but finally, it was done. I bid farewell to my family and friends and then set off for New York. From NY I had to travel to San Francisco where I would have my studies for a period of 2 years before heading back home and applying for a different program if I would still be interested. My years of study were awesome, with a few challenges here and there but I was able to overcome them and graduate. I had the chance to invite my family and friends over for the graduation and they headed back home.

With the two years down, it was my time to head back home but that was not to happen. Life in the USA was much faster and better compared to my home country. This is where I wanted to be but I did not have any means of getting documented so as to stick around. It was a matter of choice, whether to go back home and try my luck once again or stay back without immigration documents, find means of survival, risk deportation, and a temporary or permanent denial of entry to the USA. While still in school, my best friend and I managed to get a part-time job where they did not ask for any documentation. This helped us with food and secure housing with the help of a US citizen who did all the paperwork for us as long as we did not delay paying his rent.

2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic had already set in most countries. The USA was not spared and everything was disrupted. Businesses and workplaces were really affected and some came to a closure. How could this happen at such a time! This is what happened to our place of work when we needed it most. Our employer had to lay us off with nothing since we weren't under any employment contract. Sad but true, we had to take in the bad news and deal with it. Now we had no job meaning no income and no rent, our host became hostile and we had to leave the premises. This is how we became homeless and have been ever since. I just hope that things will stabilize again and I can find another job since our employer decided to venture into a different field away from San Fran.

A piece of advice for anyone coming to the USA either on a visitor's or student's visa is, once your time is up please just head back home and try other means of becoming a permanent resident e.g. Green card application. At this moment, I'd say I am still confused and don't know what I want the most. Whether to wait for assistance or just present myself to the authorities and get deported at once. ■

## 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**

## WRITE FOR STREET SHEET

This paper is unique because it is created by homeless people and advocates like you who contribute their stories, artwork, poetry, comic art, and political perspectives. Want to write or create for STREET SHEET? Visit our website for information about how to submit, or to submit something you've already created! Or you can submit any content in person at our office. [www.streetsheet.org/submit-your-writing](http://www.streetsheet.org/submit-your-writing)



# REMEMBERING ERIC "E-TEE"

We are devastated to learn about the loss of Eric E-Tee, a longtime Street Sheet vendor beloved by many. Eric, known to many as E-Tee, lived here in San Francisco since he was 27 years old. E-Tee sold the Street Sheet since 1989, when it was only one sheet of paper. He usually sold the paper outside of Peet's Coffee on the corner of Van Ness and Turk, wearing his distinctive gray fedora.

When he first arrived in the city, he had high hopes to work for the Cement Mason Union doing work laying brick and concrete. However, in order to work for that Union, he needed to pay union dues, or the cost of membership needed to fund the activities and services that unions typically engage in. At the time, union dues were \$500, which was an amount beyond E-Tee's means. Nonetheless, he had a family to feed, so he did his best to find labor work for under the table pay, and he did. Everyday, he worked hard, but the under the table work had its drawbacks: E-Tee's employers weren't willing to pay union rates, which left him needing to supplement his income in order to feed and clothe his family.

That was what initially drove him to sell the Street Sheet. When interviewed for a profile in 2016, E-Tee told us that he cared a lot about the issues that the paper brings to light and wanted people to be made aware of them. "People read it and say, this is not in the regular newspaper."

E-Tee was known for his sense of humor, and was constantly making up stories, cracking jokes, and sometimes jovially pitching marriage proposals. He is survived by many children and will always be remembered by those of us here at Street Sheet, and buy his loyal customers who bought the paper from him.



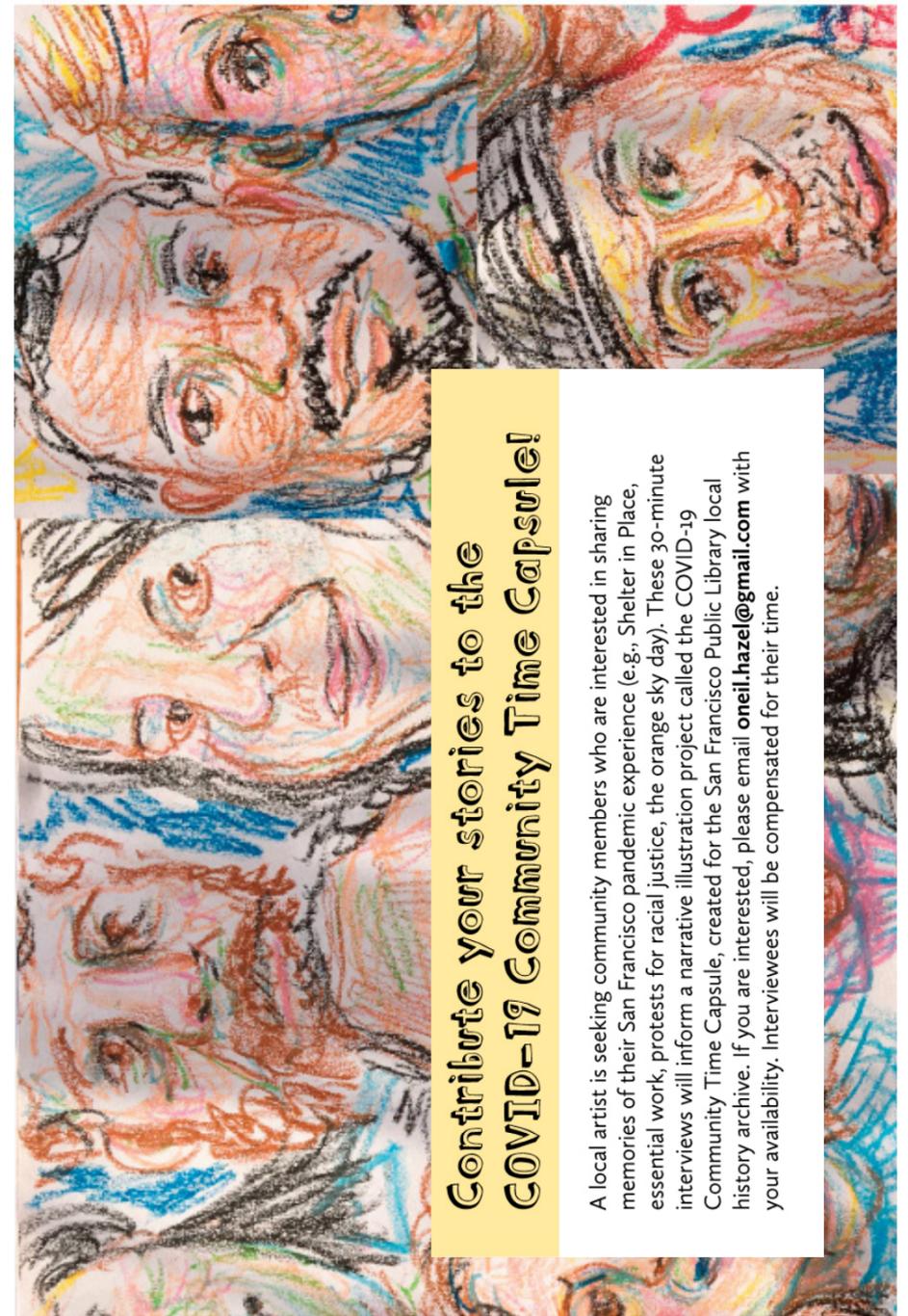
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## Contribute your stories to the COVID-19 Community Time Capsule!

A local artist is seeking community members who are interested in sharing memories of their San Francisco pandemic experience (e.g., Shelter in Place, essential work, protests for racial justice, the orange sky day). These 30-minute interviews will inform a narrative illustration project called the COVID-19 Community Time Capsule, created for the San Francisco Public Library local history archive. If you are interested, please email [oneil.hazel@gmail.com](mailto:oneil.hazel@gmail.com) with your availability. Interviewees will be compensated for their time.