



**NEW BEGINNINGS  
COUNSELING CENTER**

324 East Carrillo Street, Suite C  
Santa Barbara, California 93101  
(805) 963-7777

www.newbeginningscounselingcenter.org

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May 5, 2008

Mr. Browning Allen  
City of Santa Barbara  
620 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101

Dear Mr. Allen,

In accordance with our contract with the City of Santa Barbara, please accept this six month report regarding the work of our RV Safe Parking Project.

**Overview**

New Beginnings operates a RV Safe Parking Project as part of its Homeless Outreach Program. The program operated for 4 years before receiving funding from the City of Santa Barbara in September, 2007 to expand its operation at three City lots and businesses on the lower eastside of Santa Barbara.

There are three city lots currently being utilized to place vehicles overnight. The Carrillo/Castillo commuter lot had its capacity increased from 5 to 8 spaces and has been fully utilized for the past six months. When the Cota lot was added three spaces became available. They have been fully utilized during the past six months. The Garden/Cabrillo lot was added and was allocated three spaces as well with the stipulation that only families could be placed there. Since there has not been as great a demand from families, this lot has been used sporadically during the past six months.

We have made major advances in offering the program to businesses on the eastside. You may recall that the City agreement called for one vehicle per business parking lot. The area this encompasses is roughly from Garden to just before Milpas, the 101 Freeway to just below Haley. When this program was approved, we approached the Chamber of Commerce and attended their Executive Committee's luncheon. From that meeting we received a unanimous vote of support for this program.

With this endorsement we have offered the program to several businesses and to date three have signed agreements to open their parking lots to our clients as night watch persons. Involving businesses is an educational process that we are actively engaged in.

While we respond to any requests for assistance throughout the City, our mandate has been to attend to the issue of people living in RV's in the downtown corridor. That has been our focus although we did respond to assist the city when the issue of RV's in the Alice Keck Park area was raised. Our staff made our program available to those folks as well.

New Beginnings Counseling Center is a non-profit community organization

While the overall goal of this program is to place people in permanent housing we recognize that many of them prefer to stay in their vehicles. Where necessary we offer loans to these individuals to prevent them from becoming homeless.

### **Number of Participants**

Since September, 2007, 32 unduplicated clients have been placed at the three City lots in downtown Santa Barbara. Currently, 19 of the 20 spaces available in city lots are being utilized. Another 73 have been served at the County lot and the churches/non-profit parking facilities. The private church and non-profit lots continue to be at capacity with 41 people currently being served. Many of the people in these lots work in the downtown area during the day or are living on fixed incomes as a result of personal disabilities. Per our contract with the city, during the first four months of operation, our outreach worker, Nancy Kapp, went to each lot morning and night seven days a week to monitor the clients' activities. Since January she has visited the sites four days a week. She has been very successful in developing strong personal relationships with these clients and has been able to assist them in a myriad of ways including helping them find housing, jobs and social service assistance. For instance, two of her previous clients who were occupying the Carrillo/Castillo Lot are now housed. Several clients have been able to go on job interviews and others were accepted in programs that fulfill their needs. Also some participants were able to sustain housing with our help. This program is a needed stepping stone for our clients to find stability, communication and compassion. Once they are in the program we can guide them into the right direction.

During this six month period, we have been successful in placing 20 into permanent housing or substance abuse treatment programs.

With the expansion of the RV Safe Parking Project into the CM and M1 zone Nancy Kapp began a program to invite local businesses to join the program. The arrangement centered around utilizing people in vehicles to serve as security on the premises at night exchange for a parking space so the homeless individual could feel secure as well. Many businesses were approached and with the support and endorsement of the Chamber of Commerce, some businesses (5) agreed to join the program. Unfortunately, homeless individuals have preferred to stay in the private lots and have the company of others. To date, three individuals have elected to stay overnight in the CM and M1 businesses and currently one of them is making use of this opportunity. As homeless people are persuaded to move their vehicles away from city streets on the lower eastside of Santa Barbara, we are hopeful that more will show an interest in business parking at which time we will approach more businesses to participate in the program.

### **Number of Complaints**

From September 1, 2007 through February 29, 2008 New Beginnings has received no complaints of any kind from neighbors around the lots or the general citizenry. Our relationship with the farmer's market staff remains cordial and there have no incidents where clients have overstayed their visits or caused any problems with the Saturday morning market.

In late 2007 we were informed that some neighbors in the Alice Keck Park area had complained to the City about RV parking on City streets. Although this area had not been one we had focused our outreach efforts previously, we spent several weeks going to that location and offering the people staying in vehicles to make use of our program. We have continued during the six month period to drive by and make contact with the many people living in RV's who park in the Montecito Street, De La Guerra area on the lower eastside. We continue to respond to reports of homeless people who are living in vehicles in other areas of Santa Barbara and Goleta as well.

We respond to these inquiries by making a drive by visit, making personal contact when possible with the people and leaving a flyer about our program. We estimate that 15 people have accepted our invitation and joined the program through this outreach approach.

NEW BEGINNINGS COUNSELING CENTER: a non-profit community organization

When this program was initiated there were concerns that there would continue to be a problem with RV's parking in the Cabrillo area. It appears that the ban for overnight parking has been successful. Although we allow parking in the Garden Street/Cabrillo lot this has not caused the confusion that we once feared.

### **Funding**

New Beginnings was awarded a grant of \$36,420 for the ten month period between September 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Given the success of this program we would be interested in continuing it for the next fiscal year, July, 2008-June, 2009. We are requesting an extension of the contract at the current monthly rate, an annual amount of \$43,700.

New Beginnings receives funding for our Homeless Outreach Program from a variety of sources. Government entities, private foundations and community donors support our work. We continue to pursue support from all of these sources to continue our operations.

### **Future Plans**

Even with the success of our program we recognize that there are a large number of RV's that part in the lower eastside area. Despite our invitations to join the program, individuals prefer the freedom of coming and going as they please and they continue to park on the street. Perhaps the City Parking Department, the Restorative Policing Program and our staff should spend some time collaborating to develop some new approaches. We could either encourage people more effectively or consider using parking tickets to force people to enroll in the RV Safe Parking Program.

We are pleased with the success of the program so far and look forward to working with the Downtown Parking Commission, the Waterfront Commission and the City Council in effectively dealing with the issue of recreational vehicles.

Sincerely,

Gary G. Linker, Ph.D.  
Executive Director