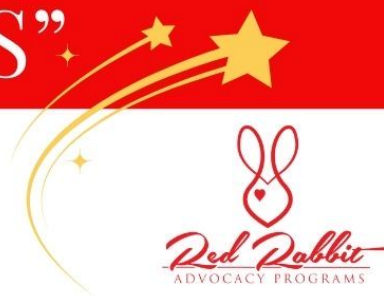


“UNDER THE STARS”

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NEWSLETTER



Homelessness

Explained....

By Ashley Petrey

Currently between March Lane
and Scotty's Island

So how can you truly have a PASSION about something, unless you have lived it? I am writing about homelessness, with that, comes so much more. Homelessness is misunderstood, often due to people being misinformed, and people having misunderstood what is really happening here. I come from the heart of it, the broken, the innocent children, women, poor, disabled, mentally challenged, elderly, victims of violent crimes, sexually assaulted, PTSD, victims of circumstance. The list goes on. All of us come from the same place, we bleed the same, we all are given our own individual circumstances when we are born into this world, without ever having the chance to pick and choose what it is exactly that this life will have in store for us. Some of us are born into wealth. Never knowing an ounce of struggle, while others not so fortunate. One thing I do know, it's that in the end, material wealth and power you cannot take with you when you die, yet one thing is certain. We all will and have to do it. So let me ask you this? Are you a person whom of which chooses to judge, discriminate, alienate and disregard these people who are less fortunate? Are you a person of compassion, a love for humanity, someone who wants to help and end this epidemic, and find a positive and loving approach to a resolution for a more permanent and dignified solution? Like a thief in the night, life can take a sudden turn and everything you once knew is now changed and in the blink of an eye a natural disaster, a sudden death, a victim of violence, losing a child, a car accident, a stroke, all for sure out of our personal control. Then what? Well that's where it starts. Emotionally scarred, traumatic, physically hindered, financially ripped of everything you

have ever worked for. Then you find yourself unable to pay the bills, car is broke down or stolen, fired from work or laid off, you were held at gunpoint and stripped of everything, your house burned down while shopping at the grocery store. Awful, just terrible, and completely out of your hands, then what? Some of us have no family to call, new in town, sole provider, so now your homeless, and everyone looks at you different, they think they know you. They treat you like scum, yelling out get a job you bum, meanwhile your so broken by losing your wife or child unexpectedly, or you are veteran who has lost your hand or have flashbacks of horrible moments were all your fellow soldiers were killed in combat. So now what? We have a hard time smiling, we hide our face from society, we are ashamed and can't stand the rejection, we look for comfort and result to drugs to numb the pain, trying to carry on in hopes to find a way. Then what? We find a place to hide from the cold winter nights in shadows out of sight until we are rudely awakened by authorities that displace us and destroy all our belongings. What little we may have had left of our lives, pictures, blankets from the cold, medicine very much needed, paperwork for our financial aid or doctors appointment, identification. So then in that moment we are left with pain, sadness, overwhelming thoughts of negative things, asking will we ever make it out of this reoccurring nightmare of a life. HELP ME!! ...CRIES FROM THESE PEOPLE WHO JUST NEED A LITTLE REASSURANCE, SOME GUIDANCE, A PERSON TO UNDERSTAND, LEND A HAND, A SMILE, POSITIVE INTERACTION, ANYTHING!! FOR GOD SAKES WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS NOT ANIMALS AND ALIENS. JUST A LIGHT IN THE DARK TO HELP US SEE OUR WAY. From a girl, a mother, a sister, a daughter, an aunt, a friend, a victim of sexual assault and violent crimes, a victim of circumstance, well educated, once working, tax paying citizen. A human being. You never know what lies beneath the surface. So please next time you go to pass judgment on the less fortunate, try waving, smiling, asking if they are ok. You would be surprised at what a difference even a little positive interaction can do. Thank you, Ashley Petrey.

New Stockton Ordinance/Ban on Homelessness

In a unanimous vote, Stockton City Council declared a local emergency on homelessness and toughened the city's ordinance that bans camping on public spaces. Stockton's strategy to address homelessness will boil down to three main components: "cleanups, diversion, and enforcement, in that order," City Manager Harry Black told councilmembers before the decision at the Nov. 19 meeting. The camping ban on any public property that is "not specifically designated for camping" was added to the city's existing critical infrastructure ordinance. Additionally, police officers are now allowed to ban unhoused residents from all city parks for a period of 30 days. Unhoused residents may be banned if they are issued two or more citations within a one-year period for camping at any city park. The emergency declaration — Stockton's third regarding homelessness since 2018 — grants Black the authority "to take whatever actions are necessary and appropriate" to address the issue. On June 28, the Supreme Court's *Grants Pass v. Johnson* decision reversed that. In a 6-3 ruling, the court held that cities and counties without enough shelter beds to house its homeless populations can legally cite and arrest unhoused residents for living outside. In response to the ruling, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an [executive order on July 25](https://www.recordnet.com/story/news/politics/government/2024/11/27/stockton-declares-local-homelessness-emergency-toughens-camping-ban/76490580007/) directing state officials to start removing homeless encampments across the state. The order also encouraged local governments to adopt policies and use all available resources "to take action with the urgency this crisis demands to remove encampments from public spaces."

- Story from "The Record" dated 11/27/24, Full article can be found at <https://www.recordnet.com/story/news/politics/government/2024/11/27/stockton-declares-local-homelessness-emergency-toughens-camping-ban/76490580007/>

"STAR OF THE MONTH"

This is Ms. Loretta Muck. Loretta had been homeless living in the streets for over a decade. I met Loretta when she was in the encampment behind the Stockton Record in June 2021. We tried to go through the pathway to housing with referrals and through behavioral health for over 2 years with no motion. Unfortunately, Loretta suffered a stroke in July of this year, which took her off the streets when she was airlifted to Stanford Hospital. After a couple of months in rehabilitation, we moved her to a motel. Luckily she had funds stacked up to keep her in the hotel for a couple of months. Her Section 8 came through and she just was approved for her own apartment. Loretta is clean and sober, going to her physical therapy appointments and attending church every Sunday. She was able to keep her dogs and is set to live healthy and independent from here on out! Recovery Is POSSIBLE!

PASSING OF PROPOSITION 36

Proposition 36 was passed on November 5, 2024. How does that impact those struggling to survive on the streets? Proposition 36 increased penalties for certain theft and drug possession offenses while creating a treatment-focused legal process for repeat drug offenders. Theft crimes, such as shoplifting, became felonies for individuals with multiple prior theft convictions, and penalties for drug possession involving "hard drugs" like fentanyl and methamphetamine were heightened. However, the measure also introduced treatment-mandated felonies, allowing repeat drug offenders to access rehabilitation programs instead of traditional sentencing, offering a pathway to recovery. This means your prior convictions can be used against you and turned into a felony mandating a harsher sentence. For petty theft, the misdemeanors can be stacked so that separate misdemeanors can be lumped into one felony. So if you are caught stealing multiple times, they will lump each total loss stolen together to reach a threshold of \$950.01 and now you are charged with a felony, state prison term. They will also force treatment on people convicted of the drug crimes. Keep these things in mind while you are out there trying to survive. Keep yourself educated on laws that affect you!



Loretta Muck

Formerly
Downtown
Aurora &
Lafayette
Camp