Ten years is a long time in Silicon Valley. Within the past decade, hundreds of products have become obsolete. Those that have survived — and even thrived — are built on a strong foundation, meet a continuing need, and are constantly evolving into more efficient and effective versions.

Next month marks the beginning of the Opportunity Center’s (OC) 10th anniversary year. Designed to meet the needs of extremely low-income people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, the OC is as important today as it was 10 years ago. In fact, with the cost for even the smallest studio in the Mid-Peninsula soaring out of reach, the OC’s affordable apartments and on-site supportive services are more relevant now than at any point in its history.

Creating the Opportunity Center was the shared purpose that catalyzed concerned, caring individuals to coalesce as Community Working Group (CWG) in 1998. The passion, determination, and vision that drove CWG to mobilize the expertise and resources to build the OC — the first permanent supportive

See “President’s Message”, page 2
his November, Santa Clara County voters will consider Measure A, a $950 million bond measure to support affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness, low- and moderate-income residents, and first-time homebuyers.

Recent research indicates that voters are highly concerned about our region’s lack of affordable housing and its impact on individuals and the community as a whole. “For the first time in recent memory, voters see the most important problem facing Santa Clara County as housing,” said County Supervisor Cindy Chavez, who co-sponsored the bond proposal with Board President Dave Cortese. “We have nearly 5,000 people living on our streets and in our creeks, and the housing for them does not exist.”

Santa Clara County currently has the fourth-highest homeless rate in the nation.

If Measure A passes, the majority of funds raised ($700 million) will be allocated to support housing for extremely low-income residents (whose earnings fall below 30 percent of area median income), including permanent supportive housing, which targets chronically homeless individuals and helps them obtain health care and other services, and rapid rehousing projects, which are focused on those in temporary crisis. The measure must obtain a two-thirds majority vote to pass.

For more information about Measure A, visit http://yesonaffordablehousing.org/

The golden way is to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family as one.

— Mahatma Gandhi
Thank you, County Supervisors!

CWG Board Endorses Supervisors’ Affordable Housing Decisions

The Community Working Group Board of Directors has officially endorsed the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors’ recent decisions to put Measure A, an affordable housing bond measure, on the November ballot, and to partner with Palo Alto and the County Housing Authority to save Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. “As a dedicated group of volunteers who are committed to serving low-income families and individuals and strengthening our community through the creation of affordable homes, CWG commends our County Supervisors for their recent unanimous decisions in support of affordable housing,” said CWG Board Member Gail Price. “Their actions underscore the concern we all have, that so many hard-working people simply cannot find decent, affordable shelter in our region; and they are bold steps toward solving the problem.”

“I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.”
— Martin Luther King, Jr.

Planning to move forward in trying to save the mobile home park. The county and the city have each pledged $14.5 million to the effort.

Less than a week after the decision, a federal judge also upheld the city’s requirement that if Buena Vista is closed, the owners must pay relocation costs of about $20,000 per resident.

The city and county have been fighting to save Buena Vista because affordable housing is an endangered species in the region; in fact, Palo Alto’s 2015-2023 Housing Element states that there are almost no affordable housing options in the city for low-income households without substantial subsidies.

CWG’s properties: the Opportunity Center, 801 Alma Family Housing, and Alma Garden provide affordable homes to approximately 100 children and their families. Children who have safe, stable housing are more likely to succeed in school and be healthy than children who are unhoused or who are living in homes their families cannot afford.
Celebration plans for the Opportunity Center’s 10th anniversary are underway!

To make sure you are among the first to know what’s coming up, please visit https://communityworkinggroup.org/keep-in-touch/ and put “OC10” in the “other contact instructions” field.

Nearly 10 years ago, CWG and its partners finished building the dream of a permanent supportive housing complex for Mid-Peninsula individuals who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. CWG’s Opportunity Center turns 10 in September.