

# 3.02 Shelter Evolution: Strategies for a Resilient Shelter

**INNOVATIONS & SOLUTIONS**  
for Ending Unsheltered Homelessness

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#NAEH2024

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# Housing Matters

## Our services:

- Outreach
- Housing Problem Solving
- Hygiene Services
- Mailroom
- Emergency Shelter for Adults and Families
- Respite Shelter
- Rapid Rehousing
- Employment Support
- Permanent Supportive Housing

## Our campus:

- 2-acre campus at Highway 1 and River St. (Highway 9)
- Homeless Persons Health Project (County-operated health clinic) on-site
- Dientes Community Dental weekly clinic
- Miracle Messages outreach twice a week
- 7 supportive housing apartments
- 120 apartments in development

## Impact:

- 3,346 people served in 2023
- 427 people moved into housing

Santa Cruz, California

# Housing Matters in 2024

**Low Barrier  
Housing First  
Trauma Informed  
Harm-Reduction**

- **The Loft Emergency Shelter**
  - 57 beds (40 non-congregate Pallet Shelters; 17 congregate dorm beds)
  - Partners and pets
  - 24/7 shelter (access all day, no curfew, quiet hours 10-7)
  - 3 meals per day
  - No prerequisites to enter
  - All gender access and bathrooms/showers
  - Harm reduction and trauma-informed care oriented
  - Housing-focused case managers and a housing navigator
- **Recuperative Care Center Respite Shelter**
  - 28 beds (all non-congregate)
  - 24/7 shelter (access all day, no curfew, quiet hours 10-7)
  - 3 meals per day
  - Private bathrooms
  - Harm reduction and trauma informed care oriented
  - Housing-focused case managers and a housing navigator

# Housing Matters in 2017

## Paul Lee Loft

- 40 beds (36 bunk beds)
- Partners separated by gender; no pets
- Guests required to leave the dorm during day
- 2 meals per day
- “Pathway to housing” with case management required to enter
- No case management or housing support

**High Barrier**  
**No Housing Support**  
**Low staffing**  
**Low amenities**

# What changed between 2017 and 2024?

March 2017 - Staff attended the How to Be an Awesome Shelter training in Dallas, TX (NAEH and Orgcode)

- Changed prioritization- removed requirement of “pathway to housing”
- Changed behavior and exit policies

2018 - San Francisco Navigation Center Model - Partners, Pets, Possessions

- Start allowing pets
- Add a Case Manager
- Shortened the time that the Loft is closed 10 AM - 3 PM

2019 - California HEAP/CESH funds 2 years of the Loft –first significant public funds in over 5 years

2019- County of Santa Cruz starts working on a 3-year Strategic Framework (released in 2021)

Then...

# Our Challenge

<b>The Loft Emergency Shelter</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total Served	153	181
Age 55+	43%	35%
Chronic Homelessness	44%	78%

<b>Recuperative Care Center</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total Served	80	82
Age 55+	47%	61%
Chronic Homelessness	59%	85%

More people with disabling conditions who have been homeless for longer periods of time

2023 Point in Time Count: 1,804 people experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County

2023 Point in Time Count: 1,425 people experiencing homelessness (79%) are unsheltered in Santa Cruz County

There are fewer than 400 year-round shelter beds in Santa Cruz County

Sources: Housing for Health Partnership

<https://housingforhealthpartnership.org/Portals/29/HAP/Providers/Data/2023PITExecutiveSummary.pdf>

[https://housingforhealthpartnership.org/portals/29/hap/pdf/SCC\\_Shelter\\_Inventory\\_Chart\\_092023.pdf](https://housingforhealthpartnership.org/portals/29/hap/pdf/SCC_Shelter_Inventory_Chart_092023.pdf)

**Would  
you  
choose  
more  
space or  
more  
beds?**

# Meanwhile in Recuperative Care...

- Moved the Recuperative Center to a 28 room motel - a move funded by COVID response funding through the Continuum of Care and CalAIM incentive funding
- Stand-alone shelter within a residential and tourist-oriented neighborhood –COVID shelter set the precedent to allow this presence
- Contracted with a Medicaid Managed Care Plan to provide CalAIM Community Supports: healthcare funding for Recuperative Care, Short-term Post Hospitalization Housing (interim shelter), Housing Transition Navigation, Housing Deposits, Housing Tenancy and Sustaining Services



# Lessons to implement

Bathroom near Pallets	HVAC	Electrification in Pallets	Guest Storage	Assistive devices
E-bike charging	Training for elder care	ADA Ramps	Elevator/lifts	ASL capacity
Secure bike parking	Pedestrian friendly	Communal areas	Quiet areas	Training for elder care
Healthcare staff	Dog run	Mental health support	Large privacy screens	Wheelchair van

# Essential components

- **County of Santa Cruz** Housing for Health Division has a shared commitment to housing-focused shelter with services
- Partnership with the **City of Santa Cruz** for development of the Coral Street campus site
- Co-location with a Federally Qualified Health Clinic, the Homeless Persons Health Project
- Incorporation of healthcare services and funding through CalAIM; local support is the **Central California Alliance for Health, Dominican Hospital (Dignity Health), and Kaiser-Permanente**
- Integration with Coordinated Entry for connection to Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing
- Demonstrating a low-impact on neighbors and building community coalitions
- Embracing opportunities to adapt: seeking out peers, evidence-based practices, and technical assistance
- **And we are still looking for a consistent and renewable funding source for emergency shelter**

# Value Change!

**Before COVID:**  
Get as many  
people as  
possible under a  
roof.



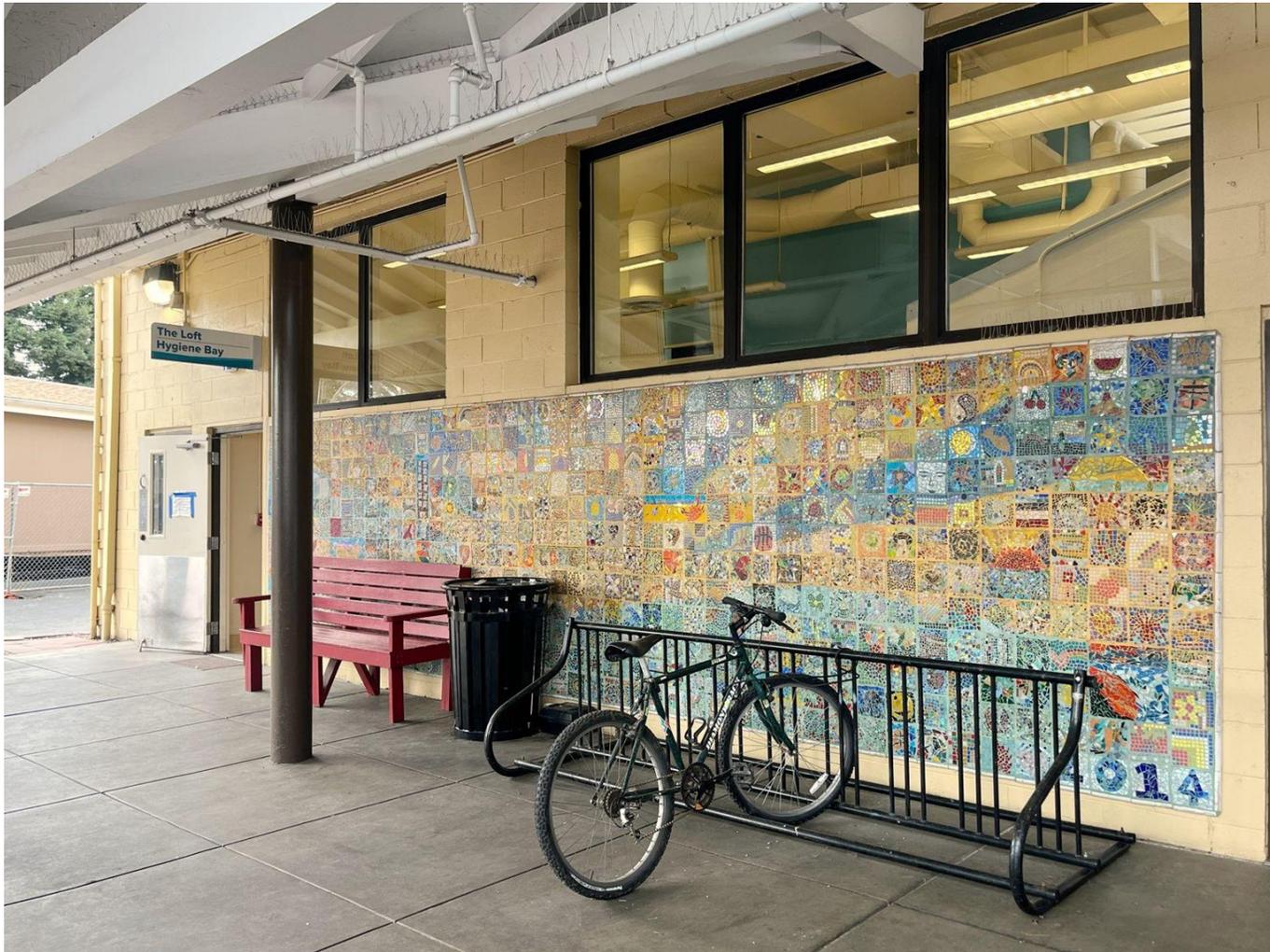
**After COVID:**  
Space and a  
quality experience  
matters.

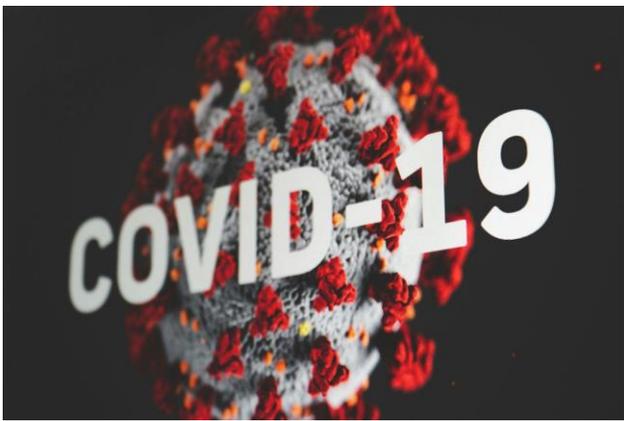


**Was your  
shelter  
purpose  
built to be  
a shelter?**



These are the old garage bays of a car repair shop.





Raise your hand if your shelter was ready for COVID without having to make any adjustments.

## COVID Response



Pallet Shelters - non-congregate space (bonus: allows couples and 2-person households to stay together and is an option for all genders)

No bunk beds and more space between beds

24/7 access to all beds

3 meals per day (shelter in place)

Space on campus to stay during the day

County of Santa Cruz opens motel-based emergency shelter



# Find the obstacles in these photos.



**We have a new  
opportunity to  
re-stage our  
Pallets and  
potential new  
structures.**





# **Transformation & Specialization in the Emergency Shelter System for Older Adults**

# Need for Aging Adult Services is Growing: CASS served 1,672 last fiscal year (55+)

- 1,419 utilized our emergency shelter services (82,049 bed nights)
- 838 were 62+
- 77% reported a disabling condition
- 27% first time homeless (we believe this is underreported)
- 47% chronically homeless
- 55% employed or some sort of income
- 72% graduated high school or equivalent
- 66% male, 33% female, 1% transgender
- 25% reported a history of or were presently fleeing domestic abuse
- 53% stayed in hotels or places not meant for human habitation prior to their arrival

# 600 Bed Low Barrier Emergency Adult Shelter

- Founded by the City of Phoenix 40 years ago
- June, 2022 scaled up to 600+ beds (Initial COA 400)
- Housing First Model (both RRH and Flexible Financial Assistance)
- 24/7 services with the scale up
- Added Client empowerment programs in the pandemic
- Case Management Services



# The Haven Model: Opening Soon

- 170 Beds
- 1:15 Case Management
- Trauma Informed Design: color, gardens, places to socialize
- Pet Run and walking paths
- Community Center for meals, classes, recreation
- Gated Closed Campus
- Volunteer Programs



# Good Neighbor Agreement for The Haven

- Support from Phoenix City Council
- Support from the Neighbors
- Zoning Stipulations



# Challenges in Navigating Mass Shelter



# Physical Space and Related Challenges

- Bunk beds, congregate bathrooms, no real private space
- Crowded and noisy
- Physical disabilities
- Walking (to get food or go to the bathroom)
- Obesity, diabetes (lack of access to healthy food)
- Mental health, dementia needs
- Navigating technology
- Vulnerability to other younger, more able persons

# Systems Challenges

- Hospital Releases
- Mental health needs
- Cognitive decline and dementia needs
- Obesity, diabetes and access to good nutrition
- Physical disabilities
- ALTECS qualifying
- Elder Abuse
- Fixed incomes and limited financial resources
- Insufficient housing, wait lists
- Etc.

# Think Differently

- 5 Years ago Demonstration Grant allowed CASS to:
  - Hire Case Managers to work just with seniors
  - New screening tool for those 60+ to better identify needs
  - Workshops and sessions for seniors
  - Develop new partnerships

# Continuing to Evolve

- 2023 started dementia screening with ASU nursing students...expanding to all 60+ (MoCA tool)
- Medicaid services soon, with expanded Client Empowerment workshops
- Grant to reconfigure wide open day rooms for group and individual work areas
- Telemedicine next

## Other Current Major Challenges we Face

- Staffing (ratios, training, wages, professional pathways)

- Highly vulnerable client mix:

1/3 chronic: Served 2,137 last year

100% reported one or more disabling conditions

790 were aging adults 55+

Rising youth numbers (served 523 last year-- 23% rise)

Rising veteran numbers (served 320 last year--11% rise)

# Trauma Informed Pathways

- All CASS staff are trained & do projects together
- Physical space improvements made
- Lack of information for humans causes stress—how to mitigate this?
  - We have information and do a secondary orientation/intake
  - Every client gets an initial housing plan
  - Must evolve more on this front with diversified pathways for sub-populations

# \$\$\$: Diversify, New Buckets, Sustainable Commitments

- Health funding (ROI)
  - Medicaid: Arizona system at the forefront
  - Hospital partnerships (CASS special set-aside beds)
- Municipal partnerships
- Prevention funding streams
- Arizona new Homeless Shelter Services Fund
- Workforce dollars
- Federal funding streams (DOJ, SAMSHA, WIOA, Congressional appropriations)

# Staff's Vision for the Haven

- Dignified temporary housing (applying trauma informed care principles)
- Reintegration—programs to help clients feel that housing and jobs are attainable (addressing despair and defeat)
- Hire more older adults (relatability)
- Onsite recreation and therapeutic programs (building community, addressing emotional needs)
- Boomer Buddies program (inter-generational mentoring)
- In a few years, convert some rooms into permanent SRO's

# Partners...



AREA AGENCY ON AGING  
REGION ONE, INCORPORATED



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HEALING HOMELESSNESS. TOGETHER.



Phoenix  
Rescue  
Mission™



**THE SOCIETY OF  
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL**

**FEED. CLOTHE. HOUSE. HEAL.**

# Don't forget to Prioritize Advocacy

