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Study: Project Roomkey helped homeless in state stabilize

BY NICOLE NIXON
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A pandemic program created to shelter California's vulnerable homeless population during COVID-19 helped thousands of people stabilize and transition into housing, a new independent

study has found.

There's just one problem: the program was expensive and the federal government is backing out of reimbursing local governments hundreds of millions of dollars for it. The program no longer operates in Sacramento County.

The report also comes a

time when California is grappling with its homelessness strategy and a lack of data to determine what is most cost-effective.

More than 62,000 people received temporary housing under the state's Project Roomkey, which was launched in April 2020. The program moved

medically vulnerable people from the streets and congregant shelters into empty hotel and motel rooms in an effort to isolate them and reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19.

While it was not designed as a rehousing program, about one-third of participants transitioned into permanent or temporary

housing after leaving, according to a study commissioned by the California Health Care Foundation and conducted by research firm Abt Global.

Another quarter of people temporarily sheltered under the program moved into other emergency shelters and 15% returned to unsheltered homelessness. Destinations for 18% of participants were unknown after they left, and 4% went to hospitals, substance use treatment facilities or other institutional settings.

Researchers gathered data for

SEE ROOMKEY, 7A



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Members of the Sacramento State chapter of Students for Justice Palestine chant after a campus press conference on Wednesday after the university decided to alter its investment policy language. The group has been camped out on the library quad since late last month, calling for disclosure of any university ties to Israel and divestment if such ties exist.

Sac State to review investments in deal with war protesters

BY ISHANI DESAI
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Cheers rang out from the heart of Sacramento State's campus Wednesday as pro-Palestine protesters danced to celebrate the university's agreement to divest in Israel-tied investments, the move coming eight days after demonstrators pitched tents on campus.

The agreement to change its investment and university policy language came late Tuesday night between Students for Justice in Palestine, other

protesters and California State University, Sacramento.

"We are pleased that we have reached resolution of the issue at the heart of the encampment at Sacramento State," university officials said. "Further, we appreciate that this resolution reflects its peaceful nature."

The move makes the university one of the first CSU campuses to agree to alter its policies amid the ongoing war in Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians living in Gaza since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing more

than 1,200 Israelis in the deadliest attack on Jews since the Holocaust.

"As soon as we walk into this encampment, it feels like a different America," said Farah, a protester who declined to give her last name due to fears of being doxxed. "It feels like we took back this plaza for ourselves."

Updates to Sac State's policies, signed off on by university President Luke Wood, show a variety of changes.

It includes Sac State seeking its five auxiliaries to investigate its direct and indirect invest-

ments to ensure practices of only "socially responsible investment strategies which include not having direct investments in corporations and funds that profit from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and activities that violate fundamental human rights."

The five auxiliaries are the Associated Students, University Enterprises Inc., University Union, University Foundation at Sac State and Capital Public Radio.

Sac State noted in its policy

SEE PROTESTERS, 6A

Elk Grove mayor sees zoo vote as 'our arena moment'

BY JOE RUBIN
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Like the financing plan carved out a decade ago that led to the construction of the Golden 1 Center in downtown Sacramento, the proposed \$302 million zoo development plan which Elk Grove's City Council was expected to pass Wednesday night is largely dependent on public financing.

"This is absolutely our arena moment," Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen said in an interview ahead of the vote that will, if successful, signify a big step forward moving a quaint zoo from Land Park in Sacramento to a facility five times the size. Interactive and experiential features, proponents say, will bring a world-class zoo, featuring savannas where African wildlife will roam.

Singh-Allen, first elected in 2020 and now in her second term as mayor, acknowledged that, while many people around the country would be hard-pressed to place Elk Grove on a map, she thinks the zoo will help change that.

She described the 65-acre project as a "tourism driver" and will show what Elk Grove can be.

"Elk Grove can dream big and do big things," she said. "We've got adult entertainment in the casino. Now we will have family entertainment down the road."

Singh-Allen also described the zoo as a passion project which reflects her civic values.

"I raised my two kids here," she said. "What families have always asked for is having more family-friendly attractions and options. And I can't think of

SEE MAYOR, 10A

Adviser suspended after high school paper printed Hitler quote

BY ARIANE LANGE
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The Sacramento City Unified School District has suspended with pay C.K. McClatchy High School's journalism adviser after its student newspaper printed a quote praising Adolf Hitler — a

suspension that experts said flew in the face of California press freedoms.

"They have the right to print it," said Steve O'Donoghue, director of the California Scholastic Journalism Initiative. "They're not advocating for it, they're just quoting what a student said."

During the suspension, adviser Samantha Archuleta has been ordered not to go on the Land Park campus or communicate with her students.

On April 25, students published in The Prospector, McClatchy High's student-led newspaper, a list feature titled "What did you say?" The list

comprised nine statements purportedly overheard on campus.

The final quote in the list — which the newspaper said was made by a student in government class and which Archuleta later said was heard by an editor outside a classroom — was "Hitler had some good ideas."

The student journalists said in a written statement, "We wanted to acknowledge and raise the question: Why are kids on campus saying things like this? It's deeply concerning that these remarks are being said on cam-

pus without proper action from staff."

They also expressed regret over the wording of the column, whose introduction said the list contained "some of our favorites" of "the weirdest stuff" heard on campus.

"We recognize the impact of our words do not match the intent, and this has impacted a lot of individuals," the students wrote, "especially when addressing the sensitive issue of antisemitism."

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