

## On Behalf of the Homeless

**T**HERE'S NOTHING new about homelessness ... there's nothing new about organizations and governments trying to do something about it. What is new is the Homeless Community Involvement campaign of the San Francisco Council on Homelessness called, "We're All Under One Roof."

It's new because it not only recognizes that everyone of us is affected by homelessness but also because it gives each of us a tailor-made opportunity to do something about it. That can be as simple as donating a coat or writing a check or offering a job or building affordable housing.

For the first time, there's a way to get involved by making one phone call — 982 HOME — and the trained Homeless Community Involvement project volunteers at the Volunteer Center will connect you to the organization and/or agency that needs and wants whatever it is that you want to do.

And if you live anywhere in the Bay Area, the folks at the San Francisco number will direct your call to the center where you live. This is an issue for the whole Bay Area.

This campaign is a collabora-

tive effort by the San Francisco Council on Homelessness in cooperation with the Volunteer Center and United Way. It is supported by many of the city's major corporations. How did it come about? It's November, holiday time and we know from experience that the desire to help others is stronger this time of year.

But we wanted people to be involved for more than just a month or two. This concept of year-round involvement, which proposed to dedicate each month to a different aspect of addressing homelessness, was first envisioned by homeless individuals using the services of the Tenderloin Self-Help Center, a program of San Francisco Hospitality House.

Homeless people are an integral part of this Community Involvement program — they will be answering the phones, helping others to be involved.

We believe it is not enough to talk about homelessness, to complain about the homeless on the streets. We believe that given the chance, most people will want to be part of the solution.

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*Rita R. Semel chairs the San Francisco Council on Homelessness.*

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