

## Homelessness Awareness Month 2022 Recognitions for “Thriving in the Face of Homelessness”

*The “Thriving in the Face of Homelessness” category is to recognize individuals who have experienced the crisis of homelessness and a) supported other people experiencing homelessness and/or b) moved out of homelessness themselves.*

### **Nominees**

1. Amanda Jenkins (District 1)
2. Daniel Aderholdt (Serves entire county)
3. Denise Mills (District 4)
4. Jessi Taran (District 1)
5. Jo Bruno (District 3)
6. Lisa Thomas (Serves entire county)
7. Tamisha Walker (Serves entire county)
8. Willy Vega (Serves entire county)

*The following pages contain descriptions of each nominee as provided by the person (s) who nominated them.*

# Amanda Jenkins, Operation Ground 0

**Nominated by:** Amanda Jenkins, Self

**Supervisorial District:** District 1 (Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, part of Pinole, and the unincorporated communities of Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, North Richmond, and Rollingwood)

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *For the last 7 yrs I have been homeless with my son. We went from abandoned houses to a tent to a makeshift house to an RV. 2yrs ago I started a safe parking program in North Richmond CA and recently my site was awarded a 4.8 million dollar Grant and 102 people will be housed they the housing first program. I also volunteer as site manager for this site and advocate at all levels for the residents. I have helped in housing 3 families into permanent housing as well as I volunteer when ever possible for anything in my community regarding homelessness. I am currently on the steering committee for the City of Richmond as well as cc county strategic planning committee to come up with a better plan for the homeless population related to services. I volunteer as the assistant manager at the Rydin Rd encampment safe parking site in Richmond Ca as well. I started my own non profit as a mobile outreach in 2017 and continue to help others daily. I have not been paid and dnt care about money I simply do because I'm doing God's work and it warms my heart to see people smile and be with there families n a house happy.*

*I am told I am very well liked as well as talked about in the city of Richmond I know tht the mayor and all of city council appreciate my work as well as the city manager and program managers I work with. I have done surveys and referrals leading 3 people to long-term housing again and they appreciate it. I go above and beyond the scope of the job whenever needed and never complain about it.*

# Amanda Jenkins, Operation Ground 0

**Nominated by:** John Springman, Friend

**Supervisory District:** District 1 (Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, part of Pinole, and the unincorporated communities of Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, North Richmond, and Rollingwood)

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *For the last 7 years I have seen Amanda thrive and become a leader and advocate for the homeless in her community she started the Castro encampment in Richmond which received \$4.8m from governor newsom and she is part of the county steering committee the city of Richmond strategic plan committee the homeless taskforce the Reimagining Richmond Taskforce the Castro stakeholders taskforce and advocates with Faith in Action East Bay for Rydin Rd and Castro encampments as well as all the homeless in Richmond and North Richmond. She is always willing and able to help anyone with anything whether it be money clothes a ride help with paperwork assistance in any resources. She is still homeless with her 15yr old son and has been apart of 7 families with minor children from the Castro encampment being housed and continues to do this day after day for no money at all she has yet to get a job from the city yet she says she doesn't do it for the money she does it bcuz she wants to get to heaven to see her sons face again. She lost her son almost 6yrs ago to gun violence.*

*Amanda touches and changes people's lives everyday. Several times in the past 7 yrs I have witnessed individuals come to her with no hope ready to hurt themselves or give up and Amanda welcomes them into whatever dwelling she calls home at the time and talks to them and helps them with clothes and comfort and maybe a place to sleep or she might have built them a room connected to her dwelling or mentored them if there young and talked them down from feeling the way they were feeling or gave them resources and helped them to receive whatever help they may be seeking. She has helped the RV community of around 75 people recieve a grant that will assure everyone in the encampment will receive housing thru the housing 1st model and services they need to become self sufficient. Amanda is truly a great person and leader and advocate and has served her homeless peers with her heart everyday since she became homeless and people trust her in the homeless communittee and deserves this award.*

# Amanda Jenkins, Operation Ground 0

**Nominated by:** Kevin Canamore, Friend, Co-worker, Business partner

**Supervisory District:** District 1 (Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, part of Pinole, and the unincorporated communities of Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, North Richmond, and Rollingwood)

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *She started her own safe parking site for homeless individuals living in RVs and trailers in North Richmond 2 yrs ago and in April that site received a 4.8 million dollar grant from the governor so now 102 residents will be housed through the housing first initiative and have their rent paid for one year or more and we see services. She started her own LLC local organizing committee that advocates with faith in action East Bay for homeless rights in the city of Richmond and North Richmond and for the red and road encampment also in Richmond she's a leader and organizer with faith in action East Bay as well as volunteers as an assistant program manager at her site for the last 2 years she participates in All City council meetings regarding the homeless and is part of the Contra Costa strategic planning committee as well as the city of Richmond steering committee to try and assist in a better plan for the future for the homeless population.*

*She is the founder and CEO of her own mobile outreach for the homeless and is always helping someone. People respect her and trust her and depend on her and she is still homeless herself with her teenage son. She makes people feel comfortable and gives them hope they trust her and she delivers everything that she tells them she will. Because of her efforts the people who live in her safe working site will all get housing for a year through the housing first initiative as well as services that they desperately need they trust her and love her and appreciate everything she's done.*

# Daniel Aderholt, American River Homeless Crews

**Nominated by:** Claudia Aderholt, Wife

**Supervisory District:** They serve the entire county

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *Founder and CEO of American River homeless crews and his crew members cleaned everyday for over 9 years and saved the the American River parkway. They have saved 1,000's of homeless people and their pets lives through the years! The founder & CEO of American River homeless crews just became a nonprofit May 10th 2022 and the founder and CEO Daniel Aderholt was paying for the homeless crews tools and supplies out of his own pocket all these years!*

*He's also saved the hundreds homeless pets living on the American River parkway all these years with food and supplies as well. They have been on the news dozens of times through the years saving our homeless people living on the streets in Sacramento, Pittsburg, Antioch, Concord and Martinez. My husband grew up in Pittsburg, California and always takes care of the homeless living there and where we live now in Sacramento everyday since he was a kid. He spent 20 years feeding the homeless at Brown Bag Golden Hills Church outreach in Antioch California and started doing it in his own 10 years ago here in Sacramento and Bay Area as well everyday.*

# Denise Mills, CORE Outreach & Men and Woman of Purpose

**Nominated by:** Kristi Jung, Coworker

**Supervisory District:** District 4 (Clayton, Concord, Pleasant Hill, part of Walnut Creek, and the unincorporated Contra Costa Centre)

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *Denise fought to get sober, pull her life together, get herself off the streets and into a stable lifestyle. She is now working with the homeless to help them. She has been clean and housed for 10 years now. She has been working with homeless individuals for nearly 10 years.*

*She is an amazing, kindhearted individual to works hard and compassionate everyday to help her clients. She has a strong mindset and strives to do her best everyday to help others.*

# Jessi Taran

**Nominated by:** Vanessa Calloway, community member that provides services to the area.

**Supervisory District:** District 1 (Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, part of Pinole, and the unincorporated communities of Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, North Richmond, and Rollingwood)

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *Jessi although homeless herself have made a point to organize and support those living at Rydin Road as well as other encampments. She has been very focal in community meetings and City council meeting*

*Although Jessi has had many unpleasant circumstances in life she always find a way to think of others.*

## Jo Bruno, Delta Peers

**Nominated by:** Jo Bruno, Self “I’m my own best friend”

**Supervisory District:** District 3 (Bethel Island, Blackhawk, Byron, Diablo, Discovery Bay and Knightsen, as well as the cities of Antioch, Brentwood, and Oakley)

**Nominee’s personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *I am tooting my own horn here, but it’s essential to share my story. I became homeless, sleeping in my car, during the winter of 2019. During this time, I graduated as valedictorian for the SPIRIT program. I’ve been a peer advisor for multiple groups who serve the unhoused. Even through my own crisis of homelessness, mental health and feelings of shame, I stepped up and joined the council for homelessness, where I’ve served as Lived-Experience Advisor for nearly a year now. Not only did I step up in my profession, I stepped up in my personal and spiritual life. I found another purpose as I was fighting through my homelessness. I’m extremely proud of myself, not only because of the resiliency and courage, but for literally surviving the worst kind of crisis I’ve ever experienced. It’s worth rooting my own horn.*



# Jo Bruno, SPIRIT Program

**Nominated by:** Victoria Alexander, SPIRIT program classmate

**Supervisory District:** District 5 (Hercules, Martinez, Pittsburg, portions of Pinole and Antioch, and unincorporated communities of Alhambra Valley, Bay Point, Briones, Rodeo, Pacheco, Crockett, Tormey, Port Costa, Mt. View, Vine Hill, Reliez Valley, and Clyde)

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *She keeps striving to help her self and others in the community.*

# Lisa Thomas, CORE Homeless Outreach

**Nominated by:** Michael Callanan, Manager

**Supervisorial District:** They serve the entire county

**Nominee's personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *Works to help the homeless population daily, has been instrumental in the development and expansion of CORE Homeless Outreach. She has trained and managed all parts of CORE from hiring, training, data, de-escalation, and managed all the changes that came with COVID, and it challenges. She problem solves tough situations that come to her one after another for the homeless population and has made relationships and contacts with so many resources inside and around Contra Costa County.*

*She has taken her knowledge and live experienced and put her heart and passion into serving the homeless population. She has also started working at the Concord shelter 11+ years ago and worked her way up to where she is now.*

# Tamisha Walker, Safe Return Project

**Nominated by:** Adey Teshager, Employee “Tamisha is my Boss but I also consider her my leader”

**Supervisorial District:** They serve the entire county

**Nominee’s personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *Her accomplishments are a lot in this community. She was once homeless with a child and worked herself into being a homeowner. It took a few years but she never stopped until she was thriving and still today she’s thriving. I admire her motivation and relentlessness to do better for herself and family. In turn, she became an example for us, showing us that anything is possible after any hardships. I first met her when I was homeless in 2018. She gave me an opportunity with her organization as a fellow. I went through the program and was able to get employment with her organization and never looked back. She has been a great example for me to follow and continue to learn how to be as courageous as she is. She’s now a council woman in Contra Costa.*

*I am nominating her because even when we at the org are not service providers she is always helping mothers that are homeless get into emergency hotels out of her own concerns for the children and so that we connect them with real people that are dedicated to serving others. I see her always putting others before herself and that’s admirable to me.*

## Willy Vega Concord Shelter

**Nominated by:** Bruce Heyer. “Willy is my Pastor, spiritual father, and he helped me get clean off of meth. Now I work for Contra Costa County Mental Health Financial Counseling. I help people get Medi-cal so they can go to program, amongst other things.”

**Supervisory District:** They serve the entire county

**Nominee’s personal accomplishments that reflect resilience and courage.** *Willy Vega drives to Diablo Valley Ranch every Sunday night to bring the residents church services. He also works at the shelter with homeless people helping them get Medi-cal so they can go to program if they want. I was one of those people. I now have 8 years clean off of Meth. I used from 1987 until 10/19/2014. I would be dead today if he hadn't helped me.*

*Willy Vega genuinely loves everyone. I have not met another person that cares for a person's physical and spiritual wellbeing more than him.*