

HOT AIR

New Solution To Homelessness In LA... Colorfully Painted Tents

Jazz Shaw March 3, 2020



As the homelessness crisis in California has been unfolding for the past several years, I've been saying repeatedly that somebody needs to start thinking outside the box to come up with some solutions. This might be a little bit further outside the box than I was thinking, but a local artist has come up with a scheme to provide some relief while raising public awareness of the problem. Ed Massey had already unveiled a sculpture of a homeless man in the city last year, but how he's going to be handing out tents painted with his unique artistic designs for the indigent to sleep in.

You might be wondering how much difference some tents would make for a problem of this magnitude. So was I. But as it turns out, he's got five thousand of them. (CBS Los Angeles)

A local artist and activist is using his craft to get the public's attention focused on the homeless crises continuing to grow in Los Angeles County.

Artist Ed Massey said he plans to hand out nearly 5,000 tents covered in his brightly colored designs in order to raise awareness of the issue.

On Friday, Massey displayed the tents on Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica surrounding Massey's seven-foot-tall sculpture of a homeless man that debuted last year.

If you follow the link you can see some photos of the tents. I'll be the first to admit that they're not bad looking at all and would probably be far less of an eyesore than most homeless encampments wind up being. And he's planning to do all of this with his own money rather than placing additional strains on taxpayer-funded resources, so that's a plus.

But with all of that said, tents are not a long-term solution to Los Angeles' homeless epidemic. Yes, having any sort of roof over your head in inclement weather is better than suffering from exposure, but there are too many people living in tents, cardboard boxes and other makeshift shelters as it is. Also, the tents are obviously going to be set up on the sidewalks where current encampments exist. All this is going to do is take up even more public space, exacerbating some of the current problems being caused by these large masses of people.

Massey himself admits that this isn't a real solution for another reason. Tents do not provide access to running, potable water for drinking and bathing. They don't come with bathrooms. They also don't provide much in the way of security if a determined attacker is looking to assault or rob the homeless. Anyone with a pocket knife can quickly break in.

I'm not arguing against Massey being able to distribute the tents if that's his plan. After all, as I mentioned above, it's better than nothing. But at the risk of sounding like a broken record, no amount of temporary shelter is going to

solve this problem in the long run. Until we can tackle the fundamental causes of homelessness (and there are several) and figure out a way to stop so many people from ending up without a roof over their heads, the problem will continue to grow.

A good start would be to get the mentally ill into treatment and help those with drug and alcohol addiction problems into appropriate programs if they are willing to seek help. Others who were displaced without such issues may need a path to simply overcome the monstrous cost of living in that city. I don't know how these feats might be accomplished, but the people in elected office have a responsibility to figure this out... *and quickly*.