

FW: Item 8.2

City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Tue 11/28/2023 1:01 PM

To:Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

From: iq4rent sc [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 12:55 PM

To: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Subject: Item 8.2

[External Email]

I ask that you award no funds to HomeFirst in light of the repeated and deliberate racist actions undertaken by HomeFirst management against *staff and clients* until the close of an independent investigation. These funds could be better spent being given to another provider in the interim.

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FW: NAACP, NIKKEI RESISTERS, WAGE THEFT COALITION AND DE-BUG DEMAND INVESTIGATION AFTER POLICE ATTACK BLACK WOMAN IN SHELTER

City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Tue 11/28/2023 7:37 AM

To: Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

From: Kathryn Hedges [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 4:40 AM

To: District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; Kamei, Rosemary <Rosemary.Kamei@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>; Housing - CSJ <housing.csj@sanjoseca.gov>

Subject: Fwd: NAACP, NIKKEI RESISTERS, WAGE THEFT COALITION AND DE-BUG DEMAND INVESTIGATION AFTER POLICE ATTACK BLACK WOMAN IN SHELTER

[External Email]

Dear Mayor Mahan, Vice-Mayor Kamei, and Councilmember Torres:

I join their demand for an outside investigation of Home First.

I am a Downtown resident, a registered voter, and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice. We support SV De-Bug as one of our accountability partners.

Home First has been allowed to dominate local homeless services contracting despite their poor track record. We know that Black people are overrepresented in the unhoused community, as you can see if you walk downtown near City Hall and St. James Park. Home First must not be allowed to inflict racist abuse when our Black community members seek shelter and services if these types of incidents are allowed to continue.

The City of San José is complicit if they fail to act.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Hedges
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: iq4rent sc [REDACTED]

Date: Tue, Nov 28, 2023, 1:17 AM

Subject: NAACP, NIKKEI RESISTERS, WAGE THEFT COALITION AND DE-BUG DEMAND INVESTIGATION AFTER POLICE ATTACK BLACK WOMAN IN SHELTER

To: iq4rent sc [REDACTED]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Rev. Jethroe Moore II

NAACP, NIKKEI RESISTERS, WAGE THEFT COALITION AND DE-BUG DEMAND INVESTIGATION AFTER POLICE ATTACK BLACK WOMAN IN SHELTER

HOMEFIRST SUPERVISOR WITH REPEATED RACIST INCIDENTS PROMPTS OVERRESPONSE OF SUNNYVALE DPS TO MENTALLY ILL BLACK WOMAN

NAACP San Jose/Silicon Valley, Silicon Valley De-Bug, Nikkei Resisters and Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition are demanding an outside investigation of an incident that occurred on the women's side of the Sunnyvale Shelter Wednesday, November 15th. A Black female client who was already set to leave the shelter at 9am, was seemingly awakened for no reason other than to harass her, by a supervisor who has had a series of racist incidents and the situation escalated from there, ending in her being arrested and requiring medical treatment.

"Silicon Valley De-Bug will be assisting the victim in filing a public records act request to secure a copy of the officer body cam footage" said Raj Jayadev of De-Bug. The Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition is filing a request to preserve all video footage that HomeFirst has of the incident.

We, NAACP, Nikkei Resisters and De-Bug ask that the Supervisor, Priscilla Loreda, be immediately placed on leave until the termination of the independent investigation. We also demand that she have no access to the video feeds while she's on suspension. "The three Black men HomeFirst recently fired were all placed on leave pending investigation, we believe it is only fair this supervisor be treated the same," said Rev. Jethroe Moore II of the San Jose/Silicon Valley NAACP.

The victim in this incident is a middle-aged mentally ill Black woman who had recently gotten herself off the streets by calling the Here4You hotline so she could witness the birth of her grandchild. She was being exited from the shelter for allegedly kicking another female client and hadn't even been able to appeal the possible racist nature of the charge when this incident occurred. After escalating the situation, the supervisor called 911, and based on the supervisor's call more than a dozen Sunnyvale DPS arrived at the shelter and eventually tackled the woman to the ground, head first.

"The Sunnyvale Shelter is meant to be a "low barrier" shelter, a shelter that people with addiction and mental health issues can easily access, to reduce the greater harm of leaving them outside," said Shaunn Cartwright of Unhoused Response Group who is assisting in the investigation. "Multiple staff have reported that this supervisor has said they don't like Black men, they fear Black men, and it begs the question why this person is employed by HomeFirst," Cartwright continued.

We, also ask that another supervisor be placed on leave for similar racist behavior. This supervisor, Anna Rosas, who is also new to Sunnyvale, refused to give a client, a Black Trans Senior Female Veteran hot water to make coffee with, simply to assert their authority. When the client pressed the issue, an argument ensued and because the client swore, the supervisor misused their authority, exiting the client and banning them from all HomeFirst sites. Again, isn't the Sunnyvale Shelter meant to be a low barrier shelter?

"We believe this woman is banned from all HomeFirst shelters for six months and we ask that that ban be lifted immediately. It was never proven that this woman did anything to be exited, she wasn't given the opportunity to file an appeal or grievance and police never would have been called had the supervisor not escalated the situation out of control" Moore said.

These supervisors, these acts of racism, don't happen in a vacuum, they happen in an environment where they are allowed to flourish, where 12 of the 17 members of the DEI council are management and that council only meets 10 hours a year. While HomeFirst likes to speak about DEI, they have not shown a concerted effort to diversity, equality and inclusion for all staff.

"It's my understanding Sunnyvale PD responded to yet another call from Priscilla on Monday. I have participated in numerous meetings regarding the Sunnyvale shelter and the amount of monthly emergency calls to the shelter, most months are about 4 calls, usually for medical reasons. Priscilla has generated half the monthly average number of calls singlehandedly. This is literally a red flashing light," said Cartwright.

We urge the Sunnyvale and San Jose city councils as well as the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to take this investigation seriously and respect the clients and veteran staff of Sunnyvale who have been repeatedly traumatized by

these incidents. We urge you not to consider HomeFirst for any additional contracts until the close of this independent investigation.

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FW: City Council Item 8.2, 11/28/23

City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Tue 11/28/2023 12:45 PM

To: Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>

From: Debra Townley [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 12:43 PM

To: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>

Subject: City Council Item 8.2, 11/28/23

[External Email]

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Dear Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor and Respected Council Members,

I am submitting a letter I sent previously about my lived experience with Home First. I feel it is in the best interest of our most vulnerable that NO MORE FUNDING be distributed to Home First for the charge of caring for people in need.

Please allow other non-profits to come in and repair and rebuild what Home First continues to destroy, which is the morale and hope and self dignity, and reputation of not only the vulnerable people they serve, but also their employees.

Their actions are hurting people time and time again. And for our local government to stand by while continuing to fund this heartless operation is unethical.

"My name is Debra Townley.

I am frightened at the prospect of HomeFirst being propelled forward with funding to continue to mistreat the people that they are meant to serve.

I am writing to you as a person with Lived Experience. In order for you to better understand my perspective, I have to out myself as a formerly homeless person, a disabled person, and a person experiencing poverty. These are things I would so very much like to keep silent.

But I can't because people are suffering.

I am a mom and degreed teacher who was married to a hardware engineer. Our family moved to the Bay Area in my 20's. Over the years, I was a stay-at-home mom, a licensed preschool owner, a Court Appointed Special Advocate, a foster parent, a good citizen, neighbor and friend. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Education, and an Associate of Fine Arts.

I have enjoyed access to some of the best mental healthcare practitioners, cutting-edge medical care providers, and holistic practitioners in the Bay area.

Several life-changing events that affected my mental and physical health, within a short period of time, while living in a district with few resources, contributed to my homelessness. The long story short includes divorce, a car accident, and experiencing disability while caring for a disabled adult child.

I fully expected my savings to get us through recovering from these life events until I could work again. Unfortunately, as my health deteriorated and my savings dwindled, my son and I moved from home ownership to rentals, to an RV and finally we had to live in our SUV.

While homeless, I visited the largest shelter in the county for help. Little Orchard, a HomeFirst shelter. The name resounded with hope and growth and abundance.

But there, on that cold and misty day, I found a courtyard full of people with disabilities suffering in the elements just outside the mostly empty facility. Staff were inside. The guests were not allowed to go inside until lunch and then they had to go back outside again. The smell of urine and feces and garbage permeated the air. My shoes became muddy with filth just walking from the parking lot to the door of the facility. Inside the courtyard, people slumped on the ground. There was a man there who was crying, who had tardive dyskinesia. He spoke like a professor with a dignified vocabulary, but he stuttered and stammered as his body contorted and jerked with spasms. He told me that he was in terrible pain, exhausted from the spasms and suicidal. That he needed care but that the staff had written him off as an addict in the throes of withdrawal

and couldn't be bothered with him. They told him he could not be seen by the homeless healthcare doctors there. He had soiled himself and was in great need.

I waited with many others in a long line that starts forming for medical care before the sun comes up. I arrived exhausted and sick. I was incredibly anxious, i joined the line for medical care outside the facility. We sat on the cold wet concrete that was painful for me due to degenerative disc disease and arthritis. Some of us were told after hours of waiting in the elements, that the appointment schedule is now FULL. I had to return the next day to try again. When i did finally get in to be seen there, the staff questioned the validity of my homelessness, had a police officer intimidate my son while questioning the validity of my son's service dog, interrogated me about my full life's history from "birth to now," yelled at me to not rest on the edge of a concrete wall, refused to contact my former providers to confirm my medical history that they refused to believe me about, misdiagnosed me with a severe mental illness, asked that i be drug tested immediately and regularly, refused my regular medications for chronic conditions, and instead trained me to use a Narcan kit. They also got in my face to wake me when I closed my eyes to rest them.

When i voiced that i was dissatisfied and wanted a referral to other resouces, they referred me "in-house" by sending me to another of their locations where staff was equally dismissing and angry with me for not being visible when they called my name.

This was the first time in my life I had ever been treated this way by people caring for our most vulnerable. It unfortunately was not the last. I found out over time that it is a trend for some providers. My guess is that staff become burnt out and desensitized to the difficulties and suffering and that they look the other way when colleagues behave badly, or they can no longer lead with dignity and blame the homeless for their ongoing predicaments. I do understand the patience and continual practice it takes to remain caring in an uncaring world. But this must change. We cannot continue to allow it.

Tragically, because our most vulnerable are often in such a powerless dynamic with providers, they put up with it for a sliver of comfort, a meal, an overhang to avoid the rain, a bed at night.

But I had a car, thank the good Lord.

I was able to decline their offer to split my son and I apart, shelter us only at night, and keep our dogs in kennels.

Please, I beg of you. Find another provider to evolve with the NEW trend of caring for our most vulnerable that includes a supportive, trauma informed, resilience and strength based approach to providing environments and staff that foster hope and growth and an abundance of successful outcomes."

Thank you for listening to people with Lived Experience who have been harmed by Home First.

Debra Townley

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