



## ELDER ACTION: It Takes a Village!

By Marcia Freedman & Rochelle Lefkowitz

A year ago, we began **ELDER ACTION**, as an Ashby Village interest group, to work together towards social justice. Today, we have more than 70 members meeting once a month at the Village (the third Tuesday of the month, 2-4 pm). We've formed three task forces to focus our efforts—on publicly funded long-term care/services and support, amending Prop 13 to provide more tax revenue to support public education and municipal services, and housing the homeless. As we approach the 2020 election we will no doubt also gear up for voter registration and get-out-the vote activities.

### Long-Term Care

No doubt most of us have at least thought about what happens if and when we will need long-term care services and support, and probably many of us have already faced that situation. Our membership in the Village can answer some of those needs for nonmedical support and services. But in the absence of (very expensive) long-term care insurance, it is a daunting and frightening prospect, forcing us to rely on our children, friends and neighbors for the care we might need; or, alternatively, spending all our assets down and going on Medi-Cal to pay for nursing home care.

**ELDER ACTION** has joined with the California Aging and Disability Alliance to advocate for a statewide social insurance program of long-term care/long-term services and support. We are working closely with the Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network to work on the grassroots level to support this effort. Currently, we seek your stories about what has worked for you and what hasn't.

If you have a story to share, we are here to listen and to honor your stories. We are looking for:

\* Stories that speak to individuals or families who are struggling to coordinate, sustain or afford long-term services and support, and

\* Stories that speak to great caregiving relationships (between family members, friends, paid and unpaid attendants and their employers).

Send your stories to us ([elderactionnow@gmail.com](mailto:elderactionnow@gmail.com)) and they will become part of the larger narrative making the case for publicly funded long-term care.

## **Reform of Proposition 13**

Many of us remember when this ballot measure passed in 1978. Back then, elders like us who owned homes faced losing them to rising property taxes. Turns out that was the fig leaf that since then has enabled large corporations--like Chevron, Disney and Intel--to continue to pay property taxes based on 1970s assessments.

**ELDER ACTION** has joined with 26 statewide organizations--including the League of Women Voters, California Teachers Association, California Calls, and the California Association of Retired Americans (CARA) to place a proposition on the 2020 ballot, ***Schools and Communities First***. If it passes, these corporations will begin to pay property taxes based on current assessments, thus bringing our state \$11 billion new dollars every year, of which \$4.5 billion will be allocated to our public schools. Local governments will get the rest--for roads, libraries, hospitals, parks and senior centers--everything we've been told there's no money for, for decades.

Village communities like ours are already being targeted by the proposition's well-funded opponents. Even though ***Schools and Communities First*** won't affect private homes, apartment houses or small businesses (*only* large corporate property owners), we're already getting scare mail, at home and online, warning us that any change in Prop 13 will lead to us lose our homes. Fortunately, we're old enough to know better!

**ELDER ACTION** will soon begin to gather signatures to get this measure on the 2020 ballot. We will need all the help we can get, and hopefully the Ashby Village community will do its part. If you'd like to be involved in this effort, let us know [\(elderactionnow@gmail.com\)](mailto:elderactionnow@gmail.com).

## **Housing the Homeless**

We've all seen it as we move about our city--homeless encampments everywhere. There are thousands of homeless in people in the East Bay, and almost half are over the age of 50. Many are newly homeless, having been displaced by ever-rising rents and now living in RVs (when lucky), couch-surfing, and living on the streets. **ELDER ACTION** will advocate for increased low-income, subsidized and supportive housing as part of the city's Age-Friendly Berkeley initiatives and will work with newly emerging neighborhood groups to advocate for such housing to be built along the Adeline corridor and the North Berkeley and Ashby Bart station parking lots.

## **JOIN US!**

Get involved in the movement to reform Prop 13, the long-term care initiative or Age-

Friendly Berkeley housing advocacy. Get to know us by coming to our next monthly meeting--**Tuesday, September 17, 2-4 pm at the Village (1821 Catalina).**

Want to know more? Contact us at [elderactionnow@gmail.com](mailto:elderactionnow@gmail.com). We'd love to hear from you!