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**HOUSING MATTERS PRESENTS  
PICTURE THIS: REIMAGINING HOME AND BELONGING**

*Event brings unique perspectives and introduces innovative ways of thinking about home, belonging, land and place within the framework of community collaboration to the public*

**SANTA CRUZ, CA — March 7, 2024** — Housing Matters will host *Picture This: Reimagining Home and Belonging* to launch the organization’s new Community Conversations Speakers Bureau in the Sequoia Ballroom at Hotel Paradox in Santa Cruz on Sunday, April 7.

The Community Conversations program provides space for historically marginalized people with lived experience of homelessness to share their insights with the community through storytelling.

“This event is the culmination of thoughtful planning to bring the stories of lived experience of homelessness to the larger community,” said Mer Stafford, Chief Impact Officer at Housing Matters. “By reimagining home and belonging, we want our audience to come away with a sense of hope. We must imagine the community that we wish to have and then join together to make it so.”

The launch event features a panel of experts from diverse and storied backgrounds including a New York Times best-selling author and several Community Conversations Speakers Bureau participants who will share stories of lived experience of homelessness. Speakers and presenters will share unique perspectives as they engage with the themes of home, belonging, land and place. Headliners include:

- New York Times best-selling author, educator and politician **Julie Lythcott-Haims**. Her 2017 memoir, *Real American*, chronicled her experience of coming to terms with her own racial identity and the systemic inequities that Black Americans face.
- **Thomas Sage Pedersen**, a Santa Cruz-based musician, composer, podcaster and community organizer who among many projects, is known for his “Speak For Change” interview podcast which facilitates conversations with artists, activists, politicians and community members on timely topics such as social and racial justice that impact local and global communities.

“Participating in ‘Picture This’ is a unique opportunity to share a deep dive of historical evidence on how we got here and to offer insight and solution on how we right these wrongs,” said Abi Mustapha, Housing Matters Artist-In-Residence and a speaker at the event. “The audience can expect to learn something new and possibly sit with some discomfort about how many of us have benefited from the historical systems of oppression leading to homelessness.”

The event begins at 5 p.m. with a reception featuring live music, a cash bar and light snacks. The speakers will begin at 6 p.m. For the complete speaker line-up, visit the [event page](#).

General admission tickets are \$30/person. Group and student discounts are available. Advance tickets can be purchased on the Housing Matters [website](#) and there will be a small number of tickets available for purchase at the door. All proceeds from the event directly supports the Housing Matters programs and services that help stably house hundreds of people in Santa Cruz County each year.

The event aims to be an inspiring and interdisciplinary experience that informs and energizes the audience, shifting the way people think about homelessness in Santa Cruz County. To cultivate a more equitable community for all, the community must first radically imagine it.

Event sponsorship opportunities are available. Please reach out to Louis Powell, Director of Fundraising for details: [lpowell@housingmatterssc.org](mailto:lpowell@housingmatterssc.org).

### **About Housing Matters**

*Housing Matters partners with individuals and families to create pathways out of their homelessness into permanent housing. Housing Matters offers housing support services and case management as well as emergency shelter and direct services — including hot showers, public bathrooms, and a mailroom — to people experiencing homelessness. Our case management and housing navigation services help end homelessness for hundreds of individuals and their families every year. Learn more at [www.housingmatterssc.org](http://www.housingmatterssc.org) or connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn.*