

April 19, 2016

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Thank you, members of the Board of Supervisors. I am here on behalf of the hundreds of individuals, parents and children who face homelessness each year in Contra Costa County.

You have a difficult job today. Balancing a budget in challenging financial times. Taking into consideration the needs and pleas of our most vulnerable residents as you make decisions. I know it cannot have been easy when the 2004 Board of Supervisors was forced to make tough budget decisions and eliminated \$400,000 in funding for emergency shelters for families.

For SHELTER, Inc. and the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program, this began the daunting task of rallying financial support and volunteer commitments to keep our family shelters open. With help from the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa, First 5 Contra Costa, local foundations and businesses, and hundreds of concerned citizens, we raised the support needed. And, while challenging, continued to do so year after year. But rising costs, shrinking dollars, shifting funding priorities, increased need have reached the point where this community's shelters are truly at risk.



This morning, 10 parents and 19 children woke up, ate breakfast, and headed out the door to school and work, glad to know that would have a place to come back to that was safe and welcoming. Or maybe they stayed home with a new baby or sick child, grateful that they could tuck their child in to a nice, warm bed. Tonight the families will all be back to the place they have come to call home—at least for now. They will gather to share dinner, stories of the day, and hopes for the future. The most ordinary things—laundry, homework, a favorite television show, will seem all the sweeter because they remember what life would be like without Mountain View. And tomorrow, after a good night's sleep. They'll get up and take one more step along their path to stable housing and self-sufficiency. Each year, the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter in Martinez helps over 150 men, women and children, taking our most vulnerable residents off the streets and giving them a safe play to sleep, meals, and clothing. Then we provide services like education, employment, counseling, parenting, nutrition classes, all aimed at giving families the tools they need to become self-sufficient.

Our program works--more than 90% of the families move to stable housing. I am asking you to restore funding for family emergency shelters to the 2004 of \$400,000. Please join me in making sure that every child in our county has a home.

Sincerely,

Leslie Gleason

Director of Program Operations

Letter to the Board of Supervisors
Contra Costa County
04/19/16

Dear Board of Supervisors for Contra Costa County, I have been a Family Nurse Practitioner with Health Care for the Homeless for the better part of the last 22 years. I have taken care of the homeless under bridges, in shelters, on our mobile health vans and at our traditional clinic settings.

I hope to impress upon you the desperate need we have for more shelter beds, and also to retain the Outreach Team which has been an integral part of meeting the most vulnerable in our county.

Here are some statistics:

As of January 2015, of the 3,715 homeless individuals in Contra Costa County, sixty-four percent accounted for those who were staying in a number of temporary housing arrangements such as shelters, or doubled and tripled up with other families.

The other 36% were considered unsheltered, which according to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, are those individuals living outside in encampments, in cars, or other locations, not designed for human habitation.

Those 3,715 homeless individuals comprise 2,914 households which are defined by 1 or more individuals residing together.

Of those, 37% were households with one adult and, one or more minor children. 37%!!

How sad it was last week as I witnessed the medical social worker calling one family shelter after another for a 46 yo woman and her 6 yo daughter who have been in and out of temporary housing situations for months. All of the family shelters in, and well beyond Contra Costa County were filled, and the social worker was told that there was absolutely nothing available and that it may be up to 6 weeks before would be.

This not an isolated situation.

It is of pressing concern when any individual has nowhere to find a bed, but it's unconscionable for us to let that happen to our children.

The truth is, our shelters are always filled.

Every day, Health Care for the Homeless staff encounters one or more patients that have been unable to find a shelter bed for several days or weeks.

60% of the patients who are the highest utilizers of the emergency room and are more frequently hospitalized are homeless.

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, people who are homeless are three to six times more likely to become ill than housed people.

20 % of shelter residents are disabled and chances are so are those unsheltered.

The average life expectancy in the homeless population is estimated between 42 and 52 years, compared to 78 years in the general population.

And the main reason for this is their homelessness.

While providing permanent housing is the ultimate goal, right now, these people need a roof over their heads.

I am urging you, the Board of Supervisors to put the health and safety of some of our most vulnerable citizens, including children at a priority, and consider alternative options both for sheltering and housing people. For example, if there are no funds to build new structures, at least consider following the lead of many communities including San Francisco and Oakland, by using already existing buildings that are vacant. It cannot wait any longer, and with the Bay Area housing crisis what it is, it's only going to get worse.

Another concern I have is regarding the Outreach Team.

As most health institutions have been traditionally setup, we wait for the patient to come to us to provide them care. But what we fail to recognize is that for those who are very weak or sick, they may not make it to our doors, so we have to go to theirs.

The Outreach team has been a fundamental component in meeting this need. By roaming the streets and setting foot in to the encampments, they are able to identify those who are sick and may not be strong enough to be out in the elements any longer.

And the fact that they do this in the evening and at night is crucial in order to connect with these people.

During the day, people often leave the site and go to soup kitchens for meals, or to the Multi-Service Centers to wash up and do laundry, or even to gather recycling for money. Additionally, symptoms of illness often worsen in the evening and late at night.

By helping such individuals get to the shelters, or in some case, taking them directly to the hospital, they are literally saving lives and allowing for a huge cost savings for the County as well.

My job is to preserve and improve the health of those experiencing homelessness in Contra Costa County. I am hoping you can do your part in putting a roof over their heads, and also in maintaining their connection to health services on their time clock, not ours.

In this way, we can collaborate towards the ultimate goal which is to end homelessness.

I appreciate you taking the time to hear my concerns, and also the efforts you all make to bring health and wellbeing to our citizens.

Sincerely,
Barbara Griesau, Family Nurse Practitioner

REQUEST TO SPEAK FORM (3 minute limit)

Complete this form and place it in the upright box near the speaker's podium, and wait to be called by the Chair.

Personal information is optional. This speaker's card will be incorporated into the public record of this meeting.

NAME (Print) Viola Lujan

To ensure your name is announced correctly, you may include phonetic spelling.

Address: [Redacted]

City: Pittsburg, CA.

Phone: [Redacted]

I am speaking for: Myself
 Organization: La Clinica de La Raza

I wish to speak on Agenda Item # D4

Date: 4-19-16

My comments will be: General
 For
 Against

I wish to speak on the subject of:

Budget - Contra Costa

CARES & \$250,000

Funding to continue Program

I do not want to speak but would like to leave comments for the Board to consider.
(Use the back of this form.)

Information for Speakers:

Deposit this form in the upright box next to the speaker's podium before the Board's consideration of your item.

Wait to be called by the Chair. Please speak into the microphone at the podium.

Begin by stating your name and your city or area of residence, and whether you are speaking for yourself or on behalf of an organization.

If you have handout materials, please give them to the Clerk.

Avoid repeating comments made by previous speakers.

In lieu of speaking, I wish to submit these comments:

On behalf of the
almost 3,000 patients served
by Contra Costa Cares Program
thank you for your foresight,
support & ongoing commitment
to continue this program,
making a difference in our
communities & access to care
for our families struggling
to make ends meet every
day.



April 18, 2016

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
 651 Pine Street
 Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Board of Supervisors:

After holding three public hearings and conducting an extensive community assessment and survey, the Contra Costa County Economic Opportunity Council has identified housing/shelter as its number one priority in its quest to ameliorate poverty in Contra Costa County. This includes all kinds of housing, from emergency shelter, to transitional shelter, to affordable housing. It is with this priority in mind that we feel that we must speak out in support of services to the homeless. We understand that a significant amount of funding was lost from First 5 Contra Costa as their strategic priorities have changed. We also understand that without additional funding, some of our shelters may have to close.

We need your help to repair this gap in our community safety net. To this end, we support the following actions as recommended by the Council on Homelessness to be taken by the Board of Supervisors in this 2016-17 fiscal year budget process:

- **Restore the funding for family homeless emergency shelters to the 2004 level by increasing the budget by \$550,000, to the present-day value of the funding that the County formerly provided to operate the family shelters.**
- **Increase funding to the Multi-Service Centers, the gateway to all homeless services in our County, by a minimum of an additional \$100,000.**
- **Fund vital and life-saving Homeless Outreach services at \$350,000.**

We respectfully urge you to take action as our community is in a crisis around homelessness. Please take these steps to save the lives of Contra Costa's most vulnerable residents.

Sincerely,

Ajit Kaushal, Chair

cc: Teri House, Chair, Council on Homelessness



To: Contra Costa Board of Supervisors
 Re: Request for Increased Human Services Funding
 Date: April 19, 2016

ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

The Human Services Alliance of Contra Costa is composed of 21 non-profit organizations that provide mental health, substance abuse treatment, shelter and housing, food, workforce, and violence prevention services.

Alliance members are a critical component of Contra Costa County's health and human services: 65% of all public children's mental health services are provided by contract agencies. Alliance members collectively serve an estimated 360,000 county residents annually.

CONTRA COSTA HUMAN SERVICES AGENCIES ARE IN CRISIS

Alliance members are under severe financial stress – the quality and quantity of services are threatened, putting the county at risk for far greater costs down the road (see box on right). Consider:

- **Member agencies have not had a mental health services reimbursement rate increase in 12 years.**
- Contract agencies have borne the brunt of dramatically increased costs during this 12-year period:
 - ⇒ the CPI has risen 28%
 - ⇒ the California minimum wage increased from \$8.00/hour to \$10.00/hour, and is now headed towards \$15/hour
 - ⇒ Starting 2015, California requires employers to give at least 3 paid sick leave days per year
 - ⇒ Workers' Comp insurance increased from 5% to 7%
 - ⇒ the Department of Labor is likely to more than double the level of pay required for exemption from overtime pay.
- While there has been an increase in billable units in recent years and consequently *gross* reimbursements have risen, without a commensurate increase in the reimbursement *rate*, the

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

–Benjamin Franklin

Investments in early childhood intervention with mental health, family stabilization, violence prevention and other services generate tremendous ROI for the county:

- **Harvard University:** "investments in the earliest years of life produce the greatest returns. Most of those returns, which can range from \$4 to \$9 per dollar invested, benefit the community through reduced crime, welfare, and educational remediation, as well as increased tax revenues on higher incomes for the participants"¹
- **More than 1200 Law Enforcement Executives:** "In order to promote public safety, it's important to diagnose and treat individuals with mental illness early . . . half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, yet about 80 percent of children receive inadequate treatment. And of the 1.5 million youth in the juvenile justice system, nearly 70 percent of them have a diagnosable mental illness."²
- **University of Kansas:** "Researchers . . . have concluded that every dollar invested in [family substance abuse programs] resulted in nearly \$10 in savings"³



Member agencies

Brighter Beginnings
Center for Human Development
Community Clinic Consortium
Contra Costa ARC
Contra Costa Crisis Center
Contra Costa Interfaith Housing
Early Childhood Mental Health Program
Jewish Family and Community Services of the East Bay
Fred Finch Youth Center
Lincoln Child Center
Putnam Clubhouse
Rainbow Community Center
Rubicon Programs
Seneca Family of Agencies
Shelter, Inc.
STAND! For Families Free of Violence
Ujima Family Recovery Services
We Care Services for Children
Youth Homes, Inc.

D.4



April 19, 2016

Thank you, members of the Board of Supervisors. I am here on behalf of the hundreds of individuals, parents and children who face homelessness each year in Contra Costa County.

You have a difficult job today. Balancing a budget in challenging financial times. Taking into consideration the needs and pleas of our most vulnerable residents as you make decisions. I recall the budget process in 2004, when the then Board of Supervisors was forced to make tough budget decisions and eliminated \$400,000 in funding for emergency shelters for families.

For SHELTER, Inc. and the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program, this loss of funding began the daunting task of rallying financial support and volunteer commitments to keep our emergency family shelters open. With help from the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa, First 5 Contra Costa, local foundations and businesses, and hundreds of concerned citizens, we raised the support needed. And, while challenging, continued to do so year after year. But rising costs, shrinking dollars, shifting funding priorities, and increased need have reached the point where this community's shelters are truly at risk. Once stable funders have had to shift priorities, and our county is our last hope.

I know how vital family shelters are because in my work for SHELTER, Inc. I've experienced firsthand how life changes for a pregnant homeless mother who is released from the hospital and returns, not to the streets, but to her home at our shelter. I've seen families reunited. I've seen young families move from the shelter to the first place they could call home. These shelters are the safety net when families struggle the most to get back on track, after a job loss, a crippling disease, the loss of a parent or loved one, or are new to this country. There are currently no funds for our shelters from HUD, who is more focused on permanent supportive housing once an emergency is over. So it is up to us, our community, to support families at their greatest time of need.

Each year, the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter in Martinez helps over 150 men, women and children, taking our most vulnerable residents off the streets and giving them a safe place to sleep, meals and clothing. And then we provide services like education, employment, counseling, parenting, nutrition classes, all aimed at giving families the tools they need to become self-sufficient. Our program works-- more than 90% of the families move from the shelter to stable housing.

I am asking you to restore funding for family emergency shelters to, at the least, the 2004 funding amount of \$400,000. As you make your final budget decisions, please prioritize the funding of the family shelters and join me in making sure that every child in our county has a home.

Thank you.

Sharon Bernhus, Director of Transition Services

D. Leich public comment to Board of Supervisors April 19, 2016

My name is Doug Leich. I'm a resident of Danville and a member of Danville Congregational Church. I'm speaking to you today as a member of the Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition and as a member of SHELTER, Inc.'s Board of Directors.

My faith teaches me the basic worth of each human being, and that we are called to honor each person's human dignity. The persistence of homelessness in our society is an affront to that human dignity and it is shameful that we collectively allow it to persist. But as long as some of our neighbors are homeless, we in the faith community are committed to helping them find and sustain shelter. We hear that the family homeless shelters in Richmond and Martinez lack adequate funding and the evening and night time homeless outreach program may cease to exist after June 30. We feel it should be a very high priority for the County to assure that these services are continued.

During better economic times, specifically in 2005, the county offered essential funding (approx. \$400K) to family shelters. Today these Shelters are financially at risk by declining state and federal funding. We would like the county to acknowledge the critically important work they do and honor this work by returning funding for them to the Budget.

We are very concerned about the people who are served by these shelters – especially families and children – and we, as the faith community, feel we have offered unwavering support and commitment to keeping them open. The faith community operates the Winter Nights Rotating Shelter completely on its own, because not enough funding could be found several years ago to keep another year-round family shelter open. Recent faith-community initiatives have led to the new Trinity Center Winter Shelter at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Walnut Creek and the proposed new Antioch Shelter Project. On top of this, the GRIP family shelter in Richmond is an Interfaith Project, and faith communities provide most of the meals and many other in-kind donations, valued at \$200,000 per year, to SHELTER, Inc.'s Mountain View House so that SHELTER, Inc.'s budget for supplemental food at this family shelter is only \$1,000 per year.

Clients at the family shelter are offered services related to education, employment, counseling, parenting and nutrition, all aimed at giving families the tools they need to become self-sufficient. And there's a real return on investment here - more than 90% of the families move from the shelter to stable housing. This program really works.

We ask for your help in securing funding in the county's budget for these critical services. I support the Multi-Faith ACTION Coalition's request for \$750,000 to fund the family shelters in Richmond and Martinez and to continue the homeless outreach services.

Thank you for considering this request.