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HOUSING SANTA CRUZ COUNTY TAPS LONGTIME COMMUNITY LEADER AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elaine Johnson has a deep commitment to creating positive change in the community

SANTA CRUZ, CA (Aug 4, 2022) — Housing Santa Cruz County has selected Elaine Johnson to be its first executive director, a huge milestone for the nonprofit working to increase affordable housing options for local residents and workers

“Collaboration and making a difference in my community motivate me,” said Johnson, a Live Oak resident. “I’m passionate about creating positive change in this community.”

Johnson, a native of the Bronx who holds a law degree from Monterey College of Law, considers founding the Santa Cruz County Neighborhood Courts Program to be one of her biggest achievements. The diversion program serves participants throughout the county, providing them an opportunity to make amends without carrying a criminal conviction. This type of work connects back to her reasons for joining the HSCC team.

HSCC is a countywide coalition of local organizations and individuals striving to ensure all county residents have access to safe, stable and affordable homes amid a housing crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent wildfires.

“I want the playing field to be leveled for everyone to have a seat at the table, and for there to be no limits regardless of race or background,” Johnson said. “I believe there is nothing one cannot do if they are given the space, time and support — financial and emotional — to do it.”

Johnson has trained and worked in the fields of juvenile dependency, community and divorce mediation, criminal law, and nonprofits, and she has extensive experience working in restorative justice, fundraising, community outreach and engagement, and community collaboration.

She also was an integral member of the Yes on Measure H campaign in 2018 that garnered more than 50 percent of the vote but fell short of the 2/3 majority needed to pass a tax measure that would have funded affordable housing efforts in Santa Cruz County.

HSCC launched in 2021 in the wake of that election effort.

“We are so excited to have Elaine on board,” HSCC Board Chair Don Lane said. “She has deep connections in the community and is well-respected as an advocate for marginalized communities. We look forward to effecting great change with her leadership.”

In 2022, HSCC is focused on growing its supporter base, advocating for at least eight affordable housing projects, hosting community education events and speaking at local government jurisdictions in support of specific affordable housing projects. HSCC also continues to monitor the progress of affordable housing projects across the county through its publicly available [affordable housing project map and tracker](#).

ABOUT HOUSING SANTA CRUZ COUNTY (HSCC)

HSCC is a broad-based coalition of organizations and community members dedicated to making Santa Cruz County affordable to all. Together, the coalition is building the leadership and organizational structure needed to align the political will and community will necessary to create the housing — particularly affordable housing — that Santa Cruz County needs to thrive. Learn more at www.housingsantacruzcounty.com, and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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