

Putting the living wage law to work

Officials, contractors must decide who is eligible for pay hikes

By **HEATHER BOERNER**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

1029-0

SANTA CRUZ — After the city's historic living wage ordinance passed by a unanimous vote of the City Council Tuesday night, Coalition for a Living Wage co-chair Nora Hochman had one thing to say. "We've got a lot of work to do now that the love-in is over," she said, referring to the ecstatic atmosphere at the council.

Now city staff and city contractors are left to figure out whose salary the new law will raise, how social service groups will make ends meet under the new requirements and how the law will affect the city's for-profit service contracts.

Diane Goldwasser surveyed the Teen Aged Mothers Infant-Toddler Center on Walnut Avenue recently, and over the shrieks of childish joy and anger resonating throughout the room, put a human face on the problem. She said that all seven of the current child-care workers earn well below the new city-approved living wage of \$11 an hour with benefits and \$12 without. Under the new ordinance only one child-care worker, a bilingual/bicultural caregiver, would receive city assistance to raise her salary level.

Across the county in Watsonville, where the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties

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