

**COMMENDING
“HELPING HAND”
AWARD RECIPIENTS**

WHEREAS, as Samuel Johnson said, “A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization”; and to paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi, “A nation’s greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members”; and

WHEREAS, Marin County is rich in resources and opportunities. However at the same time, 33% of its residents live below sustainability and are a paycheck away from homelessness; and

WHEREAS, in the present economic downturn, an increasing number of our friends and neighbors are threatened by health issues, job loss, medical bills and the unexpected event, tipping them into losing the roof over their heads; as many are forced to find shelter in the winter weather, there are insufficient beds to meet the need; and

WHEREAS, there are those in our community who are making an extraordinary effort to meet the mounting needs of those living without shelter and are providing time, expertise and resources to reach out a helping hand to our community’s most vulnerable members, the newly homeless, the chronically ill and children whose parents have lost their homes; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors would like to recognize these angels among us for their efforts to end the despair and contribute to a community partnership that will care for and provide for those who have nowhere but the streets to call home; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Nichols, Pastor of The Vineyard, during the inclement weather in December, in the face of opposition, opened the door of his church in San Rafael, to those in the community living without shelter, and provided them with a warm, dry, safe place to make it through the rainy nights; and

WHEREAS, Paul Gaffney serves as a street Chaplain with the Marin Interfaith Street Chaplaincy and ministers to the spiritual needs of those who have nowhere to go. He has provided hope and compassion to those upon whom everyone else seems to have turned their backs; and

WHEREAS, Chris Highland has been responsible for anticipating and meeting the many needs of those who have come to the warming center set up at the Armory for a night out of the cold and rainy weather, to the point of clearing the shelves of local stores of their stock of sleeping pads; and

WHEREAS, Steve Henderson, Pastor of Lucas Valley Community Church, has offered his church as shelter on nights that the warming center at the Civic Center are unavailable. He has recognized the need and responded with generosity and a desire to relieve the suffering of those without a bed to sleep in at night; and

WHEREAS, Stephen “Walker” Bonspille works day and night to help his brothers and sisters without shelter, and while reaching out to those in need to lift them up, he inspires all of us to live the values that make us stand taller as individuals and as a community; and

WHEREAS, Marin’s safety net is the partnership dedicated to relieve the suffering and end homelessness for those needing shelter; Ritter Center, led by Diane Linn; St. Vincent De Paul, led by Steve Boyer and Suzanne Walker; The Vine, led by Teresa Bowman; MarinLink, led by Mary O’Mara and Nancy Boyce, and dedicated volunteers; and last but not least Homeward Bound, led by Mary Kay Sweeney, Bob Puett and Kerby Ann Gleeson, are the helping hands for which we are most fortunate.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors recognizes and commends the extraordinary among us who have provided a helping hand for those in great need, modeling to all of us how to care for those who have lost their homes, and inspiring us to continue in the process toward ending homelessness in our communities.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin held this 27th day of January 2009.