

# THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## SUNDAY

Sunday, November 11, 2018

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### HOMELESSNESS

# Pushing hard to change public perception

By Theresa Walker  
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Launching a multi-pronged initiative to raise awareness about homelessness might seem unnecessary.

Orange County's unsheltered population is visible in one way or another in almost every community. Or somewhere in passing. But what is the general public perception and how do you change it?

That's the crux of the United to End Homelessness campaign that Orange County United Way launched early this year.

The main goal: Educate the public and gain support to house the chronically homeless.

The next big push, Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, began Saturday and continues to

Nov. 18. Expect a blitz of messages — in print and social media, on billboards, at bus shelters — focused on bringing a more nuanced understanding of how and why people become homeless, who they are, and what to do about it.

The focus is on the chronically homeless: people who have experienced a year or more of

HOMELESS » PAGE 15



Brian Critser, at right, credits Michael McGlenn, the director of social services at Share Our Selves, with saving his life. The headquarters is in Costa Mesa.

KEVIN SULLIVAN  
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### L.A., VENTURA COUNTIES

# INFERNO RAGES ON



PHOTOS BY KEVIN SULLIVAN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Greg Meneshian looks at the remains of his home Saturday after the Woolsey fire swept through his neighborhood in West Hills on Friday.

## Woolsey fire: Crews reach 5% containment, but strong winds are forecast to return today

By Sean Emery, Jordan Graham, Kevin Modesti and Nathaniel Percy  
Staff writers

The massive Woolsey fire grew to 83,275 acres Saturday evening as crews reached 5 percent containment, and officials warned that harsh winds are expected to return today.

The acreage burned was up from 70,000 Saturday morning and 35,000 Friday night.

Firefighters planned to work through the night to keep the flames from spreading.

"Don't be lulled by a false sense of security," Ventura County Fire

WOOLSEY » PAGE 9



With his burned-down home smoldering in the background, Shane Clark holds ultrasound images of his unborn child that were saved from his refrigerator door by Los Angeles firefighters in the Bell Canyon neighborhood of West Hills.

**"We can rebuild, but the things they were able to take out were more valuable than the structure itself."**

— Shane Clark, Bell Canyon

## Bell Canyon: Cherished possessions saved from flames provide some solace

By Jordan Graham  
jgraham@scng.com  
@JordanSGraham on Twitter

His hillside home smoldered. Only a handful of memories were spared.

As Shane Clark assessed his incinerated Bell Canyon property on Saturday — one of more than a dozen houses leveled in the community by the aggressive, wind-fueled Woolsey fire — four pieces of paper offered solace.

Thoughtful firefighters snagged some of the 28-year-old accountant's belongings, including his most important possession: four ultrasound images of Clark's unborn son, which the

BELL CANYON » PAGE 12

### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Paradise death toll at 23; 110 missing

Residents return to scenes of destruction; fire's rebound feared

By Gillian Flaccus, Don Thompson and Paul Elias  
The Associated Press

PARADISE » The air thick with smoke from a ferocious wildfire that was still burning homes Saturday, residents who stayed behind to try to save their property or who managed to get back to their neighborhoods in this Northern California town found

CAMP » PAGE 12

### VETERANS DAY

# Armistice centennial inspires reflection

David Whiting  
Columnist

Focus page: How today's Department of Veterans Affairs came to be.  
PAGE A14

On the centennial of the World War I armistice, which — not coincidentally — is Veterans Day, let's look beyond battle and blood and consider what Winston Churchill once wrote: "History is written by the victors."

Sorry, Sir Winston, that was so last century.

Despite Churchill's (on-screen) courage in such films as "Darkest Hour,"

MEANING » PAGE 7

### ELECTIONS 2018

AP: Harley Rouda wins seat



Rouda

Incumbent Dana Rohrabacher's campaign has not conceded, noting there are more than 300,000 ballots that have yet to be counted in OC. PAGE A3

### THEME PARKS

## Disneyland kicks off its annual holiday celebration

The resort began festivities Friday with parades, performances and special foods. PAGE A3

### SPECIAL SECTION

## Celebrating giving back to your community

The Register's annual Gift of Giving section highlights philanthropy in OC. INSIDE



### WEATHER

77/52 78/50  
Coast Inland

Full weather forecast » PAGE A20

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# Help Relationships Thrive

## M.A. in Clinical Psychology: Marriage and Family Therapy

Study in Orange County  
apu.edu/orange



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# Homeless

FROM PAGE 1

homelessness, or repeated episodes, and have a disability. They are eligible for government-subsidized permanent supportive housing that includes ongoing services, often on-site.

Larry Armstrong, who heads the Irvine-based architectural firm Ware Malcomb, crystallized the mission in a message sent last month to the 50-member United to End Homelessness Leadership Council, a group of influential voices in the county's corporate, business and philanthropic sectors.

Armstrong chairs the leadership council and told other members that they and their companies and organizations need to spread the word:

"Our goal is to galvanize the community on the issue of homelessness, educating minds and changing hearts so that we may build strong community support for proven solutions to get people housed."

## Galvanizing the community

The local effort mirrors the nationwide Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week that the National Coalition for the Homeless established in 1975. It always takes place the week before Thanksgiving.

The timing, which coincides with Veterans Day, is fitting. Ending homelessness among military veterans is something that Orange County United Way chief executive Sue Parks posed as highly doable.

Orange County's last Point in Time Homeless Census in January 2017 recorded 357 military veterans among the 4,792 homeless people in shelters and on the streets — a widely acknowledged undercount.

"We can house 357 veterans, don't you agree?" Parks said during an early morning breakfast talk at the Pacific Club, a prestigious private establishment in New-

port Beach.

But in California, only Riverside County has reached "functional zero" with its homeless veterans population, a term that means it is rare, brief and nonrecurring. A 138-unit complex at March Air Force Base is part of the solution.

More supportive housing for military veterans here is on the way, with the 50-unit Veterans Village apartment complex in Placentia expected to be completed in 2020, and groundbreaking this year on a Jamboree Housing development in Santa Ana of 76 affordable apartments.

But even proposals to house veterans can stir up opposition. That happened in 2015 when affordable housing developer Community Development Partners sought a \$1.9 million loan from Newport Beach to purchase and renovate a 12-unit apartment complex for veterans and senior citizens.

A backlash from dozens of residents in the city's Newport Shores neighborhood surprised council members. Still, they unanimously approved the loan. That project, called The Cove, opened this year.

## Educating minds

A photo of The Cove was part of a slideshow that Becks Heyhoe, housing manager for United to End Homelessness, included in the presentation at the Pacific Club.

This past year, more than 1,000 people have attended 28 of Heyhoe's Homelessness 101 sessions, with participants from church groups, corporations and businesses, and the general public.

Heyhoe also does community outreach around specific projects, such as the contentious 60-unit permanent supportive housing project that the nonprofit organization Pathways of Hope wanted to build in west Fullerton.

After residents raised concerns at community meetings about safety, property values and a sense of being burdened with more than their fair share, the proposal



KEVIN SULLIVAN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Brian Critser got help from Share Our Selves, a nationally recognized health center helping the homeless in Orange County. Its headquarters is in Costa Mesa.

was withdrawn.

One man who got up and made an early exit at an August meeting that included Heyhoe on a panel of speakers announced out loud as he left, "This is stupid, I'm going home. I'm getting tired of listening to their (expletive)."

Pathways of Hope plans to resubmit their proposal next year, perhaps for a different location in Fullerton or with altered plans.

But the sessions are mostly successful. Heyhoe says she tries to counter what she called "myths and ill-informed rhetoric" about the homeless population by sharing data, such as a 2017 UC Irvine study on the human and financial costs of homelessness in Orange County. The study was co-sponsored by Orange County United Way.

"We talk about whether or not people choose to be homeless, whether or not people want help," she said. "We know those are the questions people have."

## Changing hearts

Brian Critser is one of the faces of homelessness in Orange County featured in the United Way videos.

"(People) need to understand, it can happen like that," Critser said, snapping his fingers as he told his story on a recent visit to Share Our Selves in Costa Mesa, which provides medical and dental care, social services, a food pantry, and

helped him apply for Social Security Insurance, \$997 a month.

"I got a chance to live again," Critser said.

Now he hopes to find a place to rent. He is someone who would qualify for supportive housing.

"Do you want to know how to end homelessness right away? You put people in houses. We're not vermin."

The problem: not enough available units.

## Get people housed

State legislation passed this year will establish the Orange County Housing Finance Trust, a joint powers authority that will allow the county and participating cities to compete as one for state and federal funds to finance housing for homeless and low-income residents.

One goal is to build 2,700 units of permanent supportive housing.

Orange County United Way backed the legislation, but creating that many units will take several years.

In the meantime, United Way and the county are looking at encouraging landlords and apartment complex owners to open units to clients with housing subsidies.

Just in the past week, the county Board of Supervisors approved \$250,000 in general funds to partner with United Way on its nascent Landlord Incentive Program. United Way has privately raised \$600,000.

The money can be used to help cover such expenditures as move-in costs, security deposits, or fees to hold units off the market during the lag time when federal Section 8 inspections are conducted before a subsidized renter can move in.

The county hopes for a minimum of 40 housing placements over the next year for homeless people with vouchers from the Orange County Housing Authority or Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing.

Right now, 104 people have vouchers issued through the housing authority but can't find a place to rent.

"When we have people evaluated, they get on a prioritization list," explained Susan Price, the county's director of care coordination. "They get assigned to a voucher or a subsidy but they don't have a unit. It's taking a long time for people to find units."

United Way on its own has raised \$600,000 for the pilot program.

A member of the leadership council, Ernie Schroeder of Schroeder Management Co., operates 55 apartment communities in Orange County with his brother.

He stepped up to offer 10 units for the pilot program; people are expected to begin moving in within the next week or two.

Schroeder said his company over the past 30 years has had no problems with renting to people who have Section 8 vouchers.

They are actually more stable tenants because they don't fall behind in rent and they stay put for long periods, he said.

Thousands of empty units are potentially available, said Schroeder, who is reaching out to others to take part in the Landlord Incentive Program. It's a matter of convincing members of groups like the Apartment Association of Orange County to change their thinking.

"We really don't have problems with our homeless people. They are really good people trying to get a new start."

## Where to learn more

Orange County United Way is holding Homelessness 101 sessions this week at three churches. Anyone can attend, but preregistration is required. Seating is limited; food will be served:

- Tuesday: Mount of Olives Church in Mission Viejo, 5:30 to 8 p.m. Go to [h101nov13.eventbrite.com](http://h101nov13.eventbrite.com).
- Wednesday: St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Tustin, 5:30 to 8 p.m. Go to [h101nov14.eventbrite.com](http://h101nov14.eventbrite.com).
- Thursday: EvFree in Fullerton, 5:30 — 8 p.m. Go to [h101nov15.eventbrite.com](http://h101nov15.eventbrite.com).

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