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June 22, 2023

In an article about homelessness dated February 27, 2018, and published on [Rio Linda Online](#), Sacramento County District 4 Supervisor Sue Frost said

*“...handing out free stuff doesn't really solve the problem or provide a path out of homelessness...”*

Earlier this month, the Rio Linda Elverta Chamber of Commerce received a letter asking for donations for a luncheon honoring the homeless and homeless veterans in our community.

This event is known as the “Freedom Lunch”, and is scheduled for July 1, 2023. It will take place at “Ground Zero”, the well-known homeless campground on Elkhorn Boulevard where the old Rio Linda sewage plant was located, just east of Elkhorn Manor Drive.

At previous CASA/Sheriff meetings, and at Supervisor Frost’s quarterly community meetings, the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department has stated that if we as a community want the homeless population to leave the area, we need to STOP feeding and clothing them. They have asked us directly to STOP giving the homeless handouts of any kind.

In July of 2021, when Metro Fire and Regional Parks cleared out Ground Zero, the largest issue wasn’t removing the homeless residents or their property, it was the immense volume of waste that was at the site. There were food products that had been donated and spoiled, many cases of bottled water, and the associated packaging that was unable to be disposed of which was scooped up with a frontloader and loaded into a dumpster.

As representatives of the Rio Linda/Elverta business community, we feel that hosting a luncheon for the homeless sends the wrong message by encouraging and welcoming them to remain in the community.

The homeless cost the businesses of Sacramento County millions of dollars each year in theft, shoplifting, broken windows and doors, and customer deterrence. Rio Linda is not immune to this; The primary reason Rio Java is moving away from the area near Ground Zero is because of the problems that the homeless have caused and the money that the homeless have cost them. Earlier this year, a vagrant broke out a window at Rio Java, entering the premises and stealing hundreds of dollars in products. Last week a masked vagrant robbed the smoke shop next door during the middle of the day.

Understanding that, the Rio Linda Elverta Chamber of Commerce and the Rio Linda Elverta Neighborhood Association would like to discourage the organizers from continuing with this event, which is being conducted in direct opposition to the recommendations of Sacramento County Regional Parks, the Sacramento County Sheriff, and Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost.

