



## Fenced Addiction with Keys to a Peaceful Sunset

January 6, when the capitol was being stormed, has a different meaning to me than the rest of the country. I felt serenity since I signed my lease for a one bedroom apartment with my housing voucher on this date in 2023 a block from the beach with a third story view of the ocean. After living years on the side of the freeway between a chain-link fence and a brick wall that was very narrow under shreds of tarps and vines. I no longer had to commute down the block to the emergency room as frequently as I had done for the infections that I would get requiring antibiotics for MRSA (flesh-eating disease or staff infection) or strep throat. My life had become a lot different after getting clean. I had to get locked up on my birthday, spend multiple times in jail, get balanced with some mental health, reside in a few recovery treatment programs and go back into a shelter to get a housing voucher. Life's not easy now, but I'm not in survival mode. Thank God I have His creation to remind me every day what a gift life is.

By: ICUivyclarkunlimited



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This Photovoice project was supported by San Mateo County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services' Office of Diversity and Equity. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63).



## INQUIRING THE INTRUSIVE

As I navigate my journey, substance use and mental illness clouded my beliefs. I didn't want success; I couldn't see tomorrow. Now, I face the loss of my housing, each day I grapple with the uncertainty of what lies ahead.

Yet, I am not alone. I am driven by the unwavering companionship of my cat, Clover. She is my reason to get up every morning, a constant source of love and motivation.

The road ahead is uncertain, but our goal is to find stable housing before homelessness becomes reality.

A stray cat visits me every day, the quiet presence offers moments of comfort and resilience. Their presence reminds me that even in the darkest times, connection and hope remain. My love for Clover, and determination fuel my perseverance to keep searching for a safe place we can call home

By: Jo Padilla (She/her/ella), 38



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# SOMOS RESILENCIA NACER DE NUEVO

Soy madre soltera de dos hijas y un hijo soy de Honduras

Se lo que es vivir con muchos desafíos como:

El dejar a un hijo lejos de ti duele y no verle hace 22 años,  
El idioma, trabajo, falta de vivienda por rentas muy caras y más desafíos como lo que es la salud mental :  
Depresión, Estrés, comportamientos desafiantes. NO ES FACIL.

Busqué ayuda para mi y mi familia, empezamos a recibir servicios y no creí que funcionarían.

Gracias al ser resilientes y no darnos por vencidos y el haber aceptado ayuda con medicamentos temporales, que fueron clave para la recuperación, psiquiatra, terapias del comportamiento, participar en grupos de apoyo, clases de BHRS Embajadores de Salud Mental,

Hoy hemos vuelto a nacer juntos, esos días dolorosos quedaron atrás y hoy poder decir como madre valió la pena

Ahora practicando las herramientas día a día porque todo es temporal y continuar aprendiendo juntos .

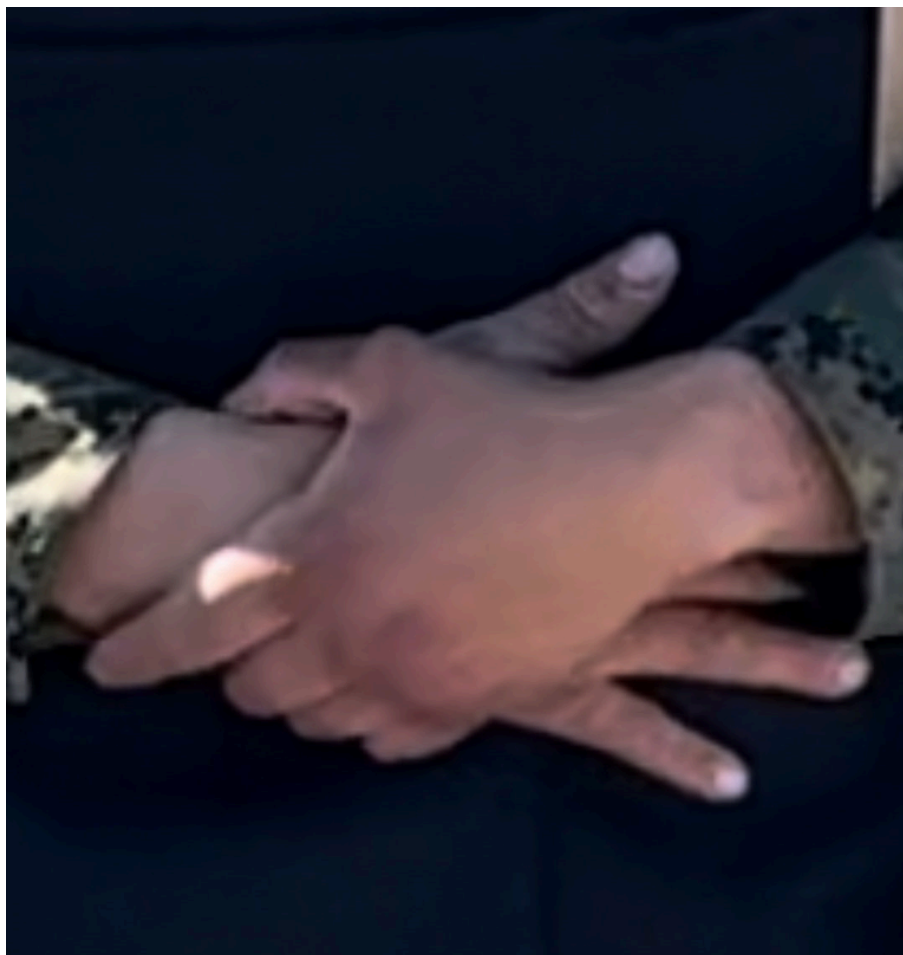
By: C.C. (She/Her/Ella), 50



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## WE ARE RESILIENCE BORN AGAIN

I am a single mother of two daughters and a son, I am from Honduras.

I know what it is like to live with many challenges such as:  
leaving a child far from you hurts and not seeing him for 22 years,  
language, work, lack of housing due to very expensive rents and more challenges such as mental health:  
depression, stress, challenging behaviors. IT'S NOT EASY.

I sought help for myself and my family, we started receiving services and I didn't believe they would work.

Thanks to being resilient and not giving up and having accepted help with temporary medications, which were key to my recovery, seeing a psychiatrist, behavioral therapies, participating in support groups, and BHRS' Health Ambassador Program.

Today we have been reborn together, those painful days are behind us and today being able to say that as a mother it was worth it.

Now I am practicing the tools day by day because everything is temporary and we continue to learn together.

By: C.C. (She/Her/Her), 50



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# I wish I could live here

Hello, my name is Francisco, I took this photo in St George Utah. I selected this photo because to me it represents what Section 8 Housing could be. This photo shows apartments. A person who does not have a home only needs a small place to sleep, and feel safe from all the obstacles of nature. For example, staying safe from the cold and the heat, people only need a small room with a stove, a microwave, a small bed and a bathroom. Downstairs under the apartments, they could have a gym, a place for childcare and a small service clinic for the community, for those who have general mental health conditions. Having these amenities can you hope, joy, and the desire to move forward. I wish I could live in a place like this. All of these things like having a warm house, bathroom, bed to sleep in are all things that help us as people function everyday. A lot of us don't have any parts of a house. All of us need these services everyday to live peacefully. I think they need a single parents shelter, single parents struggle more in life to find housing because they need shelter to support their families. Housing should not only provide places to live but also provide family services, Behavioral Health and Recovery services, food, childcare, more amenities for every single family in the County of San Mateo.

By: Francisco Moreno (he/him), 57



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# Yo quisiera vivir aquí

Hola mi nombre es Francisco esta foto la tome en St George Utah. Yo seleccione esta foto porque para mi representa que pudiera ser Section 8 Housing. Arriba de la foto son apartamentos. Una persona que no tiene casa solo necesita un lugar pequeño para dormir, y sentirse seguro de todos lo obstáculos de la naturaleza por ejemplo el frio, y el calor solo necesita un cuartito chiquito con una estufa, un microwave, una camita chiquita y un bano pequeño y abajo tendrian un gimnasio, y un lugar para cuidar ninos y una clinica chiquita de servicios para la comunidad, que tenga problemas mentales un general. Esto les puede traerle esperanza, alegria y ganas de seguir adelante. Ojalá pudiera vivir en un lugar como este. Todas estas cosas, como tener una casa cálida, un baño y una cama para dormir, son cosas que nos ayudan como personas a funcionar todos los días. Muchos de nosotros no tenemos ninguna parte de una casa. Todos necesitamos estos servicios todos los días para vivir en paz. Creo que necesitan un refugio para padres solteros, los padres solteros luchan más en la vida para encontrar vivienda porque necesitan un refugio para mantener a las familias. La vivienda no solo debe brindar lugares para vivir, sino también brindar servicios familiares, servicios de recuperación y salud conductual, alimentos, cuidado infantil y más comodidades para cada familia en el condado de San Mateo.

By: Francisco Moreno (él), 57



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## FAITH over FEAR

My current living situation, between my car and the hotel, isn't ideal nor the best...but it's what I could afford and have thought of since becoming "homeless" in July 2024. Whenever I get paid from my two part time jobs, I make sure that I have a budget for at least two to three days of stay at the Travelodge Hotel, so that I could have better sleep and bathe properly. Being at the hotel also gives me privacy, safety, comfort and sometimes...the pretense of being on vacation, especially since they have a pool. After my days of stay at Travelodge, my Chevy Malibu car serves as my "Home", and I usually park late at night next to the RV's in Pacifica or in San Francisco, depending on where I end up nearby after Doordashing. Parking next to these RV's helps me "blend in" and have the sense of "belonging", knowing that they're all in the same situation as I am.

For almost 50 years of my life, 15 years in the Philippines and 35 years here in the United States...a "Permanent and Stable Home" is something that I really "Never" had. As I approach my "Over the Hill" Birthday this year and experiencing "Homelessness" the second time around (the first time was back in November 2018 through January 2020)...I'm a bit worried and scared since I'm all alone now. But since I'm a Woman of Strong "Faith and Love" in Life...I have to Believe that I'm going to make it and that I'll be alright.

By: 🙏🏻🧘🏻❤️ MC2



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