

Newsletter - Amador County Homeless - Stories & Resources

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*Do you wish to see
your story here?*

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This Newsletter informs the unhoused of resources in the Amador Country area for services offered by many agencies and advocates who wish to help you. Federal, State and local Legislation that effects the unhoused is also outlined here. The stories are written by Kathy M., who is an advocate for the unhoused and hopes to be a voice telling stories of the “Un-Housed” locals who wish to be acknowledged and again “visible” in the community, and whose stories might inspire others to know there are people in our community who want to help. Please feel free to print and distribute this Newsletter.

Resources in Amador Country

Key: *24-Hour Availability

Agency Information	Address	Telephone	Hours
<u>Alcoholics Anonymous*</u>		(800) 851-1304	
<u>Amador County Behavioral Health Department</u> , * Outpatient Mental Health Services Alcohol & Drug Services	10877 Conductor Blvd., Sutter Creek, CA 95685	(209) 223-6412 Toll Free Line (800) 310-6555	M-F 8am - 5pm.
<u>Amador Transit</u> (Bus Service)		(209) 267-5978	
<u>Amador Tuolumne Community Action Agency (ATCAA)</u> Services: Food Bank, Housing, Shelter, Warmth, Energy, Care Support, Early Childhood Services, Youth, Family, Seniors. They also provide services for Winter Clothing Drive Telephone	10590 Hwy 88, Jackson, CA 95642	(209) 223-1485	Monday – Thursday 9 am - 12pm – 1:00pm - 4:00pm
<u>Domestic Violence Help</u>		(209) 223-2897 (209) 223-2600 (24 Hour)	
<u>Homeless Shelter (ATCAA)</u>	Not available	Hotline (209) 223-5865	
<u>Motherlode Job Training</u>		(209) 223-3341	
<u>NAMI Mental Health Classes and Support Groups for Family Members and Consumers</u>		209-256-1293	
<u>Narcotics Anonymous</u>		(800)792-7776	
<u>Police Departments</u> *		Jackson (209) 223-1771 Ione (209) 274-2456 Sutter Creek (209) 267-5646	
<u>Resource Connection (child care resources)</u>		(209) 223-1624	

Agency Information	Address	Telephone	Hours
<u>Sexual Assault Services*</u>		(209) 223-2600	
<u>Sheriff's Department*</u>		(209) 223-6500	
<u>Sierra Wind & Wellness Center</u> , Peer support staff. Groups, meals, laundry services (Thursdays)	10354 Argonaut Lane, Jackson, CA 95642	(209) 223-1956	M-F 9:00 - 4:00.
<u>Social Services (Welfare)</u>		(209) 223-6550	
<u>Community Super – “Break Bread with Friends” (BBWF) sponsored by Catholic, Methodist and Episcopal churches</u>	St. Patrick's Hall, Jackson		Thursdays, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. m & Saturdays 9:00-11:00 a.m.
<u>Sutter Amador Hospital</u>		(209) 223-7500	
<u>The Interfaith Food Bank</u> Emergency food	12181 Airport Road, Jackson, CA 95642	(209) 267-9006	2 nd and 4 th Tuesday, 1:30 – 5:30 p.m. All other days 11:00 - 3:00
<u>Veterans Services</u>		(209) 223-6476	
<u>Victory Village (Vets)</u> – Transitional living and substance abuse treatment and recovery program for Veterans.	12408 Kennedy Flat Road, Jackson, CA 95642	(209) 223-2286	
<u>WellSpace-Immediate Care Community Health Center</u>		(209) 223-7685	

Legislation & Laws

Do you have suggestions how your Community can help the Homeless? Your story could change another's life. It could even change yours.

- “No Place Like Home” State Assembly Bill (AB 1618/AB 1622) through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) – Proposition 63.
Two Billion Dollars have been allocated for “No Place Like Home” to help the homeless. The legislation is to assist local communities in preventing and addressing homelessness. The bill addresses mostly the mentally ill and in some cases, alcohol & drug addiction to create housing and services for the homeless. This legislation is imperative for the County as it will open doors to other funding. Amador County presently holds Task Force Meetings on the 4th Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m., at the Behavioral Health Department, located at 10877 Conductor Blvd., Sutter Creek, CA.
- Assembly Bill (AB-932) – Shelter Law – if there is a shelter crisis (no beds available in local homeless shelter), existing law provides that certain state and local laws, regulations and ordinances are suspended during a shelter crisis, to the extent that strict compliance would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the shelter crisis. In lieu of compliance with local building approval procedures or state housing, health, habitability, planning and zoning, or safety standards, procedures and laws, may adopt by ordinance reasonable local standards and procedures for the design, site development, and operation of homeless shelters and the structures and facilities therein, to the extent that it is determined at the time of adoption that strict compliance with state and local standards or laws in existence at the time of that adoption would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the shelter crisis.
(The above is a segment of the bill and not the total language of the bill and is meant to only give pertinent information to the homeless.)

AMADOR COUNTY HOMELESS TASK FORCE MONTHLY (February 2020) MEETING UPDATE

The monthly meeting of the Amador County Task Force met and discussed the status of the County's Homeless Plan. The Homeless Plan (housing feasibility) will be presented next month. The Plan is due in June. There will be two community meetings in April & May, the location and time to be announced later. The Jackson Civic Center was suggested for one site.

Tyx Pulskamp, Homeless Advocate, asked about the repair of the showers located at the Food Bank. Supervisor Frank Axe will look into this.

Gary Redman, Amador County Undersheriff, gave an overview of the El Dorado County Hot Team which was very successful; but low barrier housing was not as successful. In Amador County, mapping or intel of the unhoused will not be started until the County has a Homeless Plan in place. This process will give a point count (how many males, females, children, etc.) are in the County.

Sgt. Arevalos, Jackson Police Department, presented photos of a cleanup effort conducted in Jackson for two homeless camps destroyed by fire. Many locals, Sgt. Arevalos of the Jackson Police Department and the Jackson Fire Department showed up to help, taking approximately 6 hours to clean up one of these sites. A dumpster was filled up. Sgt. Arevalos has other sites targeted for cleanup.

Jim Foley, Director Health & Human Services, Amador County, discussed the Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP) Funding. There are two sources of funding. The funding is there but the County must go through the proper channels and timelines to acquire it. Some of the funding is tied up in Federal funding. The funding is targeted for emergency shelter beds, seniors and young persons. All funding is geared for "low barrier" (low pre-conditions).

HOMELESS STORY OF THE MONTH

Pete's story was a pleasure to write. We met at Detert Park where in the Summer and on nice days, he and his campmates meet to eat and visit. He is very personable, and talked a great deal about his grandparents, who he adores. I hope he knows his story is inspiring not only to me but to many others.

"Pete"

Pete is a young, very young, man, who resonates self-reliance. Though only 20 years old, he seems like a much older soul. As I am discovering, the unhoused have many, many different scenarios and Pete is a completely different package from his campmates I have interviewed, though only 20 years have passed since his birth. How to organize telling his life journey should be a short campaign but it is anything but a brief account.

He was born in Washington state and was taken to Sacramento at the age of four months to live with his grandparents. His mother was battling addiction and, fortunately, his grandparents were there to help. His mother now lives in the East Bay but he has never met her. Pete keeps in contact with his father, who lives in Sacramento. For a period in his life, after he graduated from high school, he lived with his father in Sacramento in a trailer. He describes his living experience there as "not fun."

Pete has a paternal half-sister whom he met in 2013. She has two adopted children. He does keep in contact with his sister.

Pete went to elementary and intermediate schools in Sacramento until the 7th grade. His grandparents moved to San Andreas and he attended school in Jackson until his graduation from Argonaut High School in 2017. He had

aspirations in joining the military after graduation and did try to join but was denied entry due to his burns.

His grandmother was a police officer locally and is now retired. She was the first woman police officer for the area. He comments that he is acquainted with many people here in Jackson and in the general area, having grown up and graduated here.

Pete has been unhoused since his graduation in 2017, though he has had many jobs in the area, nothing has been of long duration. He is quite willing to work but presently cannot find work and being unhoused, makes it more difficult. He presently has no transportation, so getting to and from even a grocery store is challenging. He lives in a camp with another man who is well respected in the homeless community and feels safe. He has known this man for a few years and says they are good friends and feels blessed to have this relationship. He receives Medi-Cal and food stamps, thankfully or life would be much more challenging. St Vincent DePaul in Jackson offers free meals on Thursdays nights and this is also another resource he takes advantage of.

There are many resources in our community for the unhoused if they can access them and more are just around the bend with the "No Place Like Home" legislation. But, unfortunately, Pete must have a diagnosis for mental illness or he will not

qualify for this new legislation, but he agrees it is a start and a good one, opening the door to other funding for our homeless here. Pete's economic challenges are mainly why he is now unhoused.

Pete was severely burned in a propane explosion when he was 13 years old. He spent many months in Shriner's Hospital in Sacramento undergoing skin grafts. He does not hold any imagined anger or lingering depression for this period in his life and accepts that this is how he will experience life. He says it has not hampered his life to a degree that it stops him from any day-to-day activities, though his passion to join the military was blocked. He has a great attitude and his smile lights his whole face up. He seems a solemn individual but when telling his story, he would often "light up" with this huge smile that I'm sure went down to his toes. He came across as very intelligent and beyond his years. He just beams with energy. He has experienced much in his 20 years, starting at four months old.

Pete has not been married but had a girlfriend here in Jackson. He looks sad as he related she moved away and their relationship subsequently ended. He wants to get himself put together before he embarks on another relationship and, when commended for his wisdom in this, he just shrugged, accepting the logic behind his statement. Some of us would seek a relationship just to fill our time, but Pete, again, is an old soul and has wisdom beyond his years. Though only 20, my conversation with him spoke to someone who had many more years of self-knowledge. I asked him If he had a high IQ

and he said he was never tested to his knowledge. This guy is highly intelligent but very reserved. His ego does not rule when complimented.

Pete believes in a higher power and prays and meditates daily. This has become a routine for him and, that he practices this so devotionally, is exceptional. He considers himself to be "spiritual" and was not reared with any particular faith.

He aspires to go to West Virginia as he has extended family there and feels that California has become a very expensive state to live in. He would like to have somewhere to "clean up" and have all the "bathroom" accommodations now denied him. He misses being clean.

I wish the best for Pete as in our community, our homeless are often "profiled," making it very difficult to overcome homelessness. He is willing to do yardwork, any work actually. With the recent series of articles in the Ledger Dispatch, homelessness has become more visibly discussed and is being addressed in the community in many different lights, some not so good where criminal activity affects a greater percentage than those who commit crimes and some who are compassionate who seek ways to help those who genuinely are seeking help. My hope is if you understand their plight by reading their stories, perhaps, we all can find solutions to this tragedy. Pete wants "out of it [homelessness]." He says he "is bored" with his mundane daily activities and feels he can contribute ever so much more if given the opportunity. What 20-year-old would not?

Written by: Kathy M