

# Paula Lomazzi Retiring From Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee

*By Isidore Mika Zekli Manes Dragan of SHOC, POLQA*

Paula Lomazzi has been a part of SHOC since 1997, giving her time, effort, and self to a cause she believes in for 26 years. But now, she has decided to leave SHOC and enter into her retirement. SHOC began in 1987 to serve the homeless community in a number of different ways, including beginning this publication and the vendor program associated with it. Paula was homeless herself when she got involved with this publication, and was one of the many homeless people activated by the act of creating this journal, which heads ever closer into its third decade of publication. Paula gives more details in an interview conducted with her regarding her retirement and her history in SHOC and with this journal.

“In 1997 I became involved in Homeward Street Journal, which was attached to the SHOC organization. At that time I was living outside, and it eventually led to us doing activism. The police kept hassling everybody who were camping outside, and we wanted to fight those injustices. This helped greatly to reinvigorate SHOC. SHOC was started in 1987 to address a newly formed city camping ban. SHOC ended up helping to overturn that, but afterwards it went kind of dormant, it hardly had a staff or faculty, but creating homeward street journal brought in a lot of new people to the organization.”

Trying to fill Paula's absence in the organization has required multiple people to step forward to learn how to fill the shoes she's leaving behind. In the past few years, a lot of fresh, young activists have come forward to do work with SHOC, as well as learn how to run the vendor program and take over the responsibilities of creating new issues of Homeward Journal.

“Before Homeward, I was always involved in community activism and sustainability. I found that I believe that when you learn something, you should share it. So Homeward Journal was a medium for sharing what I learned. Once a lot of homeless people got activated to become a part of SHOC, I became like a lot of homeless people's personal assistants, helping them function as organization. I would go around with clipboards and asking them to sign what they needed to sign, or go along collect a consensus among the community.” During the interview, I asked Paula to reflect on some of the various moments in her career of activism. Aside from the River Cleanup Project, which she enjoyed due to its impact on the environment. “I was also proud to be a part of certain campaigns, such as the Homeless Bill of Rights Campaign, the Right to Sleep Walk, my work with the Health Care for the Homeless, helping to start Safe Ground, Farm to Every Fork annual events, and more recently the Community Summit on Homelessness.” says Paula.

Around the office and during her final meetings shared with the organization, Her energy towards this work and during it cannot be replaced, and our gratitude for the massive foundation she has set for activists to walk upon and take action within, and grow what she helped set forth, cannot be understated.

When asked to give the final thoughts she'll be offering to SHOC Journal, Paula Lomazzi had this to say.

“In the near future, activism needs to step up, because the attacks against homelessness, people experiencing poverty, and marginalized groups has been increasing. They've been stepping up, so I think our community needs to step up to protect those most vulnerable. I guess it's a bad time for me to leave, but there are now opportunities for younger folks who are now stepping up to become leaders in this area.”

*Thank You For All Your Hard Work*



*Paula Lomazzi*

*Serving SHOC from 1997 to 2023  
Enjoy your Retirement!*

*Paula Lomazzi, Now Retired Executive Director of  
Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee*