



ENVISIONING A COMPASSIONATE SOLUTION FOR MENTALL ILLNESS AND THE DRUG ADDICTION CRISIS HIDING AS HOMELESSNESS

SOLUTIONS FOR THE UN-HOUSED, RESTORING
FUNCTIONING COMMUNITIES AND IMPROVING QUALITY OF
LIFE FOR ALL

AUTHORED BY SEAN FITZGERALD AND MICHAEL
GHIRINGHELLI

CALIFORNIA'S CRISIS

Left up to the powers that be in California, including every Governor over the last 20 years and every politician of the state, the number of people living outdoors is growing. This is not compassion; this is an unmitigated failure. Despite billions of dollars being spent, and some well-intentioned people along the way trying their very best, a scalable solution has not been presented, and the unhoused are impairing the function of our communities.

Did you know that out of nearly 40 million people living in California, only 0.004% of the population is living unhoused? That means 99.996% of all residents live indoors. Put into actual numbers, 186,000 people are living outdoors in California. This is a solvable figure.

Approximately 70% statewide (130,000) of the unhoused suffer from mental illness, drug addiction, alcohol addiction, or some combination of these three. These folks need very special care. The remaining 56,000 are people who, through unfortunate circumstances, find themselves unhoused. We need to help get all of these unhoused people indoors and back on track with their lives. This is true compassion.

A sense of urgency, bold leadership, and a common-sense plan are needed in Marin County and California.



DOES THIS LOOK LIKE A COMPASSIONATE WAY TO LET PEOPLE LIVE?

Those arguing for unmanaged encampments as housing are leading communities and campers into the abyss.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION



SOURCE: MARIN POINT IN TIME COUNT REPORT

As of Jan 23, 2024 The total persons experiencing homelessness in Marin was 1,090 of which 72% of them were unsheltered.

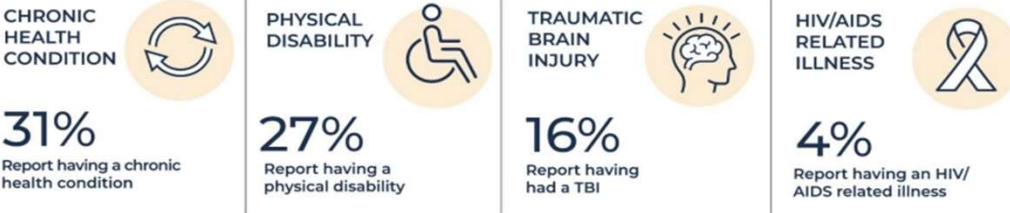
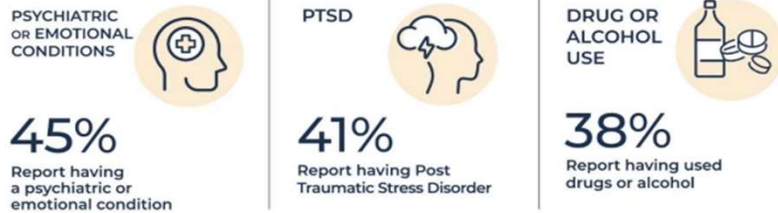
84% of the homeless have no employment. Nor are they seeking employment.

45% self report a psychiatric or emotional condition and 41% PTSD but statewide it is reported closer to 70% + for mental health issues. 38% report drug/alcohol abuse but these figures are much higher as many don't admit or report their illicit addictions.

Keep in mind these are "Self Reported" figures. Those who are severely mentally ill do not identify their illness and don't actually know the reason for their homelessness.

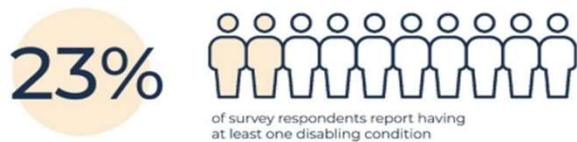
SELF-REPORTED HEALTH

Current health conditions that may affect the housing stability or employment of those experiencing homelessness.



DISABLING CONDITION

A disabling condition is defined by HUD as a developmental disability, HIV/AIDS, or a long-term physical or mental impairment that impacts a person's ability to live independently but could be improved with stable housing.



MARIN COUNTY UNHOUSED

Approximately 1,000 mentally ill and drug addicted people live on the streets in their cars, and tents in Marin county; This segment of the population is creating outsized negative impacts for existing community residents and living in terrible unsanitary conditions themselves.



“Problems that remain persistently insoluble should always be suspected as questions being asked in the wrong way.”

- ALAN WATTS

THE HOUSING FIRST IDEOLOGY

Don't we just need more Housing?

The solution being presented, “housing first,” is an abject failure.

The “Homelessness” problem has been incorrectly characterized as due to the lack of affordable housing when it is in fact driven by mental illness, drug addiction, dislocation from family and community and inability to perform basic life functions (Job, Self care, Obtain shelter, Interpersonal skills).

CA Leadership at all levels would have you believe “affordable” housing is the solution. In Marin county we would need 6,000 units of new housing to achieve 1000 “affordable” units. And you still cannot allocate 100% of those to the homeless as low/moderate income and the workforce citizens require them too.

Even if you could snap your fingers and have 1000 low-income units built tomorrow (Ignoring the needs of the functioning community members); how can unhoused manage them with no employment? There are approximately a dozen housing vouchers that become available each year. It would take 75 years at this rate just to get vouchers for them all.

WHAT ELSE GETS IN THE WAY?

NGOS a solution in search of a problem

Just getting people indoors doesn't solve the underlying problem of their inability to care for themselves. This has been proven by Homeward bounds 30% attrition rate. Their drug addiction and mental illness makes it so they are not able to hold down housing or maintain it without some kind of support, community and purpose/work.

The multi billion-dollar homeless industrial complex is not being incentivized to house people. In fact, there are no outcome related incentives for this group. Other than exceptions like Homeward Bound, their primary purpose is to serve and keep these people alive in a humane way. While noble it means we're spending billions of dollars to simply keep people stuck.

These people need a variety of support; Social workers dedicated to helping them get proper identification, and using the current system to get food, vocational training, medical treatment, and on a pathway to a meaningful life. They need in many instances, substance abuse treatment. And the vast majority need some kind of mental health treatment or medication and for the severely mentally ill, conservatorship.

Trying to treat this problem town by town is failing; Space and resource restrictions, a diverse set of mental health problems requiring specialized treatment each town doesn't have on their own and it is cost prohibitive and extremely inefficient. \$130,000 was spent per person for temporary tent shelters in San Rafael and another \$6,000 per person annually just on city services. You can buy prefab units for under \$10,000. These partial fixes don't make fiscal sense. And as long as it's permitted to sleep outdoors in our cities with no responsibilities or requirements, the mentally ill and addicts will do so.

THE SOLUTION:

Camp Rescue and Compassion City

A single centralized housing campus with facilities for people with mental illness and or addiction challenges. Right next door, separated but sharing resources is another campus (Camp ground/parking lot and micro homes) for unhoused people who are not mentally ill. These campuses include dormitory style housing, health and human services, cafeteria, transportation, and outdoor space for recreation. The mentally ill or addicted would remain on the campus until they can assimilate back into society.

The people who are not mentally ill, or addicted, will be helped to get back on their feet, with job and vocational training, and housing options. Each will have an individually tailored rehabilitation and support plan. In all cases the very first effort will be to reunite all people, on both campuses with their families and loved ones.

Step 1. Build Camp Rescue: This will be a protected and centralized place for all tents, cars, motorhomes with shared temporary services like porta potties, showers and cafeteria. Provide: Parking and plug in for cars/RVs, Protect tent campers with giant warehouse tent structures, Allow people to “Come as they are” with their own tent and items that fit in a 10ft by 10 ft space. Create public storage container area for additional belongings. 24/7 Security and basic rules for order and access to a POBOX service and social workers.

Step 2. Emergency order: health and safety crisis exists in CA. Declare emergency and pass an emergency rule that says for next 90 days it is compulsory to sleep in shelter/indoors and at the same time provide transportation to Camp Rescue.

Step 3. Build Compassion City. Add as many pre-fab ADU/Pod homes as needed and build centralized showers/community centers. Transitional housing construction to mirror New Beginnings center. Build the permanent supportive housing for the severely mentally ill and those who require conservatorship.

GOALS OF CAMP RESCUE AND COMPASSION CITY

- 1) Centralize services and dramatically reduce cost of housing per person
- 2) Create a safe place with sanitary conditions, electricity, temp controlled
- 3) Provide a medical/housing facility equipped to manage the severely mentally ill
- 4) Relieve the cities in the county of the burden/impacts on people living outdoors
- 5) Create community and support structure for those who can be rehabilitated
- 6) Provide temporary transitional housing and permanent affordable housing.
- 7) Transition plans for all inhabitants. From unsheltered to sheltered, from sheltered to temp housing, from temp to permanent housing and back into the community.

CAMP RESCUE

Transitional Shelter for tents and those sleeping with no protection.



CAMP RESCUE: CARS/MOTORHOMES



COMPASSION CITY: TEMP HOUSING AND VOCATIONAL CENTER



Compassion City: Affordable Tiny Homes Village



PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THOSE SUFFERING SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS



ADOPT AN OUTDOOR PERSON

“Be A Positive Sponsor Program”

People from all walks of life, all areas of income, have helped their fellow man, woman, and child through various support initiatives. Out of the 99.996 % (250,000) of the residents living indoors in Marin, there is ample opportunity to directly help one or more of the 0.004 (1,000), that are not housed. There are thousands of empty rooms and units available in Marin. Those willing to help could register their room and be matched with a high functioning person in need of transitional housing or integrated housing once ready to move on from compassion city. There is opportunity to help directly financially, to help unite people with their families, or to mentor someone to get their lives back on track. A percentage of the unhoused came to Marin from other states or counties in California. They often want to get back home to their family. There is so much a sponsor can do to help an unhoused person, that will help them get back their lives and have a pathway to a better future. All of the efforts to end homelessness must be centralized in Compassionate/Rescue Cities in every County. Marin can be the model for success.

We can make this happen. Work with us. Let's go - we are ready, our citizens are ready for change and new scalable solutions.