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Spring 2019 Newsletter

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## The Social Worker in the Salinas Steinbeck Library

CONTINUED

In addition to connecting homeless patrons to community homeless and mental health services, including screening clients for Interim's services, the social worker trains library and church staff on how to respond to homeless patrons who may be dealing with mental health challenges. The hope is that Interim's presence and training of their staff and volunteers will decrease incidents where police or security intervention is needed.

In the first 10 months of the program, Interim staff have worked with about 100 individuals in the church or library. It's been a slow process to engage the homeless population to evaluate their needs and encourage them to use services. Will Smith, the Interim Inc. social worker has been able to help get 17 people into some type of housing and has convinced another 5 to enroll for intensive mental health and housing services through Interim's MCHOME program which provides intensive outreach, integrated services and housing for homeless people with mental illness.

Steve Lundin, Pastor of the First United Methodist Church of Salinas says, "We absolutely love having Will (Interim Inc. Social Worker, ) as part of our team here at the Neighborhood Services Center at First United Methodist Church. He has done trainings for our core volunteers and is appreciated greatly. He handles many of our most difficult situations with compassion and confidence. Through Will's assistance, people are getting needed help. The quality of the services offered at this site have so improved that I cannot imagine not having a case worker here. Thank you for all that you have done to make this happen."

The program started in Spring of 2018 and is funded through June of 2019. Interim, the Methodist Church and the City are continuing to evaluate the effectiveness and on- going funding for this model.

## Expanding Services

CONTINUED



problem by bringing services directly to clients. ACT team members include nurses, clinicians, counselors and family partners.

The ACT team members are bilingual and culturally suited to provide services to Latino, Chicano, or Hispanic mental health consumers and their families. The ACT team is on call so that individuals can receive coordinated services in their own home when they need them. ACT team members teach individuals how to manage their mental health challenges within the context of their daily life. Clients will receive assistance in developing the skills necessary to lead independent or interdependent healthy and meaningful lives in the community. The ACT team will also offer support and mental health information to clients' family members to increase their natural support system.

Clients must be adults from Salinas or South Monterey County with serious mental illness and serious functioning impairments who are new to services, not engaged in services and/or have difficulty connecting to the systems services due to psychosocial or other barriers. Clients must be referred to the ACT program by caseworkers from MCBH, Adult System of Care/Salinas and South Monterey County, Interim Inc., MCHOME Outreach, or MCBHB Natividad Mental Health Unit and Emergency Room.

The ACT Program began in January 2019 and is expected to serve up to 50 clients per year.

Spring 2019

## FRIENDS OF INTERIM NEWSLETTER

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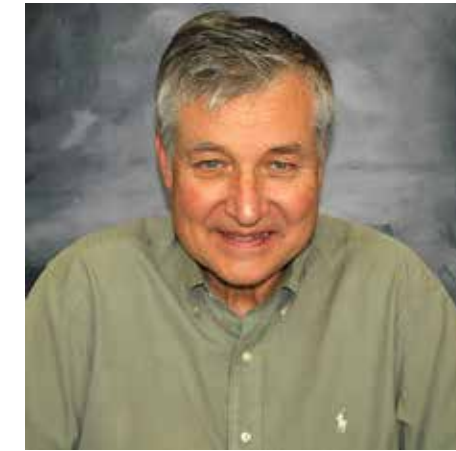
"No one ever fully retires from Interim, Inc.," Executive Director Barbara Mitchell is often heard to say. While this may be true for our long-term board members, Susan Mehra and Carl Miller, they have retired from active board positions effective January 2019, but are still valued voices as part of our "off-board" volunteers.



**Susan Mehra has served on the Board of Interim for a combined 27 years!**

She served terms on the Board of Directors from 1984-89, again in 1993-2001, 2006-2014, and finally, 2016-2018. A retired Clinical Psychologist, Susan has been on the Program/Personnel Committee and served as its chair for most of that time. She has also been the Secretary for the Board of Directors.

Susan's gift of guidance in programming has been invaluable to the agency. Her insight and experience with other non-profit agencies shaped Interim, Inc. in many constructive ways. When Susan is not busy with Interim Inc., she sings and sometimes directs the renowned chorus "I Cantori di Carmel".



**Carl Miller, the immediate past Board President began serving Interim Inc in January of 2007.**

He has the distinction of serving the maximum consecutive term of 11 years and 11 months! Ten of these years, he has been part of the Executive Committee and he just completed his third term as Board President. Carl who retired as Chief of Police in Pacific Grove also serves on the Monterey Peninsula Airport District Board and the Republican Central Committee. He has graciously shared with us his law enforcement experience as well as experience as a family member of someone with mental illness. Carl Miller's wisdom and ability to see the humor in situations has been valued during his long tenure. We will miss him at our Board of Directors meetings!



If you are interested in volunteering to serve on the Board of Directors of Interim or as an "off board" advisor, please contact our Executive Director, Barbara Mitchell at 831.649.4522.



## The Social Worker in the Salinas Steinbeck Library

Interim Partners with City of Salinas Library and First United Methodist Church to Address Homelessness.

For the past year, the City of Salinas, Interim Inc. and the First United Methodist Church of Salinas have partnered on a unique program to address homelessness in the area around the Steinbeck Library

There's an ongoing homeless crisis in California that appears to be getting worse as housing prices soar and housing availability drops, single-parent families become more common and the social safety net resources struggle to get funding and support.

About 554,000 people in the United States were homeless in 2017, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development — and 25% of them lived in California. Monterey County is not immune to these forces. The 2017 Monterey County Homeless Census documented 2,837 homeless individuals, a 23% increase from 2015, and the largest number recorded in the past 10 years. The City of Salinas has been especially hit hard: The city's 2017 homeless count increased 57%.

But the city is also looking to find solutions to the homeless problem and move people off streets and into housing and programs. One serious issue the city wanted to address was the increasing

issue of homeless people using the Steinbeck Library in Salinas as a refuge.

The city's libraries and especially the Steinbeck Library is seen as a welcoming place for homeless people, as the library is a warm and quiet place to seek refuge and they could use its facilities, such as the restrooms. However, the presence of large numbers of homeless people in the library were creating issues for other patrons and at times, the library staff as many homeless people were in crisis or distress.

The neighboring First United Methodist Church operates a day center for homeless people, but they tend to go back and forth between the church and the library. The city was looking for ways to encourage homeless people to find and use resources that would help them move from the streets to permanent housing. Interim has operated outreach services for homeless people for many years in Salinas through the MCHOME program. In 2017 the City approached Interim and asked for assistance to address the growing homeless population in the library and the church.

Interim recommended that the city look at a model used in San Francisco and other cities called the "social worker in the library." The concept is to help the staff of a library to make it a safe and welcoming place for all who use it, while offering special services, such as designated social workers, to the

homeless.

The San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) in 2009 was the first library in the nation to appoint a full-time social worker. Other cities followed suit, but designed their own programs to fit their communities and their own unique issues.

Some of the methods utilized by cities for supporting social work in the library ranged from providing Homelessness and Mental Health 101 courses to staffers, recruiting peer navigators who are in recovery or social work students to help administer services, to forming partnerships with local organizations.

In Spring of 2018, the City of Salinas and the Steinbeck Library joined forces with Interim and the Salinas First United Methodist Church to collaborate on an outreach program to address the issue.

The expansion of services, which includes a trained social worker assisted by peers through a model based on relationship building. The social worker can establish a relationship over time that will get "customers" connected to services they need, according to Eric Howard, Deputy Librarian for the City of Salinas.

The program's objective is to "break cycles" through a model based on relationship building. The social worker can establish a relationship over time that will get "customers" connected to services they need, according to Eric Howard, Deputy Librarian for the City of Salinas.

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## TRANSPORTATION COACHING TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SERVICES

When asked about challenges that prevent them from fully participating in mental health services, clients of Interim and other Monterey County Behavioral Health Bureau (MCBHB) services always list transportation as being one of their greatest challenges. Monterey County is large, and most services are concentrated in Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula.

Many clients do not drive or own a vehicle. Clients in southern Monterey County, and even those in Marina and Monterey, frequently find it difficult to arrive on time to medical and other appointments.

Although Interim Inc. and MCBHB both have been providing some assistance with transportation for clients, the need is much greater than can be provided.

To help clients overcome the transportation barrier, MCBHB asked Interim Inc to partner in a new program for mental health consumers "Transportation Coaching by Wellness Navigators". These

Wellness Navigators who have "lived experience as either a consumer or family member" are employees of Interim and work out of each regional MCBHB clinic. Their job is to help clients access transportation that best fits their needs. Clients may be assisted in using public transportation assistance programs, acquiring bus tickets and monthly passes or taxi vouchers, or any other means of transportation. The Wellness Navigators are trained on taking the bus with clients, educating clients on how the public transportation system

works, and helping clients reduce fears associated with public transportation. In addition to this, Wellness Navigators will provide peer support services to increase clients' connection to community resources such as supported employment, supported education services, mental health and substance use recovery groups and a wide range of social activities, and other community events.

Interim is hiring Transportation Coaching Wellness Navigators. If you are a mental health services consumer or family member who is interested in a part-time or full-time job that helps others, please contact our Human Resources department at 831-649-4522 ext. 307. Or to see the full job description and apply for the position, check out the Interim Inc. Job Postings at: [interiminc.synchr-recruit.com/job/101569/wellness-navigator-transportation-coaching](https://www.interiminc.com/job/101569/wellness-navigator-transportation-coaching)

## Interim is Expanding Service in the Salinas Valley and South Monterey County

Sometimes people who receive emergency psychiatric services in Monterey County have difficulty connecting to follow-up care.

Sometimes this is because they live too far away from services. Sometimes they don't seek follow-up care because they are overwhelmed by the system of care and don't understand how to access services, and sometimes there are language and culture barriers that prevent patients from seeking

follow-up care. Many times, it is a combination of one or more of these.

The Assertive Community Treatment Program (ACT) recently begun by Interim and the Monterey County Behavioral Health Bureau (MCBHB) is intended to address this

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## Shelter Cove Remodel to Increase Transitional Housing Capacity!

In April, Interim started on new project to increase the capacity of our Shelter Cove Transitional Housing in Marina from 32 to 39 beds.

This will increase our capacity by 22% to house single adults with psychiatric disabilities who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Residents are working to maintain sobriety and to learn skills to cope with their mental health diagnosis. Many are recent graduates of next-door Bridge House Transitional Residential Treatment Program which serves individuals with mental illness and concurrent substance use disorders.

Shelter Cove was acquired by Interim Inc at the closure of Fort Ord in 1996 and Interim has operated transitional housing at this site for 22 years. The housing is on a cul-de-sac and consists of eleven two and four bedroom units. Seven of the units are four-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath housing units. These spacious units have over 2000 square feet each and feature four upstairs bedrooms above a downstairs kitchen, dining room, family room, and formal living room. Each resident has their own bedroom and shares the common area of the house.

In order to increase capacity, the four bedroom unit will be reconfigured to add 7 additional downstairs bedrooms. The half baths will be remodeled to

full baths to improve accessibility for residents with limited mobility who can't climb stairs.

Interim always seeks input from, residents in planning each project. When this proposal was presented to residents, they brought up the difficulty of four residents sharing the limited current kitchen space in the units. Their input resulted in plans for renovations of the kitchens in the seven units in order to accommodate more residents using the kitchens and to make the space more useful. Each house will now have two refrigerators and individual space for residents to store their food supplies.

Residents were exceptionally enthusiastic about expanding the capacity of Shelter Cove. Their unanimous response was that they would love to expand the program to clients on the waiting list. Residents also saw great benefit in being able to provide a bedroom on the ground floor of their units for those who have difficulty with stairs.

Total project costs are approximately \$840,000. The cost of producing housing for 7 more residents and

remodeling the units is approximately \$120,000/bed, substantially less than the cost of building 7 new apartments which averages \$300,000/studio unit.

To minimize disruption to residents, the units will be remodeled two at a time. The project is expected to be complete in the Fall of 2019.

Interim has been awarded funds for this project from Monterey County Behavioral Health Bureau through a special grant of HMIOT funds, the Community Foundation for Monterey County, through MCGIVES!, Interfaith Outreach of Carmel, The Harden Foundation, Berkshire Foundation, Carmel Rotary Fund, and other private grants. We are also grateful to our many individual donors who are helping to fund this project. We are still raising funds for this project and are seeking additional grants and donations to cover the project costs.

If you would like to donate to the Shelter Cove Transitional Housing remodel project, an easy way to do so is through the secure "Donate Now" button on our website: [donatenow.networkforgood.org/interiminc](https://www.donatenow.networkforgood.org/interiminc). By indicating "Shelter Cove" in the purpose line, we will add your donation to this project. Thank you for your continued support of Interim, Inc.