

City Solutions - Harvey West Community Safety

Document Description: This is the email sent to the HSC on 2013-09-15 in response to Claudia's email of 08/23/13.

Subject Line: City Solutions-Please Provide the Email Addresses of the HSC Board of Directors to the HWCS Team

Harvey West Community Safety
to Claudia brown, d lane
Dear Claudia,

We are in receipt of your recent email below and it appears that you've misinterpreted our group's mission. Our list of suggestions are in reference to public safety, but your response was in reference to homelessness. Our group is not focused on preventing or ending homelessness. We are focused on keeping our community safe - our entire community, including the most vulnerable among us, who often end up at the HSC.

We agree that other communities indeed are getting positive, measurable results. We studied Prado in detail in San Luis Obispo County. They were having terrible problems with public safety and spillover into the surrounding community until they underwent an overhaul of the day center procedures. Since they implemented their Safety practices they have become far more effective.

You mentioned "Monica... is familiar with their operations." Monica's volunteer practicum at Prado must have been some years back since Prado's Manager of 16+ years is unaware of her time spent there. Consequently, Monica's experience is irrelevant to Prado's current operations as a Day Center since Prado's procedures have all been enacted since 2006.

We urge you to take an honest look at Prado's current procedures, rules and intake form, along with our recommendations. Our team has not only talked to the Prado administrators, staff, and community members, but one of our team members actually visited and was given a full tour of Prado over the summer.

Few communities face problems on the scale of Santa Cruz's. We have far more transients here than other places. We tolerate far more negative behaviors than in other communities. The rate of Violent Crimes has continued to escalate among our Transient population as well.

Our focus, once again, is not on ending homelessness. Our team is a group of highly experienced, educated professionals who want nothing more than public safety for everyone in our community.

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Over the past 7 months, we have offered several dates to meet with you. Your most recent letter indicates that you want to focus on homelessness and you do not have an interest in working with us to solve the safety issues.

We would like to give our public safety recommendations directly to the HSC's Board of Directors. Would you please provide us with the email addresses for your Board members?

Thank you for your anticipated prompt cooperation.

Harvey West Community Safety Team

Claudia's email of 2013-08-23

To: (Team member's name removed),
CC: Don Lane, Monica Martinez
Sent: August 23, 2013

We did receive your list of suggestions and appreciate the interest you have shown in the safety of our community. Email from Claudia Brown

The suggestions on your list may seem logical on the surface, but effective social services for the poor, disadvantaged or addicted are often more complex than one expects.

That's why it is extremely important for us to follow the science of homeless causes and cures rather than being swayed by the emotions involved in dealing with social and economic difficulties. Sadly, the national crisis of homelessness has prompted a lot of research over the last few years. We actually know what works. Communities around the country are getting positive, measurable results and the HSC is getting good results too. We just can't empty the pool of homelessness as fast as it is growing.

If you would still like to meet with us now that summer is winding down and scheduling people should become less challenging, we would be happy to have that meeting. Meanwhile, here are some resources that could help inform you and your team if you are interested in knowing more about the current research on best practices regarding preventing and ending homelessness:

<http://homeless.samhsa.gov/About.aspx>

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/> (of particular interest is the section on approaches to dealing with chronic homelessness – a big problem in the Santa Cruz population that we are addressing with the 180/180 campaign)

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/index.html>

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The quote in the Sentinel was simply a mistake. The reporter showed Monica a pile of papers that did not look familiar to her and so she believed she had not seen them before. We have all read your preliminary draft report on the services at Prado. Monica volunteered at Prado for some years before coming to Santa Cruz and so is familiar with their operations. If you ever finish your investigation of other centers that are getting measurable results, we would be happy to see your work.

We are at a crossroads in our approach to homelessness across the nation and here in Santa Cruz. Many (if not most) communities around the country are facing problems similar to Santa Cruz's and asking the same questions. We are recognizing that the stop gap solutions we have tried in the past, coupled with the economic crises and overcrowded criminal justice and health care systems have contributed to an unwieldy problem for our neighborhoods. We now have good data on what works and what doesn't to end homelessness and it takes multiple constituencies, time and funding. There is no magic bullet, but the good news is that working together we can have the same positive results that other focused communities have had. HSC is committed to continuing to work with the Santa Cruz City and County to implement life (and money) saving solutions that have a permanent effect. We would be delighted to have your support.

Claudia