**A Brief Summary of the Developing Diamonds Community Proposal**

**The definition of being homeless** is to be without a home address to return to at night to sleep, safe and secure. About 80 % of the Chronic Homeless are **Neurodivergent**, which only means they **simply see and processes their world differently** than the neurotypical population and have both extraordinary capacities and challenges in living as a minority in a neurotypical society. The neuro**typical** society tends to respond to one who thinks differently as "my way of thinking is right and any other way, the divergent way, is wrong." So often they have **grown up** with most of the people around them thinking there is "something wrong" with them and their thoughts and ways of being are treated as less valid and worthy than others. They may often be **demeaned and disrespected** by those around them. The emotional impact of that is bad enough under normal conditions, but when you grow up homeless with parents who probably grew up homeless, **the stigma is multiplied** exponentially. Most of their "mental illness" is simply from trying to protect themselves from the blows of disgrace, demeaning, child abuse & abandonment. The many triggers they have developed make holding a job impossible, so there is no income to support rent or mortgage and ultimately they fall back into a **survival mode** of existing as an **out cast**, using their exceptional creativity to simply survive as an outcast of society, but on their own terms.

The life they live, in small encampments hiding from disruptive and harassing policing and violence from both within and without their community is **beyond the comprehension** of anyone who has not lived it themselves. Their only **goal is to wake up** to endure another day and hope for a bit of **relief,** often in the form of drugs and alcohol for at least the illusion of life and humanity or to give up and let those illusions take them out of their misery. So why would they choose to live this life as opposed to the shelters offered to them?

It's as simple and as difficult to understand as claiming their **human right to self determination**. Just as the general public has misunderstood them and unintentionally treated them as having less value, so have many of the homeless shelters who **"rescue"** them from their inhumane conditions, presume only they know what is best for them, **telling them what, how why and when they need** to fast track toward a job to support themselves, expecting them to **comply** without question to **expectations and rules** that are often counterintuitive to them. Efforts to comply often lead to failure and suspension or expulsion from the program, making them feel even more "unworthy," "incapable" and/or defiant that **to "fit in"** they must give up their **human and constitutional** right to choose the life they feel is worth living and to **comply to the "authoritative**

**voice”** of what they have determined “pursuit of happiness” **should l**ook like. The shelters they are offered have a “cookie cutter,” **“one size fits all”** protocol that the neurodivergent simply *cannot* and *will not* comply with.

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We’ve named our proposed HOME, **“Developing Diamonds Community” (DDC)** for the Homeless are “Diamonds in the Rough**”** full of **innate value** in service to themselves, their new home community and the public. To the untrained eye, this intrinsic value is undiscernible. But to the trained eye, potential is revealed. This diamond-in-the-rough is gently removed from it’s surroundings and trimmed of it’s dross. Then the expert hand gently and slowly cuts this rock along it’s unique, core planes. until it becomes the most valuable of rocks by the unique way it captures and reflects the light. Trying to cut the rock into the carver’s personally preferred shape only shatters it’s potential, leaving only lost potential and **diamond dust.**

Their brilliance has been buried under layers of trauma and great pressure. They cannot mine themselves, nor formulate and polish themselves. That is the **privilege and responsibility of the public** who currently enjoy a life-style & resources, of which the homeless have been deprived. The **process** of engaging and helping these diamonds in the rough, to develop their ultimate brilliance as community assets may also **help the public rediscover** their own human traits of **empathy, compassion and community.** Potential residents may apply at the **SALLT** (Speak up and Listen to Learn Together) DDC event to be vetted by the DDC guidelines of urgency & need and be admitted to the Sanctuary in **manageable waves.**

The first stage is to provide a **DDC “Sanctuary” home that is familiar**, but offers a **clean, safe, secure and peaceful place for a good night’s sleep.** It will have **empathetic security** that will protect them from interference from the outside as well as disturbances from within the Drug Free & Safe Home. ID cards with their personal home address will issued and advocacy will be provided when they may be harassed as homeless. Any contraband or potential weapons will be **surrendered upon entry and returned** when leaving for the day, knowing that they would now be held responsible to obeying the **rules for the public,** and violation will carry it’s own civil punishment. After a **peaceful sleep and good breakfast** with uplifting ambient music and caring mentors, stage one residents are required to leave camp by 10 am as good community citizens. They are to **return by dark** to socialize until they choose to sleep, respecting **smoking areas** and the need of other residents for quiet in order to

sleep. Illegal drug  alcohol will not be allowed on site, however, if a resident  has been using off site and is still under the influence,  s/he may still re-enter to "sleep it off," if not loud or violent.

**Additional meals, comforts and privileges may be earned** in exchange for **services rendered.** They may be care companions for a disabled resident, or cook's helper. They may help in the community garden, water the future shade trees, as well as give time and services needed by neighbors inside, as well as outside, the DDC. They may also serve by attending and contributing to continued "SALLT" events to **socialize with various segments of the public & special guests** as well as model our principles of "Listening to Learn" in building better understanding, empathy, cooperation, collaboration and mutual service within the DDC and for it's neighbors. In time, service to others becomes an internalized reward in itself.

The DDC will be **administered by elected representation.**  Each year the DDC will **elect a representative** to whom grievances, suggestions and disputes will be brought.  That elected representative will take these **to the Advisory Board** who will hear all concerns and refer them to the Executive Board with their recommendation.  If **personal disputes** arise, that representative may assist in arbitrating a solution in collaboration with the camp manager on duty at the time. If it cannot be resolved, it may be referred to the Advisory Board and that decision will be **obeyed as final.** The decision may be appealed, however, to the Executive Committee who will decide if the dispute and decision warrants their consideration. Until and unless the executive board reverses or amends the Advisory Board's decision, their decision remains final.

Principles and Processes have been **adapted from non-mental health sources** such as Montessori's principles of **sequential development** and **"leading from behind.**"  We don't tell the resident what we think he needs to do or be, **we watch, listen** and talk with the residents to **help them discover** more successful ways of getting what they want and need, how to make better choices for **happy relationships and sense of purposeful well-being.**  We help them **rediscover talents and passions** that give them joy. When they have an idea of the future livelihoods they want to explore, we will encourage them to commit to the Developmental Village where more specific life & livelihood skills may be developed, including needed courses and apprenticeships. In order to enter the Village Developmental Program, they must be sober.  After attending an off-campus detox and recovery program, they will return to the supportive environment and programs of the Village. he cycle of recidivism will be broken.

Members of the Village **advance to DIY micro pods,** tiny homes and **"neighborhood" clusters,** even, potentially to affordable housing. They will also have full access to the Coffee Shop and Community Center that will vibrate with activity, inspirational TV, Discussion Groups and Debates, Music & Dancing, as well as Improv Theater, board games and just relaxing. Guest speakers will be invited to speak and demonstrate on a variety of subjects that interest the residents which may include religious community traditions and food sampling. Another motivation for further connection to their family traits and talents to assist in restoring broken family relationships is the **CRI Ancestry DNA .** To begin their money management training, they will be assisted in opening a **local bank account** and **contributing a fair share** to their education and development program.

From beginning to end this will become a **family affair.** Each resident retains their resident number. Even if they decide to leave the Sanctuary or Village program, they may be **welcomed back** with their **same resident address**. As residents advance in service and skills, they become role models and mentors to souls at lower levels. Sanctuary residents can see and hear the advanced housing and life-style of the Villagers, **motivating them to want** more, **do** more to **be** more, **earn & give** more**.** We will make every effort to stay in touch with, assist and advocate for our extended family, even after graduation, **tracking their progress** through the program and into their public life.

The **Developing Diamonds Community Project may start in Shasta County**, but it should **become a model** for other communities and even other states. As far as I can tell, there is no other Transitional housing that has any of the aspects that are addressing the life-long Chronic & Neurodivergent **Homeless who are choosing** to die on the streets and encampments rather than submit to the impossible demands of the neurotypical shelters and housing being offered.

**In the hopes of collaborating this vision with you,** I remain, sincerely,

**Jaclyn Tredway,**
Founder & CEO of **"Building Community thru Healing Homelessness"**
**a Public Benefit non-profit:**
**Developing Diamonds Community Project Proposal**
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