

**Vizcarra, Nancy**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 5, 2025 3:03 PM  
**To:** Desmond, Jim; Anderson, Joel; MontgomerySteppe, Monica; Lawson-Remer, Terra  
**Cc:** FGG, Public Comment; luke.bergmann@sdcounty.gov  
**Subject:** [External] HOMELESSNESS - NOT ALL ABOUT DRUGS OR HIGH HOUSING COSTS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi All,

We need a new approach to treating homelessness - here's one. I don't know how much it applies to San Diego, but the issues it raises should definitely be explored.

Regards, Paul Henkin



**Good Good Good**

**New study reveals a leading cause of homelessness — and it isn't drug use**

Story by Meghan Cook [3/5/2025]

A new study from **Case Western Reserve University**, a nonprofit research university in Ohio, is shedding light on a leading cause of homelessness in America.

Meagan Ray-Novak — a research assistant at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School's Center on Poverty and Community Development — led the research by conducting **40 extensive interviews** with people in **her community** experiencing homelessness.

She says the study challenges outdated assumptions about homelessness.

“We were asking people very broadly **what life was like before they became homeless**, and what we found is that the majority of the population had actually experienced some type of loss,” Ray-Novak told News 5 Cleveland — a local ABC News outlet.

“Some kind of death, divorce, separation, and caretaking responsibilities that had significantly impacted their ability to stay in their home.”

Ray-Novak went on to explain that the study didn't just show that grief was a unifying theme for people who were chronically homeless (living unhoused for more than 12 months at a time).

The study also uncovered how major trauma like this often comes at the cost of someone's personal care.

**More specifically, the death of an immediate family member or friend was often precipitated by the individual compromising their own wellbeing and livelihood to help a loved one.**

**“Folks are giving up their living arrangements,”** Ray-Novak said plainly. **“They're either quitting their jobs or losing their jobs to take care of a family member, and that's a loving thing to do, it's a positive thing to do, but then recovering from that afterward is really complicated in ways that we didn't expect at all.”**

And these issues are only exacerbated by rising drug prices, high healthcare costs, and barriers to affordable assisted living facilities.

“[The data] tells us that folks make decisions based upon their relationships,” Ray-Novak said. “But it also tells us that the system isn’t supporting families in taking care of each other and keeping people out of hospice care or keeping them at home.”

According to the study, 35% of participants said the death of a parent, spouse or partner precipitated their homelessness.

And over 50% said “relational breakdowns,” like separation, divorce, and death, contributed to their “housing instability.”

When Ray-Novak asked participants if they regretted risking their stability to care for a loved one, not a single one responded “yes.”

“They all said, ‘No. My mom needed me. They were going to put her in hospice. No way was that going to happen,’” The doctoral candidate said.

“That’s amazing so I think we should celebrate that...This story is really about love and caretaking.”

50-year-old Eugene Sopher knows that reality all too well. After his mother had a stroke, he moved in with her .

“It’s my mother,” he told News 5 Cleveland. “The person that gave me life, that’s the person above God.”

But soon after he moved in to help take care of her, he was crushed under the weight of both of their bills. He lost his home right before she passed away.

“Imagine you have nobody,” he said. “When I lost my mother, that's how I felt.”

At first, Sopher stayed with friends and family. Eventually, he felt he had overstayed his welcome and began living in his truck. His days were spent in a seemingly endless cycle of sleeping in his car, using a gym membership to shower, and searching for work.

For years, Sopher experienced homelessness through these stages: sleep, shower, search.

Then he began drawing. In his artwork, he worked through his grief and his struggles with bipolar disorder and depression.

Eventually, people started taking notice, and “everything just lined up” for him.

And in 2022, after finding housing, he displayed his work at the Chagrin Falls art exhibit.

“Like the phoenix, I’m rising from the ashes, and I’m shining,” he said.

Although Sopher found help, and motivation, through his creative outlet, most people need outside assistance.

Fortunately, more and more nonprofits (like Abode, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Gateway Rescue Mission, Coalition for the Homeless) are combining community outreach for the homeless with free counseling — to give people a space to process their grief and move forward.

At the Salvation Army of Milwaukee, Laurie is one of many onsite mental health professionals that helps unhoused people get back on their feet. She says that their emergency clinic continues to offer free counseling even after clients have transitioned to permanent housing.

“Having services like this available to folks here at the shelter enables those who use it to have more positive outcomes – improved relationships with family and others, and skills that enable them to break the cycle of homelessness,” Laurie shared.

She said: “It’s through that that people are able to receive a sense of hope.”

*This article was originally published by Good Good Good. Good Good Good celebrates good news and shares ways to make a difference.*

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**From:** [henkinp@earthlink.net](mailto:henkinp@earthlink.net)  
**To:** [Desmond, Jim](#); [Anderson, Joel](#); [MontgomerySteppe, Monica](#)  
**Cc:** [FGG, Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** [External] FUNDING-AT-RISK NOTICE (PLEASE INCLUDE WITH DOCS FOR AGENDA #11)  
**Date:** Thursday, March 6, 2025 10:30:01 AM

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Hi Supervisors,

The problem with this is that the recommendation is to Report back with notification strategy options within 30 days. The way this government operates is to make cuts first and adjust later, like all the people they fired without notice and had to ask to come back. By 30 days, the recipients may well have been cut off already.

make this effective, I suggest that the funding-at-risk notices go to recipients whose email addresses you know ASAP and by regular mail to the others.

On the other hand, I am thinking that the funding cuts have been made clear through the media to most people.

Another good thing would be to amp down the fear factor by suggesting alternatives in the email or letter.

Regards,

Paul Henkin