



2016 Homeless Count is In Good News, Challenges Ahead

According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) 2016 Homeless Count conducted this winter, homelessness rose in the South Bay by 22 percent over 2015, from 3,006 to 3,663 people. The number sheltered also rose by 27 percent, from 2,346 to 2,968, indicating that the number of shelter units aren't making gains on the need.

The biggest increase in homelessness came from the 25-54 age group. Their numbers were up 60 percent. The second largest group was ages 18-24. For them, the increase was 27 percent.

There is good news, however. The rate for seniors aged 55-61 decreased by 36 percent, and veteran homeless fell across the region. In the South Bay, veteran homeless dropped 35 percent (30 percent across the county) thanks to new, earmarked funding.

The homeless count was executed by 7,500 trained volunteers organized by LAHSA. It was conducted over three different days across the county by people counting heads with data forms, pens, and clipboards in-hand.

Specialists who study homelessness blame the increase on the cost of housing. The problem in Greater Los Angeles is dire.



Shari Weaver, CES Program Director, doing street outreach by the San Pedro Post Office. Photo by Alex Devin.

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Success: Family Back From the Edge Raynard French and Son



Raynard French

In February 2016, Mr. Raynard French, a Harbor Interfaith Services (HIS) client and a union construction worker, lost his job when a project he was working on ended prematurely. Today, he's back on his feet.

Mike Radice, HIS Director of Development, interviewed him in his Long Beach apartment.

"I got a three-day notice to get out, and I'd lived here 14 years," Mr. French said. "I had a 16-year old son in high school, and the UNLV recruiters were looking at him for football. I told the

boy he'd have to go live with his mother, and he was heartbroken. It was awful, just awful," he said as he closed his eyes and shook his head.

His son's mother lives in Inglewood, and it wasn't clear if she wanted him; a move from Long Beach would damage his chances for the college football scholarship. "The boy needs an education to prepare for his future," Mr. French added.

"This had never happened to me before," he continued. "Construction projects come and go, but you make enough from one to carry you to the next. I just wasn't expecting it. I couldn't pay my union dues, and I lost my membership. I tried to bring in some income, picking up work where I could, but without my union card, it was all low pay."

Mr. French is a skilled tradesman with certifications in everything from Brick Trade to Painting, yet with the lost union card, the best he could find was a job packing crates for \$8 an hour. "That didn't cover expenses," he sighed. "My landlord gave me odd jobs to reduce the rent, but it wasn't enough."

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Executive Director's Message



As noted in the cover story, The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) recently released the 2016 homeless count results. Veteran

homeless fell by 30% and homeless among families decreased by 18% from 2015. However, homelessness among chronically homeless individuals and youth increased. The South Bay Area of Los Angeles (SPA 8) saw a rise in homeless of 10.5% (including Long Beach #s); further details and analysis will be shared in the future.

Recently, the County and City of Los Angeles launched a \$100 million plan and identified 47 strategies to combat homelessness.

Implementation sessions are already taking place and geared to enhance the overall homeless system that will provide additional resources. Harbor Interfaith, as the lead agency in the South Bay, coordinates efforts for

both families and individuals. This regional approach enables the providers to increase its outreach efforts and collaborate in our efforts to decrease homelessness.

Harbor Interfaith is committed to ensuring that the homeless and working poor are connected to resources that address barriers, increase income and allow households to secure permanent housing and maintain stability.

True to our mission, we remain focused on the agency priorities outlined in our strategic plan: acquire additional housing, reach full utilization of the agency children's center, and develop the agency capacity through innovative technology.

Thank you to our supporters for your partnership and trust as we work to address the homeless and working poor.

Tahia Hayslet, Executive Director



Laughter Raises Money

On May 4, the South Bay Auxiliary of HIS held its Second Annual "Evening of Laughter and Fun(d)raising" at the Comedy and Magic Club in Hermosa Beach. The event netted \$72,000 for Harbor Interfaith. Over 215 guests enjoyed dinner, comedy, magic, a live auction, a raffle, and fellowship. There was also a moving personal talk from Robert, a HIS success story. Many thanks to the sponsors, guests, Club staff, and the hardworking Auxiliary team who came together and made this evening a success.



Pictured L/R: Jennifer King, Cheryl Rau, Ron Rau, Howard Smith, Gail Smith, Steve Cox, and Ida Gardner

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Homeless Count

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The lack of housing and the cost of what's available are major contributors to the problem. In LA County, there's a 4.3 percent vacancy rate compared to almost double that nationwide (Zillow.com). The National Apartment List Rent Report for May published the average rent for Los Angeles at \$2,210 per month, the seventh highest in the country, making a year's rent equal to the annual earnings of a low-wage worker. Many can't even afford housing with a Section 8 voucher.

The problem isn't limited to the homeless. A UCLA survey of 1,400 county residents found that that one-third of the county's residents worry about losing their homes.

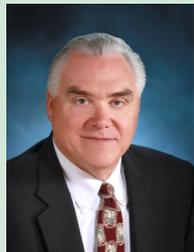
"I feel like a telemarketer sometimes," said Shari Weaver, Director of HIS' CES Program. "Our housing navigators call and call trying to find affordable vacancies. It's tough."

Board News

Officers, New Members

At its May annual meeting, the Board of Directors elected a new slate of officers: **Andrea Burrill, Chair; Glenda Owens, Vice Chair; Sheri Taylor-Nikolakopoulos, CFO;** and **Tony Vickers, Corporate Secretary.** These dedicated volunteers will put considerable time and effort into Harbor Interfaith Services on top of their commitments to work, family, and friends. Also at the meeting were two new members: **Randy Bowers** and **David Johnson.**

Randy is the President and CEO of Malaga Bank. He is a native of Southern California and currently resides in Palos Verdes Estates. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of Marymount California University, chairs the Finance Committee; and is a member of the County of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board. He has also served as the Chairman of the Board for both the Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce.



David, a resident of Palos Verdes Peninsula, is the principal of Johnson ERP LLC Consulting. The company offers services in cloud computing consultation, website development, project management and database administration. His clients

Success

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After a couple of months, he was close to losing his apartment and son. He turned to Catholic Charities in Long Beach, just seven blocks away from his apartment, and they referred him to HIS. Through the Homeless Family Solutions System we paid Mr. French's back rent plus two months forward, giving him enough peace of mind and time to find work in his field. It also enabled him to keep his son. He got another job at \$16/hour and earned enough to put food on the table and reinstate his union card. The union found him a good paying job.

"I'm working for RTJ Construction now, building a new casino in Long Beach, and things are good," he said, leaning forward with a smile. "But this time, I'm going to put some money away and buy a house. I'm starting to think more about the future and how to plan for it. I don't want this to happen again. I appreciate everything more. Things are clicking together like Legos."

As the interview closed, Mike Radice asked, "May I get a picture of you outside where the light is better? Our readers want to see your face."

Mr. French leaped up and swung open the door to the sidewalk, letting in a flood of light. "Anything your agency wants. Anything."

include non-profit organizations and minority-owned and small businesses who seek affordable information systems solutions. Soon, he will enter a degree program at Veritas Evangelical Seminary in Santa Ana.

Transitions

We want to thank **Scott Donnelly** (left), our Board Chair who turned the job over to Andrea Burrill. **Scott remains on the board**, but we are grateful for the time and hard work he put into HIS these last two years as Chair.

We also want to thank outgoing Board members **Derek Smith** and **InaMarie Johnson.** We greatly appreciate their contributions and look forward to their continued support. InaMarie chaired the Governance Committee, no small task.



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A.L.L. Grad Graduates

Margarita Favela, Health Professional

"It's hard to find a place to live in LA, it's so crowded and expensive," said Margarita Favela, an Accelerated Learning & Living (A.L.L.) program graduate. She was interviewed for this article in HIS' administration building with her 4-year-old son, Gianni, sitting patiently in an adult-sized chair. Her daughter, Selena, age 14, was in class at a local magnet school.

"Things weren't going well for a while before I got here (to HIS). I had an alcohol problem and a drug addiction. DCFS took the kids (the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services), and I ended up on my father's couch with the kids in foster care." She shook her head. "I got clean, completed the drug program, got my kids back, and I started looking for a place. But I didn't have enough money to get an apartment, so DCFS led me to Harbor Interfaith."

The A.L.L. program provided Margarita with housing in an HIS-owned apartment building on a quiet San Pedro street. There, she lived with her children as she finished a bachelor's degree at California State University, Dominguez Hills.

A.L.L. offers families up to 18 months of housing while parents attend school to complete a degree or earn a certifi-

cate, enabling them to step into a career to support the family. Without A.L.L. parents would be stuck in minimum-wage jobs and still on the street.

While Margarita was in the A.L.L. program, Gianni was enrolled in our Children's Center.

"He loved it," she said, "and now he's ready for kindergarten. As for me, I completed a degree in Kinesiology and got a job at the Wilmington YMCA teaching Pilates. Harbor Interfaith helped me find an apartment, too. I'm fine, now, and the family is together. I'm thinking about doing a Master's degree in Health and Wellness through American Career College. I can't thank Harbor Interfaith enough."

Following the interview, Gianni skipped all the way to the elevator.

"He thinks we're going to the Children's Center," Margarita said. "But we have somewhere else to go."

Gianni stopped skipping.

