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HOMeward

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Giving Homeless Youth Credit

Unique Barriers Facing Gen Z

*By Cynthia Griffith
Courtesy of Invisible People*

They've been called every name in the book, from pretentious to entitled, lazy to distracted. They've been simultaneously accused of frivolous spending and promoting a lazy work ethic, of being too aloof to care while being too obsessed with filters to be aloof at all. Suffice it to say there has been a great deal of criticism directed at the coming generation that is wildly unjust.

Studies show that from a statistical standpoint, the demographic cohort known as the Zennials actually works more while earning less and bolstering lower spending power when compared to older

American generations. They also tend to be more generous, eco-conscious, and intelligent about their spending habits.

Sure, they may be surrounded by wealth and opulence, but much of this is unattainable or intangible, like the virtual landscape they've inherited.

Their response to the criticism is best illustrated through a meme that features a spinning space station hotel orbiting space in a surreal manner, like something straight out of a sci-fi film. The caption below sums everything up. "We literally just want healthcare," remarks Ben Yahr on the platform previously known as Twitter.

Wealth Inequality is Burning Out Our Future Workforce and Making Them More Susceptible to Homelessness

Wealth inequality is a common denominator in many of the leading causes of homelessness. The gap that exists between the rich and the poor – the one that is ever-widening – is what creates rising disparities and social discontent.

To quote Brookings, "These trends in inequality have been associated with an erosion of the middle class and a decline in intergenerational mobility, especially in advanced economies experiencing larger increases in inequality and a greater polarization in income distribution."

According to NPR, it is this inequality, in tandem with things like stagnant wages, high rates of inflation, astronomical rental rates, and flat-out exhaustion, that is robbing the youth of a promising future. The stage, for many, is set to fail. Our city leaders have spent more time vilifying than rectifying, which shows in the current climate and legislation.

A recent survey put together by the University of Chicago shows that millions of Gen Zers are falling into homelessness. From the tender 11-year-olds to the tech-savvy 25-year-olds, it would seem that nobody is safe in the current chaotic housing market. One in 30 adolescents and one in ten youths endure homelessness each year, which translates to more than four million folks in total.



"What we try to really do is not have that 25-year-old space be like this cliff that you fall off of... Like, you get all of these wonderful supportive services as a youth, and then you age out, and then what do you get?" Danielle Werder of the Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness speaks on the hardships of youth homelessness

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Paula Lomazzi Retiring From Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

By Isidore Mika Zekli Manes Dragan of SHOC, POLQA

Paula Lomazzi has been a part of SHOC since 1997, giving her time, effort, and self to a cause she believes in for 26 years. But now, she has decided to leave SHOC and enter into her retirement. SHOC began in 1987 to serve the homeless community in a number of different ways, including beginning this publication and the vendor program associated with it. Paula was homeless herself when she got involved with this publication, and was one of the many homeless people activated by the act of creating this journal, which heads ever closer into its third decade of publication. Paula gives more details in an interview conducted with her regarding her retirement and her history in SHOC and with this journal.

“In 1997 I became involved in Homeward Street Journal, which was attached to the SHOC organization. At that time I was living outside, and it eventually led to us doing activism. The police kept hassling everybody who were camping outside, and we wanted to fight those injustices. This helped greatly to reinvigorate SHOC. SHOC was started in 1987 to address a newly formed city camping ban. SHOC ended up helping to overturn that, but afterwards it went kind of dormant, it hardly had a staff or faculty, but creating homeward street journal brought in a lot of new people to the organization. “

Trying to fill Paula’s absence in the organization has required multiple people to step forward to learn how to fill the shoes she’s leaving behind. In the past few years, a lot of fresh, young activists have come forward to do work with SHOC, as well as learn how to run the vendor program and take over the responsibilities of creating new issues of Homeward Journal.

“Before Homeward, I was always involved in community activism and sustainability. I found that I believe that when you learn something, you should share it. So Homeward Journal was a medium for sharing what I learned. Once a lot of homeless people got activated to become a part of SHOC, I became like a lot of homeless peoples personal assistants, helping them function as organization. I would go around with clipboards and asking them to sign what they needed to sign, or go along collect a consensus among the community.”

During the interview, I asked Paula to reflect on some of the various moments in her career of activism. Aside from the River Cleanup Project, which she enjoyed due to its impact on the environment. “I was also proud to be a part of certain campaigns, such as the Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign, the Right to Sleep Walk, my work with the Health Care for the Homeless, helping to start Safe Ground, Farm to Every Fork annual events, and more recently the Community Summit on Homelessness.” says Paula.

Around the office and during her final meetings shared with the organization, Her energy towards this work and during it cannot be replaced, and our gratitude for the massive foundation she has set for activists to walk upon and take action within, and grow what she helped set forth, cannot be understated.

When asked to give the final thoughts she’ll be offering to SHOC Journal, Paula Lomazzi had this to say.

“In the near future, activism needs to step up, because the attacks against homelessness, people experiencing poverty, and marginalized groups has been increasing. They’ve been stepping up, so I think our community needs to step up to protect those most vulnerable. I guess its a bad time for me to leave, but there are now opportunities for younger folks who are now stepping up to become leaders in this area.”

Thank You For All Your Hard Work



Paula Lomazzi

*Serving SHOC from 1997 to 2023
Enjoy your Retirement!*

*Paula Lomazzi, Now Retired Executive Director of
Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee*

Giving Homeless Youth Credit Conclusion

Obstacles Facing Our Nation's Youth

From sofa surfing to shelter systems to living out of vehicles, this generation faces unparalleled obstacles that lead to homelessness, many of which have never been seen. For example, the very prospect of needing to build credit before being able to move out of your parent's house is relatively new.

While the vast majority of people under age 35 are now renters, according to Pew Research, trying to rent an apartment with low credit or no credit pigeonholes young people into either poorer neighborhoods or hidden homelessness (which happens when you live doubled up with a friend or family member).

Other factors fueling the youth homeless crisis include:

- Death of a parent, guardian, or caregiver
- Hailing from a single-parent household
- Growing up in deep poverty
- Lack of access to transportation
- High rates of inflation and interest on college loans
- Unable to get a job in the field they hold a degree in
- Housing instability beginning in adolescence
- Interaction with the juvenile justice system, the foster care system, or both

Give Homeless Youth More Credit: Talk to Your Legislators

The modern landscape of homelessness is all-encompassing in terms of geographical location. There is no place a Gen Zer can go to escape the housing crisis that is fueling the homeless crisis each day.

Studies show that rural youth, urbanites, and people hailing from the suburbs all face similar heightened risks for homelessness. However, racial and socioeconomic status do put specific demographics of young people in more vulnerable positions.

Researchers from the University of Chicago recommend a tailored approach to outreach that keeps this broad range of obstacles in mind. Please talk to your legislators about building a better future for these socially conscious up-and-comers who have asked us for so little and received even less.

When there's no Home for 'Home for the Holidays'

By Isidore Mika Zekli Manes Dragan of SHOC

Its harder and harder to feel the sense of family and community that Thanksgiving and the Winter Holidays are supposedly meant to bring. The American Tradition of these federal holidays have more and more transparently shown that the so called tradition has always been that which divides the haves and have nots for the purpose of driving the true vessel of the American dream, commerce. So as our unhoused communities are facing continually harsher conditions, what are some ways our city are doing to provide warmth, comfort, and relief to those without a home to return to as we head into the penultimate month of 2023?

When our own systems and even our own families are no longer there for us to rely upon, the community becomes our family. One such community, known to those she serves only as "Bread Lady", has operating "TAG Community Table". An offshoot of "The Awkward Gardener", Bread Lady's gardening effort, when she realized that gardening can often provide a surplus of unneeded additional food. Every Thanksgiving she has provided home cooked meals for those needing a home cooked meal, which is what TAG Community Table originally started by doing regularly with her gardening surplus.

Bread Lady still plans to continue to outdo her Thanksgiving efforts every year, but during COVID lockdown in 2020, she began contributing her food to organizations that can use it to provide their own homecooked meals or otherwise distribute the raw ingredients to those who are truly in need of them. Originally, she only served homeless people, but expanded her outreach to anyone experiencing food insecurity, and began distributing her raw ingredients to nearby "Freedges", or community fridges and pantries, allowing anyone who comes by to pick up whatever the fridge has to offer in order to feed themselves. Reach out to Tag Community Table on their Instagram: [tagcommunitytable](https://www.instagram.com/tagcommunitytable).

Another local effort is being offered by NorCal resist, who this year is planning to provide mutual aide packets for the rough winter seasons out to those who need them on a to be specified weekend in December.

The program began in 2020 to provide relief to families that lost their income due to the shutdown. They were able to provide relief for 215 families of all shapes and sizes, intergenerational, and background. The last few years since, they have taken intake by calling families one by one to get information regarding size, interest, personal details, etc. But this year, they're trying something different. The packets will include items purchased by sponsors from a list of essential items, depending on the category they chose. Families can then choose what packets they want to receive. Look forward to a set date on NorCal Resists social media pages, on Facebook and Instagram ([norcal_resist](https://www.facebook.com/norcal_resist)). You can become a sponsor by visiting tinyurl.com/ncrgiftsignup

NorCal Resist has regularly done supply distros for the community of Sacramento for a number of years, that are advertised in advance on their social media accounts. Another group that has been providing food and medical supplies to the homeless community is Punks With Lunch. Coming to city hall every Tuesday at 5pm with meals, snacks, feminine supplies, harm reduction supplies, and more, people have relied on being able to come up to them, or have the Punks come to them, in order to get what they need for survival. The Punks will talk and get to know the local community and source specific requested items from wherever they are able.

Sacramento Free Fridges:

4641 Marconi Ave, Sacramento, 95821
Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer

2961 La Solidar Way, Sacramento 95817

Free Pantries (No Fridge):

9 Questa Ct, Sacramento, 95833

5930 19th Ave, Sacramento, 95820

4244 Cabrillo Way, Sacramento, 95820

1617 25th St, Sacramento, 95816

425 Lampasas Ave, Sacramento, 95815

3210 California Ave, Carmichael, 95608

2417 Aramon Dr, Rancho Cordova, 95670

Free Farm Stands/Pantries:

5498 Carlson Dr, Sacramento, 95819

3200 16th Ave, Sacramento, 95820 (Alley)

2021 Bell St, Sacramento, 95825

What if they got it all wrong...

By Crystal Sanchez, President of the Sacramento Homeless Union

The point in time analysis reported nearly 50% of those experiencing homelessness are considered 'chronic' 60% reported being unhoused for more than 3 years. 58% of unsheltered report disabling conditions vs. 40% in 2019. 74% of the unsheltered population reports being homeless continually for more than a year. Black individuals are 3-4 times more likely to experience homelessness. There was a substantial rise in vehicles counted – in 2019, 200 vehicles were counted; in 2022, 1,100 vehicles were counted equating to 1,782 people. The report also notes the new trend of "vehicle encampments". In addition to the Point in Time count, the report also provides an annualized count of people that experienced homelessness at some point in the last year – up to 22,000.

22,000 people on the streets--let that sink in, most of us do not have to as everyday we see this reality line our streets; while to some this is the reality they live and die in.

Homelessness has become a huge political platform in which billions of dollars are funded into, but to what progress. For the City of Sacramento and other jurisdictions it has become a boxing match with many entities in which they are losing control of quickly. Trial and error works in experiments but not in the science of solving a humanitarian crisis where the basic dignity, life and death of a community are on the line. New teams of people to shuffle people from block to block are being created but why? It doesn't matter who wears the uniform to do

the task. As long as we criminalize survival with no true solutions we will continue to increase homelessness. The constant outcries for help coming from all sides, people demanding more be done, people wanting to believe in something, 100 beds every district, sprung shelters, Shelter and enforcement act, safe grounds, bed spaces, campus model, housing, not in my back yard but not over there either. What if the director of these directions is wrong.

My hopes are we as Sacramento residents want to see people off the streets in dignified housing options with wrap around services. We all bleed, we all breathe, we are all human no matter what our housing status is.

Cities do not have the capacity or the responsibility of social services. While Sacramento has created a partnership the results are still out of touch, in the left field because again we are enforcing ordinances with no services to go to. Getting on extensive waiting lists in a crisis is like putting a bandaid on a bleedout situation. We need a tourniquet and STAT.

So the title is What if we are wrong.....Why is homelessness falling under criminalization where penal codes and law enforcement teams are being created to corral, harm and discriminate through policy against a specific group of people pushing them into poorer neighborhoods.... Is this the new type of redlining? Skid rows? Lining up internment?

Homelessness in its entirety needs to be moved to the County and in our view under the Public

Health Department with the assistance of other county entities such as behavioral health, Department of Human assistance, Department Of Health Services ect. The Cities should be positioned to support but not lead especially with the mass of homelessness being in the city. The County of Sacramento is equipped with the Social service sector and the budget to do so. The City is a Charter and is juggling homelessness on a shoestring budget. Homelessness is a public health crisis not only for the unhoused whose lifespan is shortened by living in the elements but the deteriorating ecosystem of Sacramento. The key areas of specialization in the field of public Health include environmental health, community health, epidemiology, global health, and health policy and management. The public health department also has another set of rules that apply. They work off the health and welfare codes which could produce a health approach versus a criminalization approach with the laws already in place to provide for and protect our most vulnerable. What if we deemed this as a public health crisis? Let's define what a Public health Crisis is.

A public health crisis is a difficult situation or complex health system that affects humans in one or more geographic areas (mainly occurring in natural hazards), from a particular locality to encompass the entire planet. Why are we not moving homelessness under this critical resource and funding it to end this crisis? I am putting out these questions to get us; sacramento residents to think: are we doing this wrong? Can we create a place we can all thrive healthy together!?

Climate Chaos = More Homeless Migrants

By Muriel Strand

Climate chaos means that many of the immigrants arriving in the US seeking asylum are unable to survive where their families had been living for centuries. They are homeless. And many of the homeless Sacramentans trying their best to survive are unable to apply for asylum because they were already living here when the 'rising tide' of vulture capitalism sank their leaky boat.

It's an uncomfortable fact that our government of by and for the people is unable to fit even homeless citizens back into the mainstream

economy, let alone migrants. On the federal level, a distant plutocratic, polarized and politicized Congress has been unable to come to terms with immigration. State politicians, such as the snarky and unChristian Texas Gov. Abbott, are acting out with performative and inhumane politics. Counties, many with threadbare budgets, have responsibilities for public health, while most homeless people gravitate to cities because that's where food and water are most accessible. Homeless people make sheltered people feel uncomfortable. Encampments look shabby, and there's a social abyss between the poor and the comfy. Most of us know that increasing economic inequality is a key cause, and is destabilizing

more and more working people. Yet it's all too easy to ignore all the hurdles confronting homeless people who want to work. Getting a job is no picnic when you have no kitchen, bathroom, clothes washer, or a place to charge your phone. We as a community have yet to find effective ways to fix the problem (which is actually many entangled factors), and that's disturbing. This inconvenient truth and market failure can be mostly ignored until it happens to you. As they say, denial is a very long river.

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Self Love (Sometimes)

by AndYes (David Loret de Mola)

Sometimes self-love looks like too much coffee.
 Too-many late night staying up
 Reliving the things that hurt you,
 So you can give them context,
 Exhaust them, find closure,
 Move on.
 Self-love looks like tears, sometimes.
 Like a notebook full of poems thrown across the room
 Because you wrote that one line you never wanted to say out loud.
 It looks like silence.
 Awkward, stuttering conversations with friends
 Because you've been locked in your head for the past month
 And talking with people is just too much.
 Sometimes self-love doesn't look like self-praise
 Self-Aggrandizement, Self-Faith, Self-Pride.
 It's sitting down across the table from someone
 A head full of words dying for oxygen -
 You breathe in to loosen the notes
 But they get caught in your esophagus.
 The point is you tried.
 Sometimes self-love is tearing yourself apart
 To find what it means
 To put yourself back together.
 Sometimes it takes a long time to put yourself back together.
 Sometimes you dig deep
 And find you need to go deeper.
 That's okay.
 Drawing up the pain isn't the point.
 The point is you love yourself enough to keep going,
 And know that sometimes you need to rest.
 Not every moment of your life has to be spent
 Exhausting yourself
 Digging up the pain you felt.
 Sometimes self-love looks like open books.
 Music. Dancing. Friends. Family. Meditation.
 Random, selfless acts for strangers.

Homeward Journal is working towards transitioning to a new 'Zine' format, featuring more art from the homeless community, higher quality images, and fine detail color printing, alongside the news content you already have been enjoying for decades! Look forward to us implementing changes slowly as we move toward this new format!

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*AndYes (David Loret de Mola) at the Latino
 Center of Arts and Culture*

How people experiencing homelessness become vulnerable to right wing violence

*Translated from German by Lisa Luginbuhl.
Courtesy of Strassenkreuzer / International Network of Street Papers*

As a marginalised group, people experiencing homelessness are disproportionately susceptible to violence at the hands of right-wing groups with an intolerant ideology. But how we as a society relate to homeless communities also plays a role in this, says political scientist Martin Stammer. He spoke to Nuremberg street paper Strassenkreuzer about the subject, Social Darwinism and how it turns to hatred and violence.

Interview: Alisa Müller

Strassenkreuzer: The sight of homeless people in general makes an impression. Many feel compassion, perhaps shame, or choose to ignore them. But some people also react with anger or hatred. Where does this come from?

Martin Stammer: The fact that we live in a capitalist society plays a role. To be able to achieve something oneself, to be able to earn one's own living, is the yardstick. Looking at others who cannot, or do not want to, do this can easily go hand in hand with devaluation: "That person is too lazy, lives at the expense of the state and thus also at my expense, because I pay taxes", people may say.

One could also say: I am perhaps not quite as poor as you, but we should actually work together to ensure that wealth is better distributed. Instead, people often set themselves apart from those who are even poorer. Social Darwinism occurs most often in groups that live on the poverty line themselves.

What does Social Darwinism mean?

Darwinism comes from Charles Darwin, who developed the theory of evolution - the idea that the strongest prevail in evolutionary terms. Social Darwinism is - to put it simply - the application of the theory of evolution to the social structure of human beings. This means that anyone who cannot make it on their own, who is not strong enough on their own, does not deserve to live or survive in our world in dignity.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there was prevalent thinking that "If people are going to die soon anyway, there's no need to take much care of them". Has Social Darwinist thinking gained momentum?

This is not a new trend. This attitude has been systematically measured for over 20 years, every two years. We simply know that a certain percentage of the population, roughly between five and 20 per cent, completely or latently agree with Social Darwinist statements.

Social Darwinism is thus associated with an ideological devaluation of marginalised social

groups. But how do these thoughts turn into hatred and violence?

First of all, the following always applies to politically motivated violence: Depending on how the social discourse proceeds, perpetrators feel more or less motivated to act. That means, for example: If it is normal in social discourse to devalue refugees, right-wing perpetrators get the feeling that if they use violence, they are actually doing something that the silent majority wants. They feel motivated and instructed to act accordingly.

And that is also the case with violence against homeless people?

It didn't stop after the Nazi era with state discrimination against homeless people. In the German Democratic Republic, we actually had the possibility until 1990 that homeless people could simply be locked up because they "disturbed public order". In West Germany, this was possible until 1969, in principle with the same justification. And today it is still the case, for example when walking through main railway stations, that policemen or security guards expel people. When you see this again and again, it reinforces the image that homeless people are worth less, that they shouldn't be here. And that can lead to people becoming more unrestrained, insulting themselves and saying: Get out of here.

Is that the only motivation?

It is also part of it to have the possibility to exercise violence in a group with others. What happened in East Germany in the 90s - the so-called 'baseball bat years' - was massive violence by right-wing groups against all people who didn't fit into their world view. They actually went on a hunt, arranged meetings, listened to neo-Nazi music that incited violence, drank beer, and then went out. Some murders of homeless people have also arisen from such situations. It also plays a role that homeless people are really not protected. They have no lobby or representatives, and are naturally an easy target when they sleep on a park bench somewhere at night.

If we look at violence against homeless people in general, are political motives the most important reason?

Rather not. In a 2017 evaluation by the Federal Working Group on Assistance for the Homeless, 55 per cent of homicides were committed by other homeless people. This also means that 45 per cent were committed by non-homeless perpetrators. In the case of assault, the share of perpetrators from non-homeless contexts is even higher. And "prejudice-related motives" often play a role in these violent acts. It is not possible to be more precise.

Is the motivation not asked in court?

Especially in the 90s and 2000s, it was often clear

in court that the perpetrators were clearly part of the right-wing extremist milieu. They may even have made corresponding statements, but this was rarely examined in depth and then punished. In the end, it was said that it was a quarrel about alcohol, cigarettes or money. Fortunately, a change in thinking is slowly taking place, also with other right-wing extremist motives for crimes such as racism or violence against the LGBTQ+ community. The ideological motive is more often recognised.

How did this come about?

Ultimately through pressure from civil society. Victims' associations, relatives, but also educational institutions and NGOs that record right-wing extremist acts have repeatedly said: The state authorities are blind to this. The fact that this has been repeated to the public has contributed a lot to the fact that there is now more sensitivity.

That actually gives us hope.

Definitely. I believe that it is still important to remember such cases. Even though there have been no right-wing killings of homeless people in Nuremberg in recent years, they can happen at any time. It is simply important to see that this danger is there and where it comes from. It is not simply neo-Nazis who have this world view, completely isolated from society. But how our society deals with homeless people has an influence on whether neo-Nazis feel called to kill.

Martin Stammer is a political scientist who works for the Academy Caritas-Pirckheimer-Haus, Nuremberg. He organises educational events, among other things, in the Centre of Excellence for Democracy and Human Dignity, for example on remembrance work and right-wing extremism.

Violence and devaluation in numbers

- *At least 621 homeless people were killed in Germany from 1989 to 2022 inclusive, 279 of them by non-homeless perpetrators. (Systematic press evaluation of the Federal Association for Assistance to the Homeless (BAGW))*

- *In 2022, just under 17 per cent of respondents agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement "There is valuable and non-valuable life". (Leipzig Authoritarianism Study)*

- *12 per cent of respondents fully or somewhat agreed with the statement "Most homeless people are work-shy" in 2018 and 2019. For the statement "Begging homeless people should be removed from pedestrian zones" it was 24 per cent. (Friedrich Ebert Foundation Centre Study)*

Climate Chaos = More Homeless Migrants - Conclusion

By Muriel Strand of SHOC

The huge gap between the sheltered and the unsheltered induces dehumanization, so too many sheltered people persist in blaming the victims. Still, some few have the guts and compassion to offer some assistance, but nobody can do it all. It takes a village. And in the face of climate chaos, we all need eco-villages.

Climate chaos will get worse before it gets better. That reality means more and more homeless migrants everywhere. Local conditions will vary greatly, here and there and at various times. Who will be destabilized, how and when? Rather, who won't be destabilized? What survival skills will be most useful? Few of us can survive without our current system.

Homeless people camp in cities because food and water are easier to find there, because fossil fuel energy has made possible an unprecedented separation of people from the land. Very few people in 21st century USA know how to live without fossil energy, including what's required for mining and refining, and now also used for farming, manufacturing and distribution. Meanwhile, all mining and all pavement reduce our ecological carrying capacity. Soon enough the sheltered and the unsheltered will be in the same boat.

At the same time as migration increases worldwide, we have begun to hear superficial land acknowledgements at the beginning of public events, naming the Native American tribes who lived here originally, and our thankfulness for the place of meeting. We are beginning to notice that indigenous residents had a deep and enduring relationship with the land—with ecosystems—that migrants and homeless people are denied. Deep and personal relationships with flora and fauna are crowded out by fossil fuel addiction, yet each of us has that instinct somewhat. Reclaiming the memories and skills of those hunter-gatherer relationships offers all of us paths toward a sustainable future, for those who choose to follow.

Of course, a sustainable future will not look like human prehistory; the intervening epochs and cultures will be in the past of the future. And a stable future will be one that depends directly on the giant fusion reactor in the sky which has energized the whole planet for billions of years, and on photosynthesis without which we could not exist. Homo species survived and thrived for many millennia with only solar energy and the natural world. If we are as smart as we say, we can do it again.

'Tripledemic'. What to know about flu, RSV and COVID

By Shreya Agrawal - Courtesy of Calmatters

Public health experts generally expect a milder flu season this year. Last year was especially severe as social activities returned to normal and COVID-19 social distancing rules ended. Experts say that more than two years of staying at home and taking precautionary measures protected people from influenza viruses, but also reduced their immunity once they

Don't call it a tripledemic — yet. Influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19 are circulating this fall, but not yet at the rate that worried public health agencies a year ago. As we approach the time of winter when these diseases usually peak, around December to February, experts warn that the patterns can change at any time and advise people to take precautionary measures, such as getting vaccines.

For those who are concerned about respiratory viruses, there is good news: the Food and Drug Administration approved two RSV vaccines and another shot for use in vulnerable populations. Several vaccine makers also have updated their COVID-19 boosters, which are recommended for those who are over age 5.

Public health experts generally expect a milder flu season this year. Last year was especially severe as social activities returned to normal and COVID-19 social distancing rules ended. Experts say that more than two years of staying at home and taking precautionary measures protected people from influenza viruses, but also reduced their immunity once they resumed normal social activity.

"We are seeing pretty decent matches with the flu vaccine, which is going to help and we haven't seen a big take off locally and nationally yet of the flu," said Dr. Marlene Millen, an internal medicine doctor at UC San Diego.

If you still haven't gotten the latest vaccines for flu and COVID-19, it is not too late. Here's what you should know about this cold and flu season.

What is the outlook for flu, RSV and COVID?

The big answer is that it is uncertain," said Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, infectious disease physician at UC San Francisco. Experts say the exact patterns of infection of any of these respiratory viruses cannot be predicted due to several factors, such as human interaction, travel and preventative habits. According to the California Department of Public Health, it is too soon to know how severe each of the diseases will be this season.

"As more people are heading indoors for school, fitness routines, and festive gatherings, Californians are getting exposed to respiratory viruses," said Dr. Tomás Aragón, director of the state Public Health Department in a press release. "Anyone can be affected by winter illnesses, however, some individuals, including older adults, people with weakened immune systems or chronic conditions, pregnant people and young children are at higher risk for severe illness and death."

Chin-Hong said that while infections from COVID-19 have plateaued in the past few months, there may be an uptick in infections on the horizon, especially among vulnerable populations. The state's respiratory infections reports show that RSV infections are currently rising ahead of flu and COVID-19. But the state also has more tools to battle the disease compared to last year. The new RSV shots, combined with the leftover immunity from last year, Chin-Hong said, may result in a comparatively milder RSV season from last year.

What experts are worried about is the rate of infections for all three of these respiratory diseases peaking together at the same time, which can overwhelm health care systems. That scenario is now known as a "triple-demic."

"Every year, that's a possibility. I always cross my fingers that that doesn't happen because we get very busy in the hospitals, especially in the clinics and other places," Millen said. "Every year since COVID, it has been a concern that all three will kind of peak at once. And if that happens, then our health care system gets even more strained."

Should I be worried?

Millen said even though infections could spread faster than predicted, there is no reason to panic.

"These aren't new viruses, so all of the risks are already there," she said. "The biggest thing is listening to what is going on and paying attention."

Several treatments can help reduce serious infections and death rates. Experts also say that people should continue to exercise preventative measures such as wearing masks, washing hands and staying away from crowded places as they did during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

How do I know if I have flu, COVID-19 or RSV?

All three viruses have similar symptoms in that they attack the respiratory system and cause symptoms like cold, fever, cough, stuffy or runny nose, body ache and fatigue, as well as chills. Infections from all three viruses can also be asymptomatic.

Doctors recommend isolating if you develop any respiratory systems or fever at all, to avoid putting others around you at risk, especially young children and the elderly.

"If you're sick, stay home," Millen said. "Viral loads are really high in those first few days of illness and that's when spreading illnesses happens, so just wait." What is the current guidance on vaccinations?

For influenza and COVID-19, the state Department of Public Health recommends vaccinations for all who are 6 months or older. Anyone over 6 months old should get the annual flu shot, while those 5 years and older should also get the updated COVID-19 booster this year.

For RSV, doctors recommend all those who are eligible to get vaccinated. This includes adults who are 60 or older, pregnant women, infants who are 8 months or younger and high risk children between 8-19 months old.

For those who do not have health insurance, California has several resources to get free vaccines, including federally qualified health centers, Bridge Access Program for COVID-19 vaccines, and the Vaccines for Children program.

What is happening with the new RSV vaccine?

Earlier this year, three shots were approved for RSV: two vaccines and an antibody shot.

The two vaccines are approved for use in elderly and pregnant women. The vaccine for pregnant women is recommended to be used between weeks 32 and 36 of the pregnancy and will reduce the risk of infection in newborns. The vaccine for seniors is available for all adults 60 or older as they are at higher risk from infections than younger adults.

The antibody preparation provides lab-prepared monoclonal antibodies to infants and young children at high risk from infections who may not be able to produce their own antibodies. This shot is recommended for all infants under 8 months as well as high-risk children between 8-19 months old.

Resources List

Sacramento Loaves & Fishes.

1351 North C Street - www.sacloaves.org - (916)446-0874
 On Campus Programs:
 Friendship Park – Day center for homeless adults. Mon-Fri, 7AM-2:45PM
 Welcoming Center – Donation drop-off and admin. Mon-Fri, 7AM-3PM
 Dining Room – Lunch served. Get tickets in Friendship Park. Mon-Fri. 11:30AM-1PM. Sat-Sun 11AM to 12:30PM
 Maryhouse – Women & family services. Mon-Fri, 7AM-2PM. (916)446-4961
 Mustard Seed School – For children ages 3-15. (916)-447-3626
 Men's Wash House – showers and laundry for men. Mon-Fri, 7-11AM, 11:30AM-1:30PM
 Anneke's Haven – Kennel for spayed & neutered animals. Mon-Fri, 7AM-2PM, Sat-Sun 8:30AM-1:30PM
 Guest Advocate office. Mon-Fri, 8-11AM
 Library – Reading room, computers & glasses. Mon-Fri, 7:30-11AM, 11:30AM-1:30PM
 Jail Visitation – For individuals in custody or recently released. Mon-Thurs, 8AM-12PM. (916)447-9472
 Genesis – Mental health counseling. Mon-Fri, 7:30AM-12PM, 1PM-2:45PM, (916)669-1536
 Mercy Clinic – TB tests and General medical assistance. 8-11:30AM
 Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal Clinic. Mon-Thurs, 8AM-12PM. (916)446-0368
 Miscellaneous on campus services; Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, El Hogar Mental Health, DHA, Mercer Clinic for veterinary services, Harm Reduction Services.

River City Food Bank

(916) 446-2627. Food Distribution
 Hours: Midtown, 1800 28th Street – Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30am to 1:30pm. Arden Arcade, 2300 Edison Ave - Friday-Saturday, 10:30am to 1:30pm.

Food search by zip code: www.sacramentofoodbank.org/find-food

Sacramento Safe Space for Unhomed Youth –

Tuesdays, 9am to noon, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 1430 J Street. Temporary sanctuary for ages 18-30. Breakfast, hygiene items and other supplies when available. For more information: www.engage.us.org

Pilgrimage Program –

Rotating support from congregations in Midtown Sacramento. Overnights temporarily canceled. Clothing, Meals, and mobile showers one or two days a week at:
 Bayside Midtown (19th & W) (916) 706-2337;
 First United Methodist (21st & J) (916) 446-5025;
 St. John's Lutheran (17th & L) (916) 444-0874;
 Trinity Episcopal (25th & Capitol) (916) 446-2513;
 First Church of Nazarene (28th & S) (916) 452-6171
 See @PilgrimageSac on Facebook for the calendar. or **call in advance** for place and times.

Midtown HART Respite Centers –

Tuesdays: St. John's Lutheran Church, 1701 L Street, 9:30AM-12:30PM.
 Fridays: Trinity Cathedral, 2620 Capitol Ave, 9:30AM-12:30PM

Sacramento Self Help Housing

offers housing counseling and lists, and shared and supportive housing. sacselfhelp.org - (916) 341-0593

Tommy Clinkenbeard Legal Clinic

provides free legal services to homeless people relating infractions and misdemeanors in Sacramento County. Also manages court-ordered community service sentences. (916) 446-0368

Legal Services of Northern California:

Helps with cases about Housing, public benefits, including CalWorks, CalFresh (food stamps), Medi-Cal, General Assistance (GA), Social Security, SSI, unemployment insurance benefits (UIB), and state disability insurance (SDI). lsnc.net – (916) 551-2150

Sacramento Tenants Union

– Advocacy support for tenants: sactenantsunion@gmail.com

Department of Human Assistance(welfare)

Mail – use drop boxes outside office, or submit documents online through mybenefitscalwin.org, or mail them to: P.O. Box 487, Sacramento, CA 95812
 Apply for Benefits – apply online at www.mybenefitscalwin.org

General Assistance, call (916) 874-3100
 EBT – new or replacements, call (877) 328-9677

Harm Reduction Service:

2800 Stockton Blvd. Open from 4-6PM weekdays. Call for

Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee



<https://sacshoc.org>
 (916) 442-2156

SHOC office hours Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30AM-12PM @Friendship Park. SHOC open meetings are held first Tuesdays at the Delany Center and every Tuesday via Zoom at 10am. Email for Zoom link--shoc_1@yahoo.com

outreach schedule or supplies. (916) 456-4849

City of Sacramento:

For general information or questions about Sacramento shelters, safe camping and safe parking facilities, call 211 or 1-800-500-4931 or 916-498-1000. You also can email info@211sacramento.org

City services: 311

Community Resources: 211

Sacramento Covered
 (916) 874-9670

Elica Health Centers
 (916) 454-2345

WellSpace Health
 (916) 737-5555

Sacramento County Health Center
 (916) 874-9670

Sacramento County Department of Health Services: www.saccounty.net/COVID-19

National Call Center for Homeless Veterans:
 (877) 424-3838
 Healthcare & Program Referrals

Donate online www.sacshoc.org



Welcome to Homeward:

Please help us make a difference!

Homeward Street Journal has been publishing since 1997 as a non-profit project of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee.

The paper's mission is to lessen misunderstandings between communities by educating the public about housing and poverty issues, and by giving homeless people a voice in the public forum. Homeward also provides a financial self-help opportunity for those individuals who wish to participate by being a Homeward Distributor.

The opinions expressed in Homeward are those of the authors, and not necessarily of SHOC or Homeward.

Submissions and Editorial Policy

We welcome any participation or contributions: Articles, poems and other writing can be submitted at our office in Friendship Park, or mailed to the address below.

All writing submitted for publication will be edited as necessary, with due respect for the author's intent. The editors will attempt to consult with an author if changes are necessary, however, the paper will go to print with the story as edited if the author is unavailable.

All Letters to the Editor must be signed to be published. If the writer wishes to remain anonymous s/he should so state, but the letter must still be signed.

Poetry and graphics will not be edited, either the paper will publish the submission or not.

In submitting articles to the paper, authors give their permission to print their submissions in accordance with the above stipulations, as well as possible reprinting in INSP member papers, with due byline. Any requests for stories outside the above three will be referred to the author.

Subscriptions are available with a \$20 contribution. Make checks out to SHOC (Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee).

Loaves & Fishes is not affiliated with the Homeward Street Journal in any way. Participants with the paper are not allowed to solicit for donations for L&F, nor make any reference regarding the relationship between Loaves & Fishes and this newspaper whatsoever.

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The paper may be reached at:
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The paper may also be e-mailed at HomewardStreet@gmail.com

On the web at:
<https://sacshoc.org/homeward>

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