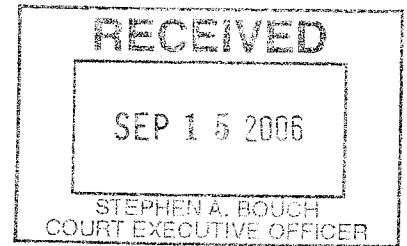




COMMUNITY ACTION OF NAPA VALLEY

encouraging self-sufficiency



August 17, 2006

FILED

SEP 15 2006

Clerk of the Napa Superior Court

By: *C. Bue*
Deputy

Napa County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 5397
Napa, CA 9581-0397

Napa County Grand Jury:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Community Action of Napa Valley Board in response to the Grand Jury Report of July 9, 2006. It is our understanding that we were to receive a copy of the Grand Jury Report prior to publication in the Napa Register. We want to notify you that we did not receive a copy of the report prior to publication in the Napa Register and hope to receive copies in the future should we be profiled again. In this response we are going to respond to each statement that is, in our view, incorrect and/or inaccurate in the order they occur in the Grand Jury report giving as much information necessary to address the issues outlined.

In the report the statement was made that “expanded services, including medical treatment, job assessment, mental health assessment, computer access, housing assistance and life-skill building” are to be provided. “Many of these services are not being provided or provided on a limited basis.” This statement is not true. These services are being provided by Hope Center staff or by outside services providers. Medical Services are provided by Clinic Ole. Mental Health Services are provided by Health & Human Services. Employment services are provided off site by the Job Connection. There are four computers available for clients to build resumes, job search, homework, etc. There is a weekly support group for participants addressing life skills, drug and alcohol education, managing life in housing, etc. There is a housing coordinator on site to assist the homeless in finding permanent housing. In addition, Domestic Violence education, Legal Aide, Project 90, Job Skills workshops are being provided on site.

The report states that The Hope Center is minimally staff by unskilled, untrained staff. The site supervisor of the Hope Resource Center is a Certified Drug & Alcohol Counselor (CAADAC). The Program Director of the Shelter Project has a Master Degree. The Executive Director has a Bachelor’s Degree in Human Services. The Housing Coordinator has 6 years experience in Case Management and working with low-income and the homeless population. The Hope Center’s Lead Center Manager has worked for CANV for over 5 years and has gained excellent skills working with this population.

The primary objective in serving clients at the Hope Center is that each client will have case management services. This includes weekly cases management meetings with the client to discuss goals, objectives and progress.

Each Hope Center client is required to participate in certain activities such as doing a volunteer job a minimum of 2 hours per month. These volunteer jobs include cleaning the center, bathrooms, showers, moping floors, laundry, vacuum, etc. We do not have cable T.V. so clients do not “sit around and watch T.V.” however, we do allow for one movie per week chosen by staff.

The Program Director is in the process of working with staff to redesign the policy and procedures of the Hope Center to better serve the clients and the community as a whole. The statement “there isn’t much incentive for the homeless to be productive” is inaccurate. As mentioned above, all participants of the Hope Center have goals to work towards that are developed collaboratively with staff. We have implemented an I.D. system, which identifies who is receiving services from The Shelter Project either at the Hope Center, Samaritan Family Center or the new South Napa Shelter. Each participant signs an agreement that states they will not participate in illegal activities, inappropriate behavior and/or violence. With the I.D. system in place the Police Department can notify us if they have interaction with the clients we serve. Consequences are enforced should our clients participate in any inappropriate behavior. This can result in immediate discharge from our programs and denial of access to facilities we manage.

Community Action of Napa Valley has been running the Homeless Shelters since 1982. Since that time we have been asked to operate the Samaritan Family Shelter and The Hope Resource Center. In addition, we received the contract to provide services at the New South Napa Shelter, which opened May 2006. The staff of Community Action of Napa Valley (CANV), Shelter Project has been instrumental in program design and development of the new shelter. We have worked closely with the County on policy and procedures, furnishing the shelter, hiring appropriate staff, and overall operations of the shelter.

The Grand Jury stated in the report that the “management of CANV is overwhelmed with the day to day operation of the shelters and does not have a clear understanding of the customer base”. We have years of experience providing services to this population. In addition, we work closely with the City and County of Napa, the Police Department and other agencies to develop and provide services that serve this population. We were recently awarded the contract to provide services at the new South Napa Shelter.

CANV has provided a forum for the neighbors in the area to come and discuss any problems or concerns with The Hope Advisory Board every other month at the Hope Center. These meetings are now on a monthly basis and have been for the past year. In addition, the neighborhood spokes person has telephone numbers and email addresses for key personnel in case of an emergency, problems and/or concerns. In addition, there have been ongoing meetings with the City Manager, Chief of Police, Health & Human Services, City of Napa, other agencies in the area and key staff to address the problems in the area of the Hope Center with regard to the homeless population and to prevent problems from happening at the New South Napa Shelter. These meetings have been happening on a regular basis since February 2006.

CANV has been working closely with Health & Human Services, City Manager, Housing Authority and the Chief of Police to address the many problems with the homeless population and the services provided by the Shelter Project. We are in the process of hiring a new Mental Health Outreach Worker who will work with the Police Department's Outreach Worker referring the homeless to service providers in the community. We have implemented new policy and procedures as requested by these collaborators and are open to continuing this discussion in the future. In addition, we are developing a training schedule for our staff to keep them informed of new information on providing services to this population.

Since opening the Hope Center in 2001, we have enrolled 1,308 people. We have provided the following services:

36,190	showers
15,044	loads of laundry

services provided working with our partners, over:

932	Moved from streets/riverbanks to shelters
824	found jobs
750	moved into sustainable housing
500	entered treatment
1,044	accessed medical care
500	mental health services
200	women referred to Domestic Violence

These numbers are approximate numbers, however the medical numbers alone are significant in that 1,044 did not have to access Emergency Rooms since services are being provided at The Hope Center. Each emergency room visit costs approximately \$2,500 per visit. Potentially, the Hope Center has saved the community over \$2,000,000 in medical costs alone.

CANV receives minimum funding for the Hope Center through a HUD Grant, which provides \$58,000 of the \$160,000 needed to run this program. CANV fundraises the additional revenue. We receive grants, donations and foundation awards for the Hope Center. We provide an annual report to HUD and any additional reporting required for our funding through our grant writing.

The Use Permit for the Hope Center is technically "expired" however, there was some confusion as to renewal of the Use Permit. The City Manager has an attorney researching the Use Permit issue, as it is unusual for a Use Permit to "expire" and/or to have an "expiration date". It is customary for a Use Permit to be approved or denied, not renewed every two to three years. The Hope Center received a "conditional Use Permit" which was renewed after two years for an additional three years. Prior to the "expiration" of the three years (2/5/06) a hearing was to be held to determine if the Hope Center has met the

conditions of the Use Permit and to determine renewal. We are waiting for the hearing to be scheduled, which should be in September 06.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Community Action of Napa Valley, I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury Report and for your work and dedication to this community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leon Garcia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "L" and "G".

Leon Garcia
Board Chair,
Community Action of Napa Valley