

From: Donna Vidrine [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2024 12:23 PM
To: Campagnolo, Laura <CampagnoloL@san-clemente.org>
Subject: CC agenda item 10C

Please include my Comments in Public Record. Thank you!

Good evening Mayor, City Council and City Leadership.

My name is Donna Vidrine and I am a leader with the San Clemente Homeless Collaborative. (The Myth Homeless People are Service Resistant)

The idea most homeless people are "service resistant" is a persistent myth among us! People say vile things about homeless people, then say when challenged

"I don't feel bad for them because they're exactly where they want to be."

People genuinely think that unhoused people act against their interests, preferring to sleep on the cold and dangerous streets rather than in a warm and safe shelter for no good reason.

Why are we so quick to blame homeless people and assume they are acting against their own interests rather than examining how our systems are failing those they are supposed to be serving?

Unhoused people are not service resistant. Most people would not choose to sleep outside on the streets if they had a better alternative. The services offered are just not meeting the right needs.

First, space in a shelter may not be available. There is also the fact that the imbalance of power and lack of sufficient oversight inside many shelters leave unhoused people vulnerable to violence and abuse.

The fact that so many people try shelters first but ultimately choose to take their chances on the streets should make us look at what's going wrong within the shelter system.

Service resistance is an easy way to let the organizers and those responsible for providing services to our unhoused persons "off the hook." If you are offering something to homeless people but don't see a lot taking you up on that offer, it's not because they're stupid and don't know what is good for them. There might exist barriers or it might not fill an actual need. If they are brave enough to ask for something other than what we have offered (something that would actually fill a need for them) we become offended and get annoyed and start to think of them as ungrateful.

A good way to subvert this vicious cycle is to start by asking them what would help and go from there rather than assuming you know what a person needs.

BY SOLVING PROBLEMS COLLABORATIVELY WITH THE INPUT OF THE PEOPLE YOU ARE TRYING TO HELP IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO HELP.

Help make the truth louder. Choose evidence-based solutions over political agendas. AMPLIFY THE TRUTH AND COUNTER THE NARRATIVE OF CRIMINALIZATION, ALL WHILE ADDRESSING THE COSTS OF HOUSING AND SKYROCKETING RENTS!

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE !!!

Thank you for your time and attention .

Sent from my Galaxy