

## de la Guerra, Sheila

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**From:** Linda Orozco <lindao93101@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 18, 2019 11:14 PM  
**To:** Ghart@santabarbaraca.gov  
**Cc:** jhartman@countyofsb.org; Adam, Peter; Lavagnino, Steve; sbcob  
**Subject:** Fw: my son Michael  
**Attachments:** Orozco letter to BOS April 2019.docx

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----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Linda Orozco <lindao93101@yahoo.com>  
**To:** Das Williams <supervisorwilliams@countyofsb.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 19, 2019, 6:11:28 AM UTC  
**Subject:** Fw: my son Michael

correction its been since 2001. I met Suzanne Riordan in 2007, someone left me the article of the "Revolving Door" written by Suzanne Riordan. It's been 19 years trying to get my son help not 10!

Thank you. Linda Orozco

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Linda Orozco <lindao93101@yahoo.com>  
**To:** sbcob@co.santa-barbara.ca.us <sbcob@co.santa-barbara.ca.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 19, 2019, 6:02:45 AM UTC  
**Subject:** Fw: my son Michael

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Linda Orozco <lindao93101@yahoo.com>  
**To:** Ghart@santabarbaraca.gov <Ghart@santabarbaraca.gov>  
**Cc:** jhartman@countyofsb.org <jhartman@countyofsb.org>; Peter Adam <peter.adam@countyofsb.org>; Supervisor Das Williams <dwilliams@countyofsb.org>; Steve Lavagnino <steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 19, 2019, 6:01:04 AM UTC  
**Subject:** my son Michael

Honorable Members of the Board Supervisors,

I am writing you as you conduct your Budget Workshops for the upcoming year, and consider where to spend the County's money.

I want you to know what my family has been through trying to get help for a young man whose great grandparents called Santa Barbara their home.

About ten years ago, I began to seek help for my son Michael who suffers from dual diagnosis and schizoaffective disorder. Despite all of my efforts, he was handed over to the mercy of a broken system, and for years kept falling through its many cracks. I was given phone numbers of agencies no longer in service. He was assigned to case managers who kept calling in sick. He was placed in sober living homes that would evict him after a few days due to his mental illness and keep the deposit.

At one point, he was placed at Millennium House in Los Angeles, walked away, and became homeless on Skid Row. While I searched for him there, day after day, I found a severely mentally ill young man I recognized from Santa Barbara who had been abandoned by our system on the streets of Skid Row. He cried and cried for help. I put him in my car, despite his terrible smell, and drove him back to Santa Barbara where I took him to the CARES Unit. Several days later, I saw him here on the streets. This is what we have done to our mentally ill sons and daughters.

At one point, my own son was sentenced to state prison for not showing up at a court hearing on charges related to self-medicating with street drugs. Upon his release from prison he was sent to a sober home in the worst part of Bakersfield, where at one point he was dared by his fellow residents to allow himself to be injected by a needle in his neck with heroin because everyone was doing it. They thought he was going to report the incident, so he was dared to do it himself. Michael has never used needles. Michael passed out & dragged into a tub with running cold water & ice to revive him. Michael said he woke up in a tub, while they were pushing down on his chest. Michael had died for a while. To my surprise his parole officer was aware what had happened and didn't demand that he be pulled out & placed in another placement.

This all happened because we have no treatment beds. I don't want anyone to live the horrific journey I have lived trying to get my son help. His youth was robbed and I was stressed to the point of developing cancer. It's been a living nightmare.

After many dead ends, various hospitalizations, incarcerations, periods of probation, and numerous inappropriate placements; after month after month of living homeless here in his hometown and near Skid Row in Los Angeles; after years and years of arguing & advocating for my son, but not before tremendous harm had come to his brain, he was conserved and sent to an IMD.

Santa Barbara County desperately needs more inpatient beds, and quality residential facilities, NOT jail cells, not sober living homes or beds in frightening places on Skid

Row. Our mentally ill deserve to be treated by people who are trained and truly care, not by people just trying to make a buck.

Yesterday, while watching the budget hearings on TV, I was moved to tears when Das William shared about a young man struggling with homelessness and a mental health condition. These are so often related: mental illness, homelessness and neglect. If enough treatment and housing were available, we would not need the jail.

My son told me, towards the beginning of this journey, that he wanted me to advocate for him and that I was to be his ears, eyes and mouth. Our message is that we must do better, that this nightmare of a revolving door for people with mental health disorders must stop. Please hear us.

Linda Orozco