



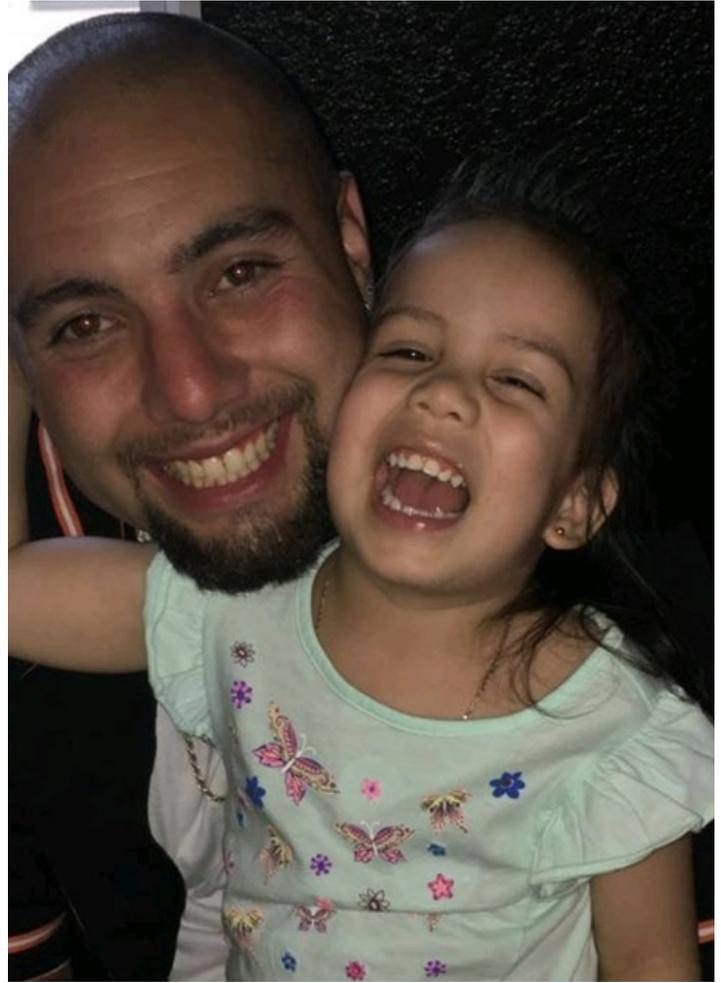
I live by myself on a sailboat in the bay area. When I first started working in the mental health field, I could not afford to live in an apartment by myself, which is an unfortunate statement of the lack of social and economic recognition given to our field. The positives of living on a sailboat are: living on the water, independence, my family of ducks and a coot. The trade-offs consist of: small living space, no shower, no freezer, no washer/ dryer or other amenities enjoyed by renters or home-owners.

I could be evicted at any time; my marina exceeds the regulatory allowable 10% of boaters who 'live-aboard'. Most marinas don't even allow boaters to live on their boats- it's only a 'recreational activity'.

I don't have a permanent address, as the mail cannot be delivered to my boat at the dock. To register to vote, open a bank account, get a car loan, a permanent address is Required. A PO Box cannot be used. I am not counted in the census. I only marginally exist.

This project was sponsored by San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Office of Diversity and Equity.





“From the Belly of the Beast, He Heardeth Me Cry”

I’ve been homeless for over five years, due to the poor decisions and my drug and alcohol addiction. But I have come to learn that my spiral down hill was waiting for me. Like my brother being kidnapped by my father and taken to Guatemala. And later on in life, being sent away to a boarding school for troubled teens at 13 where I was beaten and mentally abused. This is where I noticed I had serious validation and abandonment issues. I’ve lived in very messed up places and have seen so many things that leave scars in my heart. I’ve done so many things I’m not proud of. Things have been done to me, that ‘til this day, I am working on healing from them. I will say I thank God for all my struggles because without my struggles I would have never found my strengths. The crazy part about me doing well for myself is that I still have to live in places that have issues. Being in recovery is the best thing that I have CHOSEN for my life. If you were able to read through this whole testimony, then there is still hope and fire left in you to get your life back. It has been said that people in recovery are healthier people than those who have never touched drugs or lived the life of crime. My name is Christian and today I feel comfortable being in my skin. If you feel that no one cares, I do and you can do it!!!

- Christian H., San Bruno

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My Accommodations Make Me Independent and They Are Taking That Away

This picture shows that they don't care with people that took away the ramp that I need for my walker. They took the ramp away and put stairs so it makes me hard to get up and down the stairs with the walker. They also don't let me use my cane – it's a 4 prong and it won't even fall down on the floor. It's not safe to be there. If you're not able to use your assistance, it's not fair to take my ability to be independent with my handicap away from me. They are going to take the ramp in the back of the house down. It makes me feel bad. When I fall they call me 'the flying nun'. It's hard to go up the stairs. I have to pick up my walker up the two steps. I have to put my bag down and pick up the walker, which is hard to do. I am not supposed to use my walker in the house. Even to do it makes me feel mad that I have a hard time getting around with my feet. What makes me mad is that when I need to use some help, they won't let me use my cane or my walker around the house. It makes me feel unsafe around the house when I don't have assistance, I'm afraid I'll fall. When you can't even go up the steps, how are you supposed to feel safe in a house like that? How do they call themselves a licensed facility if they treat us like that?

- Anonymous

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'Something to Hope For!'

My name is Chris, today's my 63rd birthday. I was born and raised in Redwood City. I've had addiction issues with 'Cocaine' & 'rock' along with relationship failures which helped lead me to homelessness.

Last summer I got arrested in S.F. Tenderloin for urinating on a tree, and the policeman stole my ID and my daypack with \$8,000 - cash in it which I had to get my Van out of storage. Then later in the summer my van was taken in RWC and put on a 30 day hold. I lost it because I ran out of money. It had cost me \$20,000 - and was a 2014 Ford Van.

I could go back to work, stay clean and start a new lease on life if I could be helped in some way with housing. I've lost faith in society and my protective forces. I don't enjoy the company of most other homeless people - for the most part, they scare and bother me. ~~the~~

It would be nice to have help from a social worker that could take me through the process and options to help me like they do for those with mental health issues. I am committed to being loyal to any requirements ~~to~~ you and the county have, especially in staying clean and sober, to achieve a respectable living environment so I can go back to work and regain my pride and self-esteem and productivity. I've been homeless since late 2013.



My Proposal for True
Help to the poor
middle class (or what's left of it)
and the Homeless

I believe the Police are not totally
Sincere when they pretend to befriend the
Homeless they serve food at Street
Church and make some effort to be
friendly but I feel a lot of distrust
when these are the same people who const
antly harass and give advice like why
dont you move to an area you can
afford. In other words get out!

JAF was in a position of power
say mayor or able to draw up
bill & city regulations I
would propose that no further
Construction go up till true
affordable housing is completed
and rented say 5,000 units
at no more than \$600 per month
for 2 bedroom true affordable
housing instead of the joke
they have been proposing you
won't see this because the real cause
of these exorbitant rents is the
people in power corrupted by
their positions and instead of them
with vested interest in real
estate so good luck

These people have no desire to improve
things !! Mark Alward



Photo Jacqueline Ramseyer

Am Homeless because the Ladie I was taking care
of husband Died so out the Door I go not because of
Drugs so here I am Learning ~~the~~ the Trick and trad
of Homeless first you find a spot I ~~can~~ sign up
for Housing ~~is~~ still waiting almost two years
and what I heard they give you apt at Afflion Apt
which has Roach & Bed Bug why Does Life get no
Better When I first sign up they want ~~for~~ to
show me how to Flake 50-51 no no not for me
why Cant I just get ^{housing} been me
I think Life now is just try to make money
off the Government Like they say there are
some good homeless and they some Bad
~~There are some of us that are not~~
Mental 80% Normal 20% am
normal

Just
need a place



"BEING ON THE STREET ME"

MY NAME IS DANNY, A LITTLE BIT HOW I BECAME HOMELESS. I'VE ALWAYS HAD A PLACE THEN AFTER HIGH SCHOOL I GOT MIXED UP IN THE "THE WRONG CROWD" STARTED EXPERIMENTING WITH STREET DRUGS I LIKED SMOKING POT. THEN I FOUND METH. I'VE BEEN USING FOR ABOUT 10+ YRS. BUT HAVE BEEN AN EVERYDAY USER FOR THE LAST 5 YRS. I HAD A CLOSE FRIEND WHO PASSED AWAY AT 33 YRS FROM SCAMMING. I CONTRACTED HIV IN 2008 I NOW LIVE WITH HIV, I HAVE NO FAMILY ITS JUST ME AND NO KIDS. SO IM MY SOLE PROVIDOR I COLLECT DISABILITY \$95.47 ONCE A MONTH, I CAN'T EVEN GET FOOD STAMPS. WHICH IS VERY DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING I STRUGGLE ALOT AND WITH HOUSING I WOULD BE ABLE TO SHOWER AND GET A GOOD NIGHT SLEEP. INSTEAD IM LIVING OUT IN THE STREETS. I WISH THE WAITING TIME FOR HOUSING WASN'T SO LONG.



This is not life for me. I've done that — homeless with no hope. I wanted to think this was better for me. I could do whatever I wanted to do, without people telling me. People couldn't tell me not to smoke, not to have sex, they couldn't tell me nothing! I felt free, but at the same time its not the life I want for myself. Even though nobody could tell me nothing, I wasn't happy with myself. I was dirty, I felt nasty.

None of that would've happened if I put more attention to school, to my parents, to the people who tried to help me, to my counselors. I didn't feel like I fit in with friends at school & family. I didn't think they liked me. My family wasn't my real family: I was around with straight people. That's not me! My real family are the people who lived on the corner— they were gay boys and I could do whatever I wanted with them: things that my family wouldn't let me do at that age. The freedom is what I needed at a time of stress in the house— They used to tell me I was a bad person all the time because of my gender and sexuality.

Please find counseling or listen to your parents and your loved ones — they are the ones that know what's best for you.

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The Consequences of Trauma and the Foster Care System: It Feels Like There's No Light At the End of the Tunnel

This is one of my places that I put together so I can have a place to stretch out. Retreat - it is my little place of oneness that most people take 4 granted. There is always something new each day. Nothing is 4 sure, but the one thing that is 4 sure is that when I get up in the morning, I look around to see where I am because of my PTSD. It is scary to live in a situation where each day when I wake up I don't know where I'm at sometimes. The reality kicks in and I realize I have no home to go to. This is when I think where am I going to go today, am I going to eat today or even think where am I going to spend the night today. I also have to stay clear of the police. Sometimes you have to depend on unruly people to keep safe. My van has been my refuge. It is a place where I can feel safe inside. I do share it with mice and my dog who is my best friend. This situation is all due to the fact that she landlords can be cruel and are not accepting a housing voucher which to me feels frustrating and dehumanizing and somewhat hopeless with this situation of homelessness. However, there are other landlords that want to help. I feel like when I have a place to live, this is when I will have a chance to overcome this difficult situation. I have credentials and it is difficult to look for a job because I have no address.

- Resilience

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A Place Called Home...

This is the place where I should be able to feel safe. It is my home.

Because I have low-income I am forced to live in a place like this, and to suffer with feeling unsafe every day.

Now I have a 30 day notice because I felt threatened and finally chose to stand up for myself. Because of a verbal conflict I am being kicked out.

I can barely come into the common areas without being threatened physically, mentally, or both. I am frustrated!

I feel hopeless and defenseless because when I seek help and I am constantly being told I have to go to PES (psych emergency services) in order to get help.

I am NOT mentally unstable! I AM NOT sick!

I resent being told that I am mentally unstable because I finally decided to stand up for myself.

I am losing hope because many landlords don't accept housing assistance.

I am sad and discouraged, and I feel that if I had enough advocates and support, my needs would be met.

I most certainly would feel better and would have more confidence in the systems that are supposed to work for me.

- Anonymous

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Work is Fun

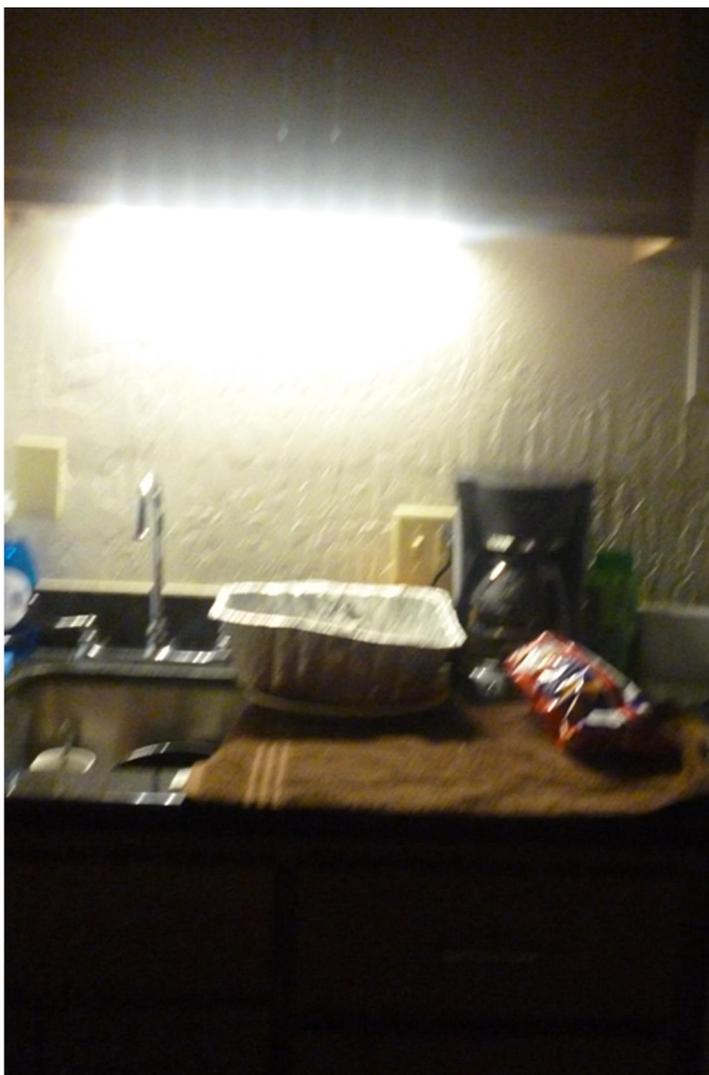
I work at the Chevron gas station and have been working for almost four years...since Oct. 2013. My boss loves me!! As much as I love her and her husband Mohammed. My boss' name is Marzia. She is always helping me with clothes, shoes, she's given me beautiful pictures...purses, everything. She gives me tips – health tips, for my painful legs... compliments me on how much weight I've lost, how good and happy I am since I moved to San Jose... She is so wonderful and gives my spirit a boost when I'm not even thinking about it. Both her and Mohammed have been so wonderful to me... Life is GRAND... I tell you

I have a mental illness but at work my customers treat me well and with respect. They don't know, and why would they? I use Redi-wheels most times but that's at 10pm when I get off work, the store is closed and no customers are around to see my ride home. I do love my job... Such freedom compared to my office job I had prior... I can go out to smoke, I talk and laugh with the customers and truly enjoy the people and my job. Thank you Marzia and thank you God!!...

- Anonymous

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Good Life

I love my new found freedom in my lovely apartment in San Jose and partying a little with my friend, Myles. I moved in on June 21, 2017 (Wednesday) and my caseworker gave me a ton of things, including an air mattress, so I don't have to sleep on the hard floor!! She also gave me dishes, glasses, mugs, flatware, pots, pans-- just so many things... I can't thank her enough...

I can't thank Myles enough for being a very good friend... That I am free to play with also. I haven't had that, ever! No good past experiences with men, unfortunately... But, funny, now that I'm 66 years old, have I found love?!! Hmmm how interesting life is, ya know?!!

- Anonymous

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“The Doll House”

This house is one of the joys in my life.

The foundation of my house includes the programs & the people in them that provided me the strengths to build this Doll House. First SMC Drug Court, WRA, SMC Pre to 3, San Mateo County Mental Health Central, CSM Caminar Supported Education, County of San Mateo BHRS. Before I received this home and before I got into recovery, I was out there mentally ill and untreated, using crack to try and kill my life & me. The Doll House is on a dead end street. There are bushes there that I use to go and sit on the ground and smoke crack.

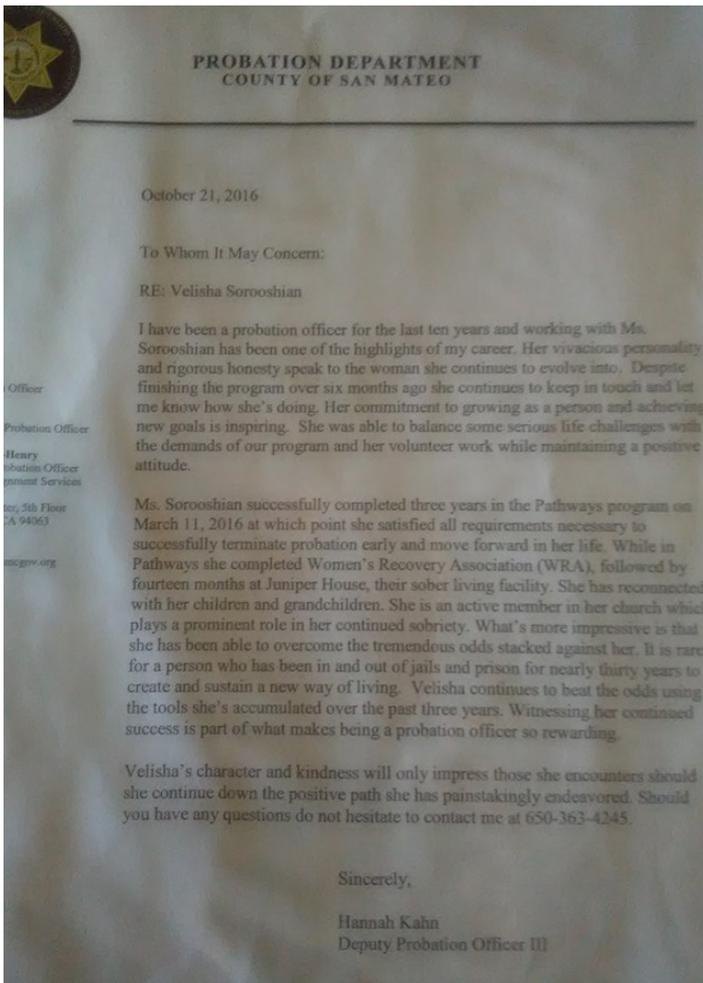
I was homeless. I just wanted to die.

I couldn't take living anymore. So I found crack to do, to kill me. I hid in every bush I could find, like this one on the street right by the Doll House. So now today I own the Doll House to remind me every day that I came a long way and I have it to look at and live in as long as I live.

- Renee Harris

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A lot of housing developments need to help people with mental health disorders and people with low income.

We should have the same opportunities as other people that don't have mental health or criminal records. People that have looked at themselves and are not violent should have a second chance.

Someone gave me a chance. Telecare Corporation & the Marymount Manor. Javier doesn't take Section 8 but he does take Life Moves. He understands mental health & homelessness & he likes to help.

Javier met me. He just saw through me. He knew I was on probation. He knew I was taking a chance with someone in recovery and he just supported me. Javier also takes Life Moves. Javier does work with most (MHA) programs, including Abode. At least there's still some hope for us. Shame on you, big low income developers!!!

What hurts me most is to see people homeless. People with mental health out there without the funding.

I pay over ¾ of my income on SSI to rent. I still pay my car, gas, insurance and other costs. We need more things to help us.

- Velisha

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Black Lives Matter

We cant go nowhere without being harassed. There's nowhere to go. There's racial things going on. They bother everyone who's black. They know we have nowhere to go. We sit there at the bus stop waiting for the shelter to open. They run your name and if you're on probation they want to search you. They have nothing else better to do than to bother African American people right now.

That guy on the street was just riding his bicycle, not bothering no-one. I wanted to take a picture of them to show racial profiling because of black history month—that man was bothering no-one.

They hugged me and took me across the street, and gave me a ticket. They wanted to take my camera away, but I told them I'm showing racial profiling for black history month.

I have anxiety all the time. I'm scared that they might come back and put something on me for taking this picture—maybe even give me a bunk charge.

- Vickie

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Black Lives Matter

Look at the floor in there, it's nasty. That's the bathroom at my shelter. They do the most they can do, the men use the women's bathroom and they go in there and puke all on the floor.

This is the hallway where the shelves are at with our belongings. They knew this was my stuff, they tagged it and put it on the floor, and once you don't claim it, they'll throw it away. If I didn't see this they would've just thrown my blanket away or somebody else would've had it.

She's very rude. Very rude. Very rude. Every time I think about the girl... She thinks she's better than other people, and she's not. It really bothers me because, ever since I got there, it has always been a problem with me and her.

I'm on sleep meds. We don't go to bed until around 9 or 10 o'clock. I take them because of my nightmares about my mom and sister being caught in the fire. I'm the only one who made it. I'm tired of the shelter, I want my own place to feel comfortable, wash my clothes, and just get a nice amount of sleep. I've been in the shelter for 4 years.

- Vickie

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Black Lives Matter

There is where everyone sits at in front of McDonald's. We just sit here and hang out. The police bother them too. These are the averages customers at McDonalds every day. They are my associates—people that I know.

This place is really comfortable for me, it's where I relax.

“If y'all not catching the bus or coming back, we're going to give you a ticket for loitering.”

We had leave the shelter at 6AM, and we couldn't come back until 4:30PM. It's raining outside, the library opens at 10 o'clock, and I don't want to go hang out at McDonalds.

The police don't want us to be nowhere. We no allowed in McDonalds without buying something. We can't use the bathroom without buying something. That makes me feel very uncomfortable. I be sad all the time, I'm sad now. If I don't take my medication, I'll be sad all day.

- Vickie

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