



WINTER NIGHTS Family Shelter

The GOOD NEWS Letter
Celebrating the families, volunteers and staff of
Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc
January 2021

**“Courage is an inner resolution to go
forward,
despite obstacles.”**

Martin Luther King, Jr.

It’s a full house at Winter Nights these days. Finally. We have welcomed 4 families into the shelter and are at our maximum socially-distanced capacity, 5 parents, and 7 of their children. Ages 2 – 18 years old.

Volunteers continue to deliver meals purchased from commercial kitchens. The staff is amazing, picking up all the roles that volunteers did inside the shelter in the past. They are warming meals, setting them out on a separate table for each family, taking care of cleanup, helping with activities for children and teens, sanitizing, doing laundry, taking temperatures and charting.

We don't think that this week's lifting of stay-at-home orders in California will impact the shelter-in-place protocols we are operating under. We are waiting for more information from the County.

We are grateful to report that 7 of 8 managers and staff have been vaccinated for Covid-19.



The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection
January Shelter Site

Welcome to Winter Nights, Covid-style.

Bill Shaw, Program Director, says that in his 7 years as a Winter Nights manager he has never spent so much time interviewing, explaining, and screening homeless families for a good fit, only to have them not show up. But we seem to be turning the corner and families have filled the Shelter. But not without special care.

He described a situation where a family with 2 toddlers was ready to enter the Shelter, so they needed to be tested for Covid-19. The county now has a program in Richmond for the homeless to get tested and stay in a hotel while waiting for their results. The family was tested and three days later, on Friday, the tests were negative. (Yay!) The county arranged for an Uber driver to bring them to the Winter Nights shelter in Pleasant Hill. When the Uber arrived at the hotel, there was a problem: No car seats for the little ones. The County contacted Kathleen Garcia, WN Shelter Manager and said the family would have to wait until Monday so the county could get car seats for the Uber ride.

Kathleen thought: maybe there is another way? Could we use our van, with car seats, to get them? No, the van was in use taking other families to shower at Oasis. But then she and Bill thought of something. They called the office and asked Teri to take her own car to Pittsburg, grab two car seats from storage, and head to Richmond. Teri did, the car seats were successfully installed in the Uber and the family arrived safely in Pleasant Hill, on Friday, as planned.

Just doing what we do, Covid-style.



Not every shelter site has showers, and that was the case in January. On weekdays, clients were showering at our Oasis Day Center. The Winter Nights van was very busy. With only one family at a time allowed in the van, it means multiple trips to Oasis, and cleaning the van in between.

On Sundays, The Bay Church of Concord is volunteering its Clean Start mobile showers at shelter sites without showers. This is a mighty mission of The Bay Church and we appreciate their support. The families are delighted, too.



Safe Parking Program

Almost Ready to Go

Plans for opening the Safe Parking Program were delayed a bit, but we think we we have it together now. It will be opening

February 1st. The Church of the Nazarene in Pittsburg has invited us to use their facility and we will be able to serve 6-7 cars in their lot. It is not a drop-in program, so all guests will be screened, interviewed and Covid-tested. We look forward to helping families and individuals living in their cars with supervised overnight parking (8 pm – 6 am), breakfast items, showers at Oasis, and access to all of our client services if they choose.

We have hired Donna, a former staff member to lead the charge as our SPP Project Manager and a site supervisor who is a former Shelter client. One more hire to go.

You Made CHRISTMAS Very Merry

Thank you to all the Congregations, Schools, Girl Scouts, Groups and Individuals who made this a very festive season for Winter Nights families and alumni.



Walnut Creek Neighbors & Newcomers
Joan Mangiaracina & Vera Braswell
with Bill Shaw



A young man from Indian Valley Elementary School organized a New Sock drive and donated them to the shelter. Shell Ridge Church did too.

Walnut Creek Neighbors & Newcomers Community Outreach Group normally gives clients new pajamas at Christmas. But due to Covid-19 they presented Winter Nights with Target and Visa gift cards.

Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church adopted ten Continued Success families and bought gifts for each family. A wonderful effort!

Girl Scout Troop #30602 provided lots of toys and children's clothes for Shelter families.

A woman donated 2 scooters.

Kathleen and Teri had a blast shopping for Shelter families and the Staff loved wrapping the presents.



Continued Success



Ten Continued Success families were surprised by Santa's elves:

Winter Nights managers Bill, Kathleen and Teri.

Thank you MDUUC for "adopting" ten families, and providing most of the gifts.

I'll get out of the way and let three of the families speak for themselves.

Alumni of the Safe Parking Program:

Thank you so much for all Winter Nights has done for myself and my Mom. Even though we met under stressful circumstances I will never forget all who has helped us then and now. May God Bless You



This beautiful mother-daughter pair were living in their car in 2017, when they found the WN Safe Parking Program. Their time with us gave them a chance to leave stress and fear of parking on the streets behind, and to heal and gather their strength. With client services, they found an apartment and have been in their own home since then. This photo is from the first Alumni reunion in October 2019.

An alumni shelter family:

**Hi Bill, Teri and Kathleen,
Thank you so so so much for loving on us. I got so emotional, at work , when my wife sent me the pic of y'all at our place Hugs and kisses to you guys. You took us in when family kicked us out. Till this day they haven't visited us, yet y'all have come to see us. My heart overflows with thanksgiving to God for you all. God bless each of you!!!**

An alumni shelter family:

WOW!! I don't even know how to say **THANK YOU**** big enough to express how awesome, thoughtful & generous your gifts were for each of us -- my children, my mom and myself. That was the best surprise ever and I just wanted you all to know how grateful I am for each one of you--and for Winter Nights!!**

Still have our backs and taking care of us. I feel the love and blessings and want you to know how much we love all of you! I was just telling a friend the other day how important it is for me to pay it forward any way I can because all of you have, and continue to, inspire me, and in doing so, it also is teaching my kids to keep paying it forward ♥.

I wish I was home when you came to drop off the gifts. My mom said I just missed you guys -as she sat on the couch with the See's candy in her lap, enjoying all the chocolates!! I wish all of you a safe, healthy and happy 2021.

P.s. feel free to come back and visit any time you guys are close by. We truly do miss you all!

An Alumni Mom is Expecting Their Third Child in April

Tragically, her partner passed away unexpectedly. Continued Success has been able to provide baby clothes and a crib and will continue to stay in touch.

Just as we feel the darkness, we welcome the light that shines with the promise of life, and with hopes for joy and happiness.



photo: Ally ad in WSJ 1/1/21

**Winter Nights Family Shelter
is currently at maximum
Covid-capacity, serving
4 families * 12 guests
5 parents and 7 of their
children
2 – 18 years old**

**Winter Night's
Safe Parking Program
Plans are to open February 1
Church of the Nazarene,
Pittsburg**



The Fall Appeal

\$66,000

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Winter Nights Fall Appeal. You donated a total of \$66,000: 114% of our goal. 109 individuals participated this year and we can't thank you enough.

These funds will cover 47 days and nights of Shelter, Safe Parking, the Oasis Day Center and Continued Success. Covid-style of course.

You are the BEST!

Offering hope, One Winter Night at a time.

Your support helps rebuild the lives of so many families. Thank you.

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**Checks can be made out to
Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc
and mailed to the address below.**

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