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20th ANNUAL HOMELESS MEMORIAL CEREMONY

The Homeless Services Center, the Santa Cruz County Homeless Persons Health Project and Encompass Community Services' River Street Shelter invite the public to share to the 20th annual Homeless Memorial services, honoring homeless community members who have passed over the last year.

The event is being held in conjunction with Homeless Persons' Memorial Day, an annual nationwide event celebrated in over 150 U.S. cities at the onset of winter. The event will feature a ceremonial reading of the names of at least 53 persons, homeless and formerly homeless, who died in the past year.

The event will be held in the cafeteria at the Homeless Services Center, emphasizing the need to work towards ending chronic homelessness. Advocates, service providers, homeless and formerly homeless individuals, religious leaders, and concerned citizens are welcome to honor the lives and dreams of deceased.

Compared to the general population, people who experience homelessness are more likely to suffer chronic disease and mental illness, substance abuse and violence. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the mortality rate of homeless persons is four to nine time higher than the general population, and the risk of homelessness is a concern for one in eight Americans.

Across the U.S., nineteen million people experience housing insecurity. Within California, the homeless population jumped 14 percent from 2016 to 2017, and 134,000 Californians are now without a home.

WHAT: 20th Annual Homeless Memorial

WHERE: Homeless Services Center Cafeteria, 115 Coral St., Santa Cruz

WHEN: December 20, 10:00 am

*On-site parking extremely limited. Overflow parking available at Tannery Arts Center (Theater Parking), 1010 River St.