

## Santa Rosa homeless center re-hiring guard

**'Test program' funds bicycle patrol 12-20 hours per week**

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Published: Thursday, April 1, 2010 at 4:02 a.m.

A Santa Rosa homeless center that has recently drawn fire over incidents of loitering, vandalism and property crime will re-hire a security guard to patrol the downtown neighborhood where it is located.

Catholic Charities, which runs the 18-year-old Homeless Services Center at 600 Morgan St., confirmed Wednesday in written statements that the uniformed guard would work 12 to 20 hours per week, patrolling the St. Rose Historic District by bicycle.

The three-month assignment, called a "test program," was funded by an anonymous donor.

The nonprofit reached the deal during a meeting Monday with Santa Rosa City Councilwoman Jane Bender, Planning Commissioner Patti Cisco, city staff and representatives of the St. Rose Historic District Neighborhood Association.

The move came in response to neighbors' complaints that they have found used syringes, human feces and homeless people sleeping on their front porches and lawns. They attribute the incidents to people drawn to the homeless center, located just west of downtown.

Until July, the center shared a part-time guard and his \$50,000 salary with the city's now-shuttered Brookwood Homeless Shelter. Since then, staff and live-in volunteers have been assigned to make regular neighborhood patrols.

Neighbors have pushed for the return of a paid guard, saying those efforts have fallen short.

Nick Baker, the center's manager, said in March that Catholic Charities took the complaints seriously but couldn't afford to re-hire a guard.

Shauna Larsen, a Morgan Street landlord, applauded the new deal.

"We're all so happy to hear they've made this decision," she said by e-mail.

Catholic Charities declined to say how much money has been donated for the guard's salary or how it plans to continue once the test period is over.

"It is expected that the knowledge we acquire . . . will allow all neighborhood members to work together to develop additional projects as needed," officials said in their statements.

Bender said no future meetings have been scheduled to address the issue.

"At this point we're taking it day by day," she said.

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