

Meet the Future Homeless Residents of Santa Cruz

Many of the future homeless of Santa Cruz are infant to school-age children from 48 Beach Flats families who are to be displaced by a Santa Cruz redevelopment project.

by Roxanne Acquistapace

There are 200 of them at risk. Most do not speak any English nor can they fill out a housing application in English. They do not have any credit references and none of their personal references speak English when contacted by a prospective landlord by phone. They earn only minimum wage.

Many of the future homeless of Santa Cruz are infant to school-age children. They are members of 48 Beach Flats families who are to be displaced by a Santa Cruz City Redevelopment project known as the Dolphin-Lee project. Previously, these families have all been able to live without government-subsidized rents by sharing rents, childcare, and living expenses with friends or relatives.

Now the hucksters are down in the Beach Flats shucking and jiving like late-night infomercial salesman promising the residents of the Dolphin and Lee apartments anything they want to hear.

"Yes, your boyfriend and your cousin

and her three children from San Salvador can continue to live with you," they pledge. "Yes, you will have a brand new three-bedroom apartment for less than you pay now."

"Yes, we will help you find a house for the year of construction and then you will definitely be guaranteed return."

"Yes, we will rent any moving truck for you to relocate to and from the new project. We don't care what it costs. You will not have to move yourself." "The drug dealers and street criminals will leave the neighborhood."

"NO PROBLEM" is the mantra of the pale faces. The critical guarantees are not in writing anywhere. And when those dislocated from this housing don't qualify for that swell new housing, they may find themselves living in cars or dumpsters.

The land will be snatched (by eminent domain) from two mixed-race families that have owned apartments in this area for many years. The smaller property owned by the Lees is filled with many of their own family members, including grandchildren. They are insulted, and rightly so, when politicians tell the public that their property is not a fit place to live.

They raised their own children here and their children are raising their children here. They are a very proud family with a lawyer, and they are determined not to lose their land.

Who ever heard of taking low-cost

