

Downie, Chelsea

From: sbcob
Subject: FW: Support for the Merger of Bringing Our Community Home, Common Ground, and the County Homeless Advisory Committees

From: Rolf Geyling
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 2:14 PM
To: 'SupervisorCarbajal@sbcbos1.org'; 'jwolf@sbcbos2.org'; 'dfarr@countyofsb.org'; jgray@co.santa-barbara.ca.us; steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org
Subject: Support for the Merger of Bringing Our Community Home, Common Ground, and the County Homeless Advisory Committees

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

The Santa Barbara Rescue Mission would like to express its support for the proposed merge of Bringing Our Community Home (The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness), the Homeless Advisory Committees, and Common Ground Santa Barbara that will be heard by your Board on Tuesday, May 15, 2012.

As you may know, the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission provides emergency food and shelter as well as residential and outpatient addiction recovery for individuals facing homelessness, poverty and institutionalization. We represent the compassion of 4,893 donors in Santa Barbara County who make sure that our community has a place that is open 365 nights a year to anyone in need of assistance. The need for such services has never been greater as we provided 164,615 meals and 61,576 nights of safe shelter in 2011.

As significant as our outreach is, we are attempting to address a very complex set of circumstances that requires the coordinated attention of several entities. Therefore, we support this merger of countywide homeless advisory bodies as it stands to significantly streamline and improve cross-sector coordination of homeless services in Santa Barbara County. This new model will ultimately benefit not only those in our communities struggling with homelessness, but also our entire citizenry. If we restructure the delivery of services to the homeless in a more coordinated and collective fashion with key County departments so as to maximize resources, we can begin to solve the crisis of homelessness in our County. As the 2010-11 Grand Jury Report on Homeless Mentally Ill Indigent recidivism illustrates, there is an identified need for centralized coordination among public and non-profit resources in order to more effectively combat the poverty, mental and physical illness, and addiction issues at the root of chronic homelessness.

Our staff, board, volunteers and donors are committed to providing emergency assistance and recovery services and welcome the prospect of providing these services with greater coordination among non-profits and municipal entities. I will personally serve on the Coordination Committee and will have appropriate staff involved in the Housing/Shelter/Treatment and Community & Faith Action groups.

I am grateful for the thoughtful discussion and effort that has gone into the proposal before you and am eager to see interested and influential parties participate in it as appropriate. The urgency our team confronts every day demands a well-coordinated response.

Please take the necessary steps to make changes to existing ordinances or create new ones to codify this new structure; and to find matching funds in the coming fiscal cycle for the County's share to establish the centralized infrastructure and dedicated staffing for this effort.

Sincerely,

Rolf Geyling

Rolf B. Geyling

President

Santa Barbara Rescue Mission

535 E. Yanonali St.

Santa Barbara, CA 93103

(805) 966-1316 x. 104

rgeyling@sbrm.org

www.sbrm.org