

California church responds to homeless issues

Last July a mentally ill man named Kelly Thomas died as a result of a beating at the hands of local police. In response a group has come together to address the issues for many homeless people who do not receive the treatment they need as one step in getting off the street. Darrell McGowan, senior pastor of First Christian Church, Fullerton, has provided leadership, including offering our church building as a meeting place. On June 5th, this group presented eight proposals for dealing with the homeless mentally ill in Fullerton to the City Council. Many members of the Fullerton congregation offered their support by signing the document before it went to the City Council where the proposals were adopted.

Also heavily involved in this effort is Susan Wright, a member of the Fullerton congregation. Wright, who was homeless herself, found her way to membership through contact with members of First Christian during that period. She has worked tirelessly for the past ten years to challenge the City Council to address the issues of both homelessness and low income housing in Fullerton. She attends meetings of the City Council quite regularly and often addresses them during the time provided for citizens to speak to the City Council about any issue. Wright was a strong advocate for a Habitat for Humanity project in Fullerton that resulted in the construction of 11 new homes for low income families. This project has been a catalyst for the transformation of a formerly blighted area in the city.

Submitted by Ed Linberg, member of First Christian Church, Fullerton, CA