



March 2020

The Living Room

Campus News

It Takes a Village

With Cindy Pasko

Happy March Living Room Friends!

Today was a special day for us here at The Living Room. Staff, participants and volunteers engaged in a campus blessing ceremony. Two participants led our ceremony, and as a group, we walked the perimeter of our campus. For over 20 minutes, we refocused our thoughts on our blessings here. We set intentions for safety, healing, being more present to support each other, and to upholding peace.

One of our participants, who is of indigenous descent, was invited to lead our dedication. She is an attorney by trade who speaks very eloquently. She quoted Mother Teresa and other great humanitarians to remind us that we overcome much in this life through service to others.

Another participant gave voice to all of our collective thoughts of peace and healing. It was a moving experience and a reset for many of us. Housed and un-housed, staff, volunteers and participants, all women, all human. Each of us trying to move through life with a better mindset.



This was a great example of taking time to remember our strengths and our compassion. Our community and campus have been going through a lot of turmoil since the beginning of the year. Events surrounding Joe Rodota Trail, our communities' responses to those who are shelter-less, human trafficking concerns for our participants, increased violence on the streets surrounding our property, and the Coronavirus threat are a few of the challenges that we have in addition to attempting to ease the suffering of those without shelter and food.

Continued on page 2



Meet Penney

Penny Sefton-Kelley has been a vital part of The Living Room community for the last 10 years. She is the mother of 2 daughters, grandmother to 4 granddaughters and a compassionate shoulder to many more here at The Living Room.

Penney is the first Peer Counselor on our campus. She started as a volunteer and joined the staff in February 2020. She is here on a part-time basis to work with our participants,

provide an empathetic ear and help diffuse any conflict that may occur during the day. Our hope is that this program will expand and that Penney will just be the first of many. So far it has been a huge success.

When Penney isn't counseling at The Living Room she can be found reading, watching movies and taking long walks through the beautiful countryside of Sonoma County.

"Every person that comes to this campus or who supports us is helping to co-create something wonderful: a place where people are treated with dignity."

Did you know?

- The Living Room has a new website! Check it out at www.thelivingroomsc.org
- The Living Room provided 25,152 hot nutritious meals for our participants last year at an average price of \$.95 per meal.
- The fabulous volunteers at The Living Room logged in 23,080 hours of incredibly compassionate work in 2019

It Takes a Village

Continued from page 1

We all have been at least a little unsettled by a greater sense of the unpredictability of life. Being part of community, both the larger ones of Santa Rosa and Sonoma County, and our little Living Room community, comes with being concerned for the welfare of those around us. It also means that we can celebrate those things that we have in common and those we are connected to.

I would like to report that The Living Room is alive and well! We are thriving in every way. We are also changing. Not just to change for change's sake, but to respond to growth and to the new needs of these times. Every person that comes to this campus or who supports us is helping to co-create something wonderful: a place where people are treated with dignity, where we are learning to embrace differences, where we see strength in others. A place that reminds us of how frail we as humans are and how strong our humanity can be.



The Snowball Effect

How Social Determinants of Health Affect Housing

By Jen Parr, MFT—TLR Lead Care Coordinator &
Lyn Cessna, MA—TLR Care Coordinator

Homelessness is a complex issue that cannot be summed up easily or quickly. The World Health Organization coined the term “Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)”. SDOH are the complex circumstances in which individuals are born and live that impact their health. SDOH can be used as the standard for understanding the many factors of chronic homelessness. To begin to understand SDOH you need to be familiar with its five main categories, and one example (of many) from each category:

- **Economic Stability:** socioeconomic conditions such as economic level
- **Education:** access to education and the quality of available education
- **Social and Community Context:** discrimination
- **Health and Healthcare:** access to health care services
- **Neighborhood and Built Environment:** living conditions such as housing status

These social determinants of health affect each other and tend to work in tandem. When a woman is without a home there are SDOH factors in relation to how she lost her previous housing that she has to navigate. Additionally, she will likely face more SDOH issues from enduring homelessness. For example, a woman may have fallen behind on her credit card payments due to lost hours at her job.

Continued on page 5

Save The Date

Loving the Living Room is our biggest fundraising event of the year.

Please join us.

Saturday, May 30, 2020

From 5-8:30 p.m.

Wild Oak Saddle Club

Tickets \$125 available

April 6, 2020 at

<http://thelivingroomsc.org>

We already have some great live and silent auction items including:

- ♥ ***The Easiest Dinner Party You've Ever Thrown—*** TLR catered dinner for 10 at your home. Sponsored by Oliver's Market
- ♥ **Season VIP Passes to Rodney Strong's 2020 Summer Concert Series**
- ♥ **A weekend getaway to the fabulous Serendipity View in Gualala**

Current Needs

The following list of items needed as we transition from a winter focus in our Points Room to Spring and Summer.

- ♥ Travel sized shampoo and conditioner
- ♥ Deodorant
- ♥ Toothbrushes
- ♥ Disposable razors
- ♥ Kids summer clothing
- ♥ Kids shoes and sandals
- ♥ Kids sun hats
- ♥ Sunglasses
- ♥ Adult sun hats
- ♥ Underwear (new) all sizes
- ♥ Summer clothing
- ♥ Blankets
- ♥ Sunscreen
- ♥ Reusable water bottles
- ♥ Tents
- ♥ Sensible sandals and tennis shoes
- ♥ Flashlights
- ♥ Tarps
- ♥ Towels
- ♥ Rolling carts
- ♥ Backpacks
- ♥ Pet supplies
- ♥ Pet food
- ♥ Pet strollers
- ♥ Flea protection

In-kind donations are accepted at our campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 -3:00

Angelica Smith Joins the Team

Angelica Smith joins the Women's Program as a Program Assistant. She comes to us from the Graton Native Youth Program where she worked and has been very involved in the community.

At The Living Room she is the designated "floater." On any given day you can find her doing intakes, working desk services, helping in the resource room or helping participants with their daily needs.

When asked what drew her to The Living Room she says simply, "I like knowing that I'm helping the community and being part of a solution."

Angelica is still very involved in her Manchester Point Arena Band of Pomo community and lives in Santa Rosa with her daughter and son. The trio can regularly be found performing native dance at local festivals and events.



Zandra is in the House!



Alexandra Wilkerson (or Zandra as she prefers to be called) joined the staff at The Living Room as the Volunteer Coordinator in February 2020. She comes to us with a variety of volunteer coordination experience and we couldn't be more thrilled to have her on board. Since beginning her new position Zandra has been very busy getting to know all of our fabulous volunteers, learning the jobs that our volunteers do and getting herself established in the job. She sites her passion for helping others and desire to give back to the community as her motivation for joining the team at The Living Room. If you have not met her yet, please seek her out and introduce yourself. We think you'll love her as much as we do.

Volunteer Appreciation Brunch

Our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Brunch has been scheduled for:

Sunday, April 19th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Save the date to come, enjoy some delicious food, socialize with your fellow volunteers and bask in the gratitude of The Living Room Staff and Board.

A more formal invitation will be heading your way very soon! Please come if you can. We want to see all of our fabulous volunteers and celebrate our successes. We really could not do this without you.

For questions call Alexandra Wilkerson at 707.978.4809 or email her at awilkerson@thelivingroomsc.org



"This place literally runs on volunteer power!"

Kelly Keagy, Food Services Manager

The Snowball Effect

Continued from page 3

Those late payments then cause her to face extremely high payments, which she cannot afford. She likely works at minimum wage because she does not have post-secondary education. She also is having issues with her relationship at home due to the stresses of poverty. She and her partner break up and she has to move out of the place in which she is living. Because of the resulting credit from her payment history her applications for housing are not accepted and she becomes homeless. Now, she is staying in a homeless shelter for single women and becomes even more distressed by the living conditions. There might be relational and or behavioral issues with the other residents and additional factors from this living situation that increasingly make her more depressed and with-

drawn. She losses her job for not showing up to work due to being depressed and getting sick too often. Her immunity is reduced from the depression, stress and shelter conditions.

This example may seem rather far-fetched, but is actually a fairly mild example. Typically, our women's stories are a lot more persistently traumatic. The result is a snowball effect that gets out of control quickly for many people with poor SDOH. It takes a support network to help someone regain housing and without support it is virtually impossible.

Continued on page 6



The Living Room

1207 Cleveland Avenue

Santa Rosa, CA 95401

707.579.0138

The Mission of The Living Room is to ease adversity and promote stability, dignity and self-reliance for women and children who are homeless, or at-risk of homelessness, in Sonoma County.

The Snowball Effect

Continued from page 5

During the last two years of the Living Room's housing program, we have been able support the participants of The Living Room through a myriad of connections to community resources and referrals. We have been able to provide transitional (TLR owned) housing to 27 adults and 4 children. We have supported 15 women and 10 children in finding permanent housing, helped connect the community and two of our participants in obtaining reliable transportation and have provided care coordination to all of these participants.

It is our goal to continue to provided resources and referrals to all participants, to provide care coordination on various levels to as many participants as possible, and to continue to provide transitional housing to as many women from our programs that our resources allow.

The Living Room

1207 Cleveland Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95401