



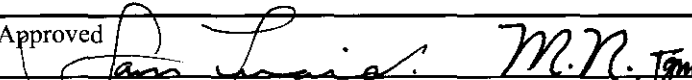
# Memorandum

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Councilmembers  
Sam T. Liccardo,  
Madison Nguyen and  
Pierluigi Oliverio

**SUBJECT: ONE-TIME FUNDING FOR  
EHC LIFEBUILDERS**

**DATE:** June 11, 2007

Approved  Date 6/11/07

**RECOMMENDATION** 

Approve the following actions for Fiscal Year 2007-08 Adopted Budget:

1. Approve a \$257,000 one-time appropriation to EHC Lifebuilders for continued full operation of the homeless shelter located in the Boccardo Reception Center.
2. Fund the appropriation from the Strategic Support/Technology Reserve.

**BACKGROUND**

In Budget Document 14, Councilmembers Nguyen and Liccardo requested \$257,000 in one-time funding for EHC Lifebuilders, Inc. (EHC), the Valley’s largest nonprofit provider of shelter and related services to the homeless, to operate the Boccardo Reception Center (BRC). The one-time expenditure will enable EHC to keep the 250-bed shelter operating at full capacity during the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

Funding shortfalls will otherwise force EHC to cut 125 beds from the shelter, thereby placing 125 adults out into the street each night. With a commitment from the City Council, EHC can leverage money from its private and foundation sources to make up any shortfalls necessary to fully fund the operation of the BRC at full capacity for another year.

This funding – which amounts to spending \$5 per homeless client per night – appears critical for the following reasons:

• **Humanitarian:**

Until the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force to End Homelessness enables the City, County, and their nonprofit partners to create sufficient permanent housing for our growing homeless population, we must provide sufficient shelter for those homeless willing to come off the street. Although shelters like the BRC require clients to be sober and drug-free, it routinely runs at full capacity, as do other nearby shelters.

- **Cost-Effectiveness:**

Spending an additional \$5 per bed per-night amounts to a bargain when one considers the alternatives. People living on the street strain scarce police resources, both for emergency services and because of their greater likelihood of committing crime and using drugs. A night in jail costs the taxpayers \$94. When a homeless adult faces problems from exposure on a cold winter night, or suffers from victimization on the street, the taxpayers will foot the bill for a \$1,278 per-night cost of a hospital bed.

- **Providing for Long-Term Planning:**

This one-time money will allow EHC to continue to provide shelter for adults while the Housing Department and EHC continue to plan for the conversion of the Boccardo shelter to permanent housing for extremely low-income (ELI) residents. EHC is fully committed to the City's "Housing First" policy to convert its shelter to permanent ELI units to provide a long-term solution to homelessness. Until that plan comes to fruition with the accompanying financial strategy, however, EHC must deal with the immediate human need of those people that it serves.

- **Economic Development and Safety Downtown:**

BRC is located on Little Orchard Way in District 7, but its displaced shelter occupants will otherwise find themselves on the streets throughout districts 7 and 3, particularly in our downtown. Over \$2 billion has been expended over the last quarter century to revitalize the downtown. Yet all of this investment will go for naught if companies hesitate to move to a location where their employees will feel concerned about safety, or if patrons feel reluctant to walk by several panhandlers as they leave their favorite restaurant.

## **CONCLUSION**

I urge my Council colleagues to support a one-time appropriation of \$257,000 so that EHC can operate its Boccardo shelter at full capacity during the next fiscal year.

cc: Mayor and City Council  
City Clerk

Attachment

# Editorial: Adversity only makes Bellarmine star stronger

## TEEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS ON HIS OWN HAVE COACH 'IN AWE'

Mercury News Editorial  
San Jose Mercury News

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Along with being a celebration of students' success, high school graduation is a tribute to parents and their years of guidance, love, encouragement and shelter. Not to mention the occasional arm-twisting to see that homework got done.

Risks rise sharply for teenagers who face life without them. But disadvantages are not always destiny. Take Stephen Powell, who has ventured solo through the dangerous rapids of adolescence, only to emerge strong and exuberant.

On Saturday, Stephen graduated from Bellarmine College Preparatory. In the fall, with full financial aid, he will attend Claremont McKenna College, which he chose over the University of California-Berkeley.

Like several older half-brothers before him, Stephen has been forced to live by himself. For the past two years home has been an apartment supplied for the homeless by EHC LifeBuilders. He has cooked for himself, paid his own bills, worked to support himself, gotten himself back and forth to school. A handsome kid, part-Latino, part-African American, he has never known his father. His mother has been in and out of his life for years.

Stephen came to our attention when the director of the Avant! Foundation told us about a tutor he had hired who rode his bike every Wednesday from Bellarmine, near San Jose airport, to Alum Rock Library to work with a struggling student. We didn't know how exceptional he was. His advisers at Bellarmine, where Stephen has been a scholarship student the past two years, certainly did.

"While many students have impressed me with their talent and intelligence, Stephen is the first student that I would actually call heroic," Kevin McMahon, an English teacher who is Stephen's track coach, wrote in his college recommendation. "In short, I am in awe of this young man."

One reason among many is that in February 2006, while weight-training for football, Stephen ruptured a disc in his back. For much of the summer he limped around in pain, uncertain of his future in sports. After a slow, patient rehabilitation, he rebounded this spring to become a top shot-putter and discus thrower, winning the regional discus competition last week, despite being, at 5-foot-11, 230 pounds, a relative Lilliputian in events dominated by leviathans.

Why is it that adversity crushes some and tempers others, makes some people bitter and others strong? At age 17, Stephen has responded to what life has thrown his way with maturity beyond his years, discipline and an optimism that creates admirers.

He's never been one to ask for help, but he's always had people looking out for him: the EHC housing manager who introduced him to Bellarmine, his teachers and brothers who call him every day and keep him grounded.

Stephen has learned to focus on what he can be, and "not waste my time thinking how things could have been different" or what he hasn't had. For students at Bellarmine, caught up in the cliquish world of high school, he offered a rare perspective, learned from struggle: Don't sweat the little things of life.

Stephen Powell's resilience can offer hope to other students who face poverty and instability. And even to those who don't.