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Notes from SVIMA meeting on Wed., March 22nd:

Guest: Erick Larson of The Village of Sonoma Valley

The Village of Sonoma Valley is a local nonprofit chapter of the Village Movement of California, the national Village to Village Network and a direct response to the California Master Plan on Aging. It is based on six initiatives, reflecting the major needs of seniors: transportation, food assistance, household help, dementia family support, caregiver resources and socialization.

Starting January 2023, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is seeking your feedback about the needs of and programs for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers in Sonoma County. Take the online survey here: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/sonoma-seniors>

Read the Index Tribune article here: <https://www.sonomanews.com/article/news/new-nonprofit-uses-it-takes-a-village-concept-to-help-seniors/>

Visit their website here: <https://villageofsonomavalley.org/>

Guest: Marty Bennett and Sonya Karabel of Unite Here

Marty is a staff member and consultant with Unite Here. Their union represents 15,000 hotel, restaurant, and food service employees throughout the Bay Area. Sonya is a worker at the Fairmont.

We request your support for our union organizing campaign at the Fairmont in Boyes Hot Springs. Currently, our union represents workers at the Petaluma Sheraton, Santa Rosa Hyatt, and the Santa Rosa AC Hotel. Another UNITE HERE local, Local 49, represents gaming and hotel workers at the Graton Casino in Rohnert Park. Most of our members are workers of color, women, and immigrant workers. Hence our union is simultaneously a labor rights, immigrant rights, gender rights, and civil rights organization.

We intend to organize hotels across the County and raise the labor standards for the entire industry. The present low-wage hospitality labor market is not sustainable. There is a substantial difference between the wages, benefits, and working conditions in union compared to non-union hotels. For example, the owner of the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn--Brookfield Private Equity--also owns two unionized Fairmont brand hotels in San Francisco and another in Berkeley. San Francisco Fairmont union housekeepers earn \$28 an hour compared to \$21 for housekeepers at the Fairmont in Sonoma.

And in the County over the last twenty years gross annual rents climbed 28% but renter incomes grew by just 10% yearly.

Hence, rent is unaffordable for workers residing in the Valley, and often, they must live in overcrowded housing detrimental to their family's health and their children's educational achievement. Other workers move out of the county to more affordable housing markets, yielding increased greenhouse gas emissions and limiting the ability of workers to participate in the civic and cultural life of communities where they work.

Please Save the Date: Monday, April 24th at 6:30 pm UNITE HERE staff and workers from the Fairmont will make a presentation to the Sonoma Valley Democratic Club on zoom about the organizing campaign. More specifics are forthcoming.

See the Press Democrat article here: <https://12ft.io/proxy?q=https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/opinion/close-to-home-minimum-wage-isnt-a-living-wage/>

Visit the website here: <https://unitehere.org/changing-lives/>

Guest: Kathy King, S.O.S. (Sonoma Overnight Support)

New in-depth study of the hunger problem in Sonoma Valley, commissioned by the Sonoma Valley Catalyst Fund, was released end of January 2023. Sonoma Valley Food Security Assessment states that 1 in 5 Valley residents struggle to have enough to eat or are chronically worried about having adequate food. That translates into 8,000 people. In 2020 they served just over 37,000 meals and in 2022 they nearly doubled that to 62,000 roughly. And they delivered 5,216 meals to those that are without transportation or are home bound.

Of the 2022 clients that are registered in the food program approximately 234 are housed and 176 unhoused and 16 declined to answer. This shows the hunger problem is not just a “homeless” issue. The survey also showed that of the 176 unhoused clients 71 are living in their car.

S.O.S. has provided approximately 747 showers, 252 loads of laundry done and 230 case management appointments met.

They are grateful for the community's support and continue to ask for help. If you would like to donate or volunteer please visit the website to see how you can best be of help: <https://www.sonomaovernightsupport.org/> or call 707-939-6777