

MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS

A County of Riverside Continuum of Care Webinar Series



Contact CoC@rivco.org for more information.

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 23

**9:00 -
10:00 AM**

[Click here to](#)

[join](#)



A Homeless Panel Discussion

The panel consists of individuals who have lived experience and will discuss solutions for homelessness county-wide. The panel's presentation comes at a very critical time and will directly support the development of the FY2021 HUD Continuum of Care Competition Application, 2022 Annual Homeless Point-in-Time Count, and finalization of the Homeless Action Plan.

Christina, a wife and mother of four children, will share on her journey from homelessness into permanent housing. Housing and supportive services received through the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission provided her with tools to fight addiction, codependence and escape domestic violence. Today she lives a life of purpose, encouraged by her faith and her family.

Monique is a twenty-three-year-old young adult, whose story is one that demonstrates resiliency and perseverance. At a very young age, her mom struggled with providing her and her siblings with a stable home. She entered foster care when she was only 7 years old and remained there until she reunited with her mom at age 15. Monique graduated from the University of California Riverside and today serves as the Homelessness Youth Coordinator at the Housing & Workforce Solutions - Continuum of Care Division.

Adan remains appreciative of all the support he has received from both the County's Housing Authority and Behavioral Health Teams in the last year. He entered homelessness for the first time in five years after losing his family and entire support system. Today he lives in an apartment that in his words is both beautiful and safe and is grateful for the group of people who continue to believe in him and support his journey into recovery.

Roberto also shares a story of great hope. He was devastated by the loss of both of his parents in such a short time, that he ended up homeless for 8 years. The Project Roomkey Program provided him with immediate interim housing, supportive services, and eventually permanent supportive housing. He would also receive assistance with applying for social security income (SSI) benefits and was ultimately approved for an award.

Angela and her husband found God and through their faith found a way out of addiction and homelessness. They used their experience to start a ministry to assist others who are struggling with homelessness and living in motels. Their goal is to work with as many people by helping them connect to permanent housing and supportive services.

Diane first became homeless after being released from jail in 2007. She is currently residing in a home for formerly incarcerated women.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS

A County of Riverside Continuum of Care Webinar Series



A HOMELESSNESS PANEL DISCUSSION

Contact CoC@rivco.org for more information.

Learn More About the Panel: *In Their Words*

Christina entered the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (CVRM) and joined the Women's New Life-Family Unification on March 26th, 2021. She entered the program with her three oldest children and while pregnant with her youngest. She had an active Child Protective Services (CPS) case for her youngest daughter and there were also concerns for her son in utero. Her husband sought assistance to relieve his family from homelessness and addiction and entered the CVRM Men's New Life Program on the same date. She arrived with at least 15 years of ongoing drug addiction, codependence, and domestic violence experience. She has now been in the program for over five months. She gave birth to her son while in program and reunited with her youngest daughter. Currently, all five children reside with her in the family shelter where she participates in 15 hours per week of job-skill training, attends weekly 12-step and other recovery meetings, completes weekly biblical studies, and attends individual and recovery counseling. Christina has exemplified a hunger and desire to transform her life for herself and children. She is a beautiful problem-solver, takes initiative, and has made great strides concerning personal growth. She has incredible demands upon her daily, which produce tremendous stress, however she faces each day with purpose, leaning on her support systems to become a whole, healthy, productive individual, mother, and wife. Christina has remained sober, has complied with both CPS and CVRM requirements, created and maintained healthy boundaries, and has strengthened her relationship with God, her children, and her spouse since entering Program.

Monique: My experience with foster care and homelessness started at a young age in elementary school. When I wasn't in foster care, I remember struggling with stable housing, parental supervision, and constant evictions. I've lived at bus stops, behind 24-hour restaurants, in abandoned buildings and in random porches that had chairs. In high school I was trying to emancipate and had nowhere to go once my mom kicked me out. I couch surfed, lived with friends, and sometimes in front of my high school. I was able to regain housing by reaching out to people and finding resources, getting a job in high school, and having income to pay for wherever I landed, and finally by coming out to college, living in transitional housing programs, and taking out loans to pay for housing. As someone who has experienced being homelessness, I now work with our unsheltered youth population with the department of Housing Homelessness Prevention and Workforce Solutions. I serve as a resource to homeless youth and individuals struggling to find economic and housing stability. I am first generation and attended University of California Riverside and graduated with a double major in Education and Spanish. While in college I worked with organizations and programs such as California Youth Connections, Youth Teaching Project, EAOP, and UCR Guardian Scholars. I interned with the city of Riverside in their Homeless Solutions Department and experienced how they administered change at the city level, and I learned a lot about the struggles and challenges homeless individuals face and it is more than the stereotypical situations we assume. I was also an AmeriCorps VISTA for United Way of the Inland Valleys and assisted foster youth with economic mobility. While being an AmeriCorps VISTA I was a part of (YAB) the Youth Action Board, a program which now through the Continuum of Care I run and manage as the Homelessness Youth Coordinator. The youth members who have lived experience with homelessness, facilitate conversations on how to increase youth participation in the Continuum of Care. I want the Youth Action Board members to become advocates and use their experience to create change and I want to create a path for my siblings to follow.

Adan: Five years ago everything in my life changed, I lost everything. I had no support system, my family turned their back on me, and my husband abandoned me so that's where it all began. My homelessness lasted for 5 years. Three years back I was taken to Recovery Innovations and from there they sent me to Jefferson Wellness Center where they offered me hope. They provided me with a list of things that I needed to do. I'm stabilizing myself with medication, see my psychiatrist weekly, visit with my therapist, attend groups for self-help and participate in a sober living program. I joined a fellowship and do everything that was asked of me. I never questioned and I never doubted the process. I put my whole faith in the program. I didn't want to be homeless anymore. Someone believed in me, a group of people believed in me. Thanks to the Housing Authority I was able to transition to life in a very beautiful and safe apartment. I plan to continue working hard for my mental health recovery and hope to become a Peer Support Specialist who can care for somebody else and help the way it was given to me. I know now that I had underlying behavioral health issues, along with my pre-existing health issues. I am part of a community that culturally sees mental illness as imaginary or an over dramatic exaggeration of feelings. Drinking was celebrated in a norm. I have a story to tell. I learned so much from the pain of being homeless, I understand so much now about who I was, and why I was homeless myself. I was just one of the lucky ones that someone found me and offered me up hope. They saved my life. The County saved my life. Housing Authority saved my life. The Riverside Mental Health Department save my life. I am now educated and I know that I suffer from mental illness and used substances to self-medicate and that because of my mental health I ended up homeless. I thought no one cared to understand me. Today I have a great support system, and it's only going to get better from here.

Roberto was homeless for 8 years following his mother's death and then the death of his father a few months later. He spent time in missions, shelters, and living on the streets. Unable to find stable work, he used to wash windows at gas stations and other odd jobs he could find. In desperation, he would take food from grocery stores to sell and buy himself food. He tried to obtain help from church organizations but was kicked out because he wasn't of their faith. When COVID hit, he received housing assistance through Project Room Key. He remained in a hotel for a year while they worked to get him social security benefits and eventually transitioned into a permanent senior apartment complex in the Coachella Valley.

Angela: Cliff and I were homeowners in Riverside. We lost our home due to family conflicts possibly caused by alcoholism. We moved into a rental and spiraled into meth addiction. We got evicted from the rental and that put us in a motel for 2 years. We sobered up after the first year, found God and He housed us and we started Angels Over Cliffs immediately. During the 3 years we have been running the ministry, we have connected over 30 people to permanent housing and so many to rehab, detox, sober living, transitional housing, and so much more. It's our pleasure and purpose. We are so excited about the future and our non-profit status that we are currently working on getting.

Diane: When Diane got out of jail in 2007, she was homeless and living behind Jack n the box. Struggling day to day for about 2 months, she ended up running into a friend and found temporary housing and work. A couple years later she found herself having to check into a Rehab known as MFI. Upon completion of that program and day of discharge, Starting Over Inc. gladly welcomed her into our ARG home for woman who've been formerly incarcerated, and she has been doing great ever since.