

REAL ALTERNATIVES TO SHUTTING DOWN SURVIVAL SERVICES

Jannan Thomas, Homeless (Lack of) Services Center [HLOSC] Director, has announced a shut down of services to the broader homeless community on July 1st.

Resistance Meeting: 11 AM Wednesday June 3rd Sub Rosa Cafe.

The following thoughts represent my personal perspective, though I believe many of my ideas are shared by others. --Robert Norse

The SCPD and Parks and Recreation Department spend an unhealthy amount of time and money arresting and citing homeless people for survival behavior. These two "public safety" gangs together account for more than 40% of the budget, while social services gets less than 1/10th of that sum. **City Council could shift several hundred thousand dollars of the SCPD's \$30 million fiscal year budget to cover holes in the HLOSC budget** which are prompting the shutdown of meals, mail, showers, and the very limited shelter the HLOSC provides.

The **HLOSC could prioritize retention of the meal, mail, laundry, shower, and Paul Lee shelter services** and make cuts elsewhere. Such ridiculous and repressive expenditures as the fence, the ID system, the most recent 24-hour homeless parking ban on nearby Coral Street, and other concessions to fashionable local bigotry masquerading as "public safety" have severely compromised the mission of the **HLOSC**.

However, **City Council has been through two days of near-final budget hearings this week and done nothing** about this crisis, rubberstamping the usual bags of bucks for cops and rangers (and the city's golf course). The final budget will be passed on June 9th.

A City Council restoration of funding won't happen without massive Baltimore-style civil disobedience and protest. As indicated by their behavior in the Bearcat protests, Council is likely to refuse meaningful reform. **Accordingly community members need to create immediate emergency action** to support those thrown out into the arms of "law enforcement" authorities. An immediate Occupation-style gathering is the most obvious alternative.

City Council has created laws criminalizing survival behaviors like sleeping at night, setting up a tent against the elements, being in a park after dark, and smoking in an area where no one else is complaining. These laws were created at the instigation of the SCPD and the Parks and Recreation Department as tools to further scrutinize the "guilty-until-proven-innocent" unhoused. The laws (and new curfews enacted in the last few years) are part of a broader gentrification/homeless dispersal campaign that seeks to make Santa Cruz a hostile place for those without money. **Harassment, citation, and arrest of innocent homeless people has expanded significantly in the last few years with concurrent theft of homeless survival possessions.** These facts deepen the significance of the closure of the broader HLOSC

programs.

Huge amounts of money are also being spent expanding jail facilities, bloating the police force, and backing stepped-up harassment of homeless folks with no legal place to sleep. These funds and priorities will not be redirected unless city authorities face a cost for their continuing Homeless Removal campaign.

HUFF activists have been properly critical of HLOSC's management. It has created prison-like conditions there with ID cards, a prison-yard gate, security thugs, "no impact" zones around the center, refusal to restore storage lockers, undisclosed and unresolved racial discrimination issues and the recent support for a 24-hour ban on homeless parking on nearby streets. HLOSC personnel, recently threatened to arrest peaceful petitioners on the ground adjoining the public Coral Street sidewalk organizing against the 24-hour ban (which is now due to start within the next few months). HUFF has not been happy with HLOSC boss Jannan Thomas--who continues drawing her salary as the services HLOSC is supposed to provide are cut off from larger number of homeless people. Her "management" will be reduced to the "creaming" programs that serve only a relative few.

Nonetheless the restoration of food, mail, and limited shelter services is a basic need, whatever HUFF's criticisms. These funds need to be replaced--though managed more directly, transparently, and productively by the clients themselves or their representatives. The shutting of the Paul Lee Loft on July 1st will escalate the "Sleeping Ban War". Under MC 6.36.055 camping tickets will be dismissed--only if they're on the waiting list (or the less accessible River St. Shelter waiting list. If there's no Loft program, unless the HLOSC uses creative tactics, there will be no Waiting List. And no dismissal of citations. And further attacks on the homeless for the "crime" of sleeping.

Activists meeting on May 31st after the Sunday Food Not Bombs [FNB] meal encouraged **any volunteer contributions of resources, funds, or volunteer time be rerouted through FNB and other services more directly accessible by and accountable to the unhoused community.** FNB has in the past served as a support system for sustained protests such as the Occupy movement, anti-war activities, and homeless encampments.

So, as City Council sits still and does nothing in the face of these cuts (done under the phony pretext of creating "Housing First" while starving emergency services), **the activist community must reclaim public buildings and public spaces unused at night to restore the survival shelter that is being ripped away. Take militant action to reverse the creeping crypto-fascism stalking Santa Cruz.**

**COME TO THE 11 AM MEETING
WEDNESDAY JUNE 3rd
PLAN ACTION**