



Santa Ana Riverbed's Homeless Children

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Dear Orange County Board of Supervisors,

On April 5, 2017, Supervisor Nelson met me at a Burger King next to the Santa Ana River late in the evening, and I promised to lead him to a homeless family that included children. Supervisor Nelson came alone, and we made the walk together in the dark. I kept my word. By the next day, the county had located housing for a family that included a mother, her two girls, aged ten and thirteen, and her son, aged eighteen.

I visited the mother on her last day at the Riverbed. She expressed relief and gratitude but also seemed to be experiencing survivor's guilt. She told me that people at the Riverbed probably see her as a "snitch," and she described how they "stared her down" when they found out she was getting out of the Riverbed. Despite her discomfort, she intends to return and introduce me to the other families with children currently living in the Riverbed community. The mother told me that her daughter received a Christmas present last year from a homeless, seven-year-old girl.

There are other children in the Riverbed, and together, we plan on finding and housing all of them. But until we do, I must ensure that the government and residents of Orange County treat the Riverbed homeless community with dignity and respect.

Accordingly, I hereby demand that Orange County immediately do the following:

- Direct the Chief Executive Office to study the feasibility of a county-funded Housing Trust Fund to provide vulnerable Orange County residents with affordable and permanent supportive housing.
- Direct Social Services Agency to send the Mobile Response Vehicle to serve the homeless encampment nearby Rampart street. The County will decrease, not increase, the numbers of homeless individuals at the Riverbed by providing them with resources.
- Direct Orange County Public Works to install temporary restroom facilities to serve the homeless community at the Santa Ana River. Homeless men and women and undiscovered homeless children should not have to publicly urinate and defecate.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors' governing laws and rules of procedures do not require a vote to fulfill any above the requests. Supervisor Nelson, Supervisor Do, Supervisor Spitzer, Supervisor Bartlett, and Chairwoman Steel—each of you has the authority and therefore the responsibility to do all the above.

Accordingly, an omission to do any of the above would constitute a personal decision by each of you to neglect a homeless population that includes small children, as Supervisor Nelson has personally witnessed.

Warm Regards,

Mohammed Aly, Esq.

Executive Director



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