



Volume 2, Issue 5 + Grant Park Neighbors is a special project of Ante Meridiem, Inc., a 501(c)3 California Non-Profit Corporation + August 2020

## Interview with Kate Oates



Kate Oates, CFET Coordinator

**GPN:** How long have you lived in Grant Park neighborhood?

**Kate:** We moved back to Santa Cruz six years ago, first on Jewell Street, then moved Market Street, near the Senior Center, for six years. Last October we bought a home on Pryce Street, across Ocean. Our boys are six and nine and love Grant Park.

**GPN:** Please describe Downtown Streets Team (DST).

**Kate:** DST is a volunteer work experience program for homeless people. Team Members volunteer in the community M-F, 8am to noon, picking up trash and safely disposing of needles. We operate in 7 project areas, including Emeline/Grant Park. In exchange for volunteering we provide team members with basic needs stipends in the form of gift cards and case management. Ultimately, we remove barriers to employment and provide dignity, hope, and a pathway out of homelessness.

**GPN:** What would you like neighbors to know about the DST crew and what benefits can we expect? Anything we can do to help?

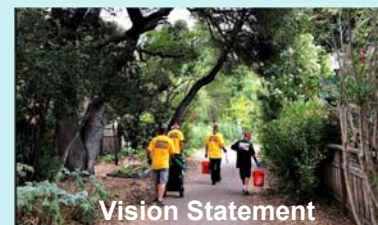
**Kate:** In our first week serving the Grant Park neighborhood, we picked up 12 bags of trash and found 17 needles. You will see our Team Members out and about Mondays through Wednesdays. We hit hard-trafficked areas each of those days, go through the Grant Park each of those days, and fan out through the neighborhood intermittently. Don't be afraid to say hi when you see the Team. That small act of kindness is a building block for our Team Members' self-esteem. It's wonderful to have neighborhood support. One neighbor broke out singing her thanks when she saw our crew!

**GPN:** How did you get involved with DST?

**Kate:** In 2018 some families in the neighborhood met during the midterm elections to discuss local measures. Our conversation expanded to Grant Park, County facilities, and homelessness. I was aware of the DST and the work they were doing. I suggested we reach out to them to see about a Team in our neighborhood. Soon after, a few of us met with then Program Manager, Greg Pensinger, to discuss our idea. In 2019 we asked them to come into GP neighborhood. At that time I was a stay at home mom for 8 years. I saw there was a position open at DST and decided to apply. I was looking to reenter the workforce, as my youngest was about to enter school. I wanted to do something to better our community. The stars aligned and here I am.

**GPN:** What do you think is the solution to homelessness?

**Kate:** There is "no one type fits all" answer. But I do know that the DST model works. It is a low barrier program. We do not require Team Members to be clean and sober before joining; we do ask that they come to shift sober. If they're having a hard time we ask them to call in to their Team Leader. That is a step in being accountable. Our Team Members show up and work hard 4 hours per day. Beautifying the community is meaningful work, something to be proud of, (cont., over)



Grant Park Neighbors will work with the Parks and Recreation Department, Santa Cruz City and County to promote a safe and welcoming environment for neighbors and the community to gather for recreational, leisurely, and family activities, and to enjoy the beauty of the park.

## Adopt-A-Park Workday Postponed:

**The Adopt-A-Park Workday on Saturday, August 22nd has been postponed until further notice. In its place we will have Zoom-in-the-Park that Saturday, August 22nd at 10 am. The Adopt-A-Park Workday will be rescheduled to a later date.**

## Recreation Survey

Grant Park Neighbors asks for your input on our organization's scope of activity with six (6) short surveys.

Each survey has less than 15 questions, and will take no more than five (5) minutes to complete. Those that complete all six (6) surveys will be entered in a drawing for three \$25 gift cards; one from Dig Gardens, one from Marianne's Ice Cream, and one from the Habit Burger Grill.

Our 2nd survey concerns **Recreation** in the Grant Park Neighborhood, link: [surveymonkey.com/r/V3Y866D](https://surveymonkey.com/r/V3Y866D)

Our 1st survey as to **Senior Activities** is still alive and active at this link: [surveymonkey.com/r/HYHTQ5V](https://surveymonkey.com/r/HYHTQ5V)

More Information, details for events, news, and volunteering can be found on our website [grantparkneighbors.org](https://grantparkneighbors.org) or contact us at [grantpark95060@gmail.com](mailto:grantpark95060@gmail.com)





## Slow Streets on May Avenue

May Avenue is a neighborhood street where many residents walk and bike both in the area and as a major active transportation corridor to downtown. GPN is happy to announce that May Street from Grant Park to Water Street has been chosen as one of 11 Santa Cruz Streets in the Slow Streets Initiative. The streets will become more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly as more locals stay home and exercise in their communities.

## 908 Ocean St. Development Update

A neighborhood meeting concerning the proposed 908 Ocean Street development was held via Zoom on August 11th (2020). During this meeting, a focused GPN committee of engaged neighbors presented the points of a comment letter delivered later in the week to the city's planner, city leadership, and representative county supervisors regarding the project proposed at 908 Ocean Street. In the letter, concerns were grouped according to neighbor interest into four categories: transportation, construction, operations, and neighborhood character. **Rumored to be the largest residential project in Santa Cruz's history, the project at 908 Ocean Street is mixed-used development that is currently planned to host 408 residential units, potentially doubling the population of the neighborhood with one intense project. Community meetings began for this project on December 12, 2018.** As the first of comment letters, this was submitted to begin neighborhood engagement and open discussion with city leadership. Currently, the city has deemed the application incomplete as of February 3rd, 2020, allowing interested neighbors more time to look over the project and respond to the substance of the project. If you wish to participate, please email [grantpark95060@gmail.com](mailto:grantpark95060@gmail.com) with your interest!



## Interview with Kate Oates (cont.)

(cont. from front) a sense of purpose. Team Members then work with case managers, like myself, to obtain vital documents, get a phone, schedule doctor's appointments, build a resume, apply for jobs, and work toward housing. We don't tell our Team Members what their goals should be. They tell us what they want to accomplish; they take ownership. Step-by-step we work together to remove barriers from their lives.

**GPN:** How did GPN help you launch DST?

**Kate:** This wouldn't have happened without GPN. Brad and others who contacted the County Supervisors laid the groundwork. In particular, Supervisor Leopold's taking part in GPN's park clean-up day brought attention to our need.

**GPN:** Anything else you'd like to say to neighbors?

**Kate:** I'm so proud to be part of a neighborhood that is solution-oriented and committed to making our neighborhood a better place. Thank you! Follow DST on Instagram or Facebook. [dst\\_santacruz](https://www.instagram.com/dst_santacruz) & Santa Cruz Downtown Streets Team. And you can reach me personally, [kate@streetsteam.org](mailto:kate@streetsteam.org)

**Active Planning Applications and Status for 908 Ocean Street can be found at:**

<https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/planning-and-community-development/active-planning-applications-and-status/908-ocean-street>