



# The **GOOD NEWS** Letter

*Celebrating the families, volunteers and staff of the*  
**Winter Nights Family Shelter**  
JULY 2021

## Winter Nights Family Shelter – Season 17 A Review and Thank you

### A Year of Transition

In 2020, Winter Nights became an independent nonprofit California public benefit corporation. For 16 years we were a program of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. But after so many years of growth it became clear that we should separate and with Winter Nights responsible for the WN program as well as its administrative costs and functions.

We are now Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc with our own EIN number, 84-4775540. Our programs continue as before: the Family Shelter, the Safe Parking Program and Continued Success plus all the administration, accounting, community outreach and donor development that supports them.



### A Year of Covid

While transitioning to an independent nonprofit, we also faced a very different year of operating under Covid-19 pandemic protocols. Judy Stillman had host congregation sites set for a normal 2-week, 36-week season schedule when in early summer Contra Costa County protocols for congregate shelters were established and demanded a reset. Winter Nights “Reimagined” was born.

We tossed the first schedule and asked our partner congregations for 4-week commitments where we could shelter-in-place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with room to socially distance clients within the facility. Tents had to be 12 feet apart, and meals were served by staff to family tables at least 6 feet apart. No buffet lines. Outside space, separate from any other use of the facilities, was needed for children to play. It was quite an “ask”.



What a wonderful response from our faith-group partners! Eight sites were found, giving us a season of 32 weeks, and 31 additional congregations simply asked how they could help. We opened late with 32 weeks of shelter, but we opened. November 2 – June 14.

Social distancing rules meant that we could only serve 14-15 clients at a time, or 4-5 families. The rules also meant that no volunteers could enter the shelter (paid staff only), no meals could be made and brought to the shelter (commercially prepared food had to be purchased for 3 meals a day), and all food and supplies had to be delivered with no contact. Schools went to remote learning so the children were taking their classes at the shelter. The van could be used to drive families to necessary appointments, but only one family at a time with cleaning in between runs.



Staff was incredible! They were fully committed to make it a success, work with families, be flexible in their shifts and responsibilities, and smiling through it all. Thank you to Bill, Teri, Stephanie, Elaine, Melissa, Ty, Randy and Elijah. You are fantastic and did such incredible work all season!

## Family Shelter

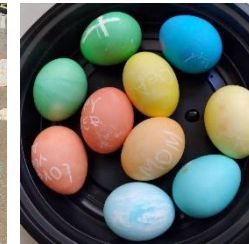


### Winter Nights Family Shelter served 9 families this season

- **9 families, 28 clients, 16 children & 12 adults.** One adult was the daughter of a family
- **The children ranged in age from an infant to 17 years old. 6 children were 5-years old and under.**
- There were **6 single-parent families**, and **3 two-parent families.**
- The average stay of a family was **104 days.**
- If you take the number of clients in each family, and the number of nights the family was at the shelter **Winter Nights provided a combined 2037 days of client stays.**

**Housing Outcomes were disappointing.** Housing was extremely scarce and increasingly expensive. The pandemic disrupted most government agencies and many nonprofits who work with us to secure housing. Government offices were closed, but they were eventually able to work remotely.

- One family found housing as a live-in caregiver with her young daughter
- One family was placed in a long-term shelter in Vallejo
- One family was temporarily placed in a motel/shelter waiting for a Housing Navigation opportunity.
- Two families moved out of the area for housing opportunities they found in Texas and Stockton.
- Two families left at the end of the season unhoused.
- Two families left the program on their own or were asked to leave for non-compliance. It happens.



### ♥ Our FABULOUS Faith Community Partners ♥

BRAVO! KUDOS! THANK YOU!

**These 39 Faith Communities were at the heart of Winter Nights. Their generous donation of facilities, time and talent is the core of the Winter Night's mission to provide shelter, meals and services to homeless families with children as they work toward stable, affordable housing. We can't thank YOU enough!**

Beth Chaim Congregation - Danville  
 Christ the King Catholic Church – Pleasant Hill  
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints –  
 Walnut Creek Stake  
 Church of Santa Maria, Catholic- Orinda  
 Concord United Methodist  
**Concord United Methodist Church\***  
 Danville Congregational Church  
**Episcopal Church of the Resurrection\*** - Pleasant Hill  
 First Christian Church of Concord  
 First Congregational Church of Martinez  
 First Presbyterian Church - Concord  
 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church - Concord  
 Grace Episcopal Church - Martinez  
 Hillcrest Congregational Church - Pleasant Hill  
 Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church - Orinda  
 Lafayette Christian Church  
 Lafayette United Methodist Church  
 Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church  
 Melinda Kring and Friends  
 Most Holy Rosary – Antioch

Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church –Walnut Creek  
**Orinda Community Church\***  
**San Damiano Retreat Center\*** – Danville  
 San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church  
**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church\*** – Pleasant Hill  
 St. Anselm's Episcopal Church - Lafayette  
 St. Bonaventure's Catholic Church - Concord  
 St. Isidore Catholic Church - Danville  
 St. John Vianney Catholic Church – Walnut Creek  
 St. Mary's Church of Immaculate Conception  
 St. Mathew's Lutheran – Walnut Creek  
**St. Paul's Episcopal Church\*** - Walnut Creek  
 St. Perpetua's Catholic Church - Lafayette  
 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church – Orinda  
 St. Timothy's Episcopal Church - Danville  
 Temple Isaiah of Lafayette  
 The Bay Church - Concord  
**Walnut Creek Friends Church\***  
**Walnut Creek United Methodist\***  
 Ygnacio Valley Presbyterian Church -Concord

# I Love Winter Nights

Judy Stillman

Those who know me know that I love Winter Nights. I don't hesitate to talk about it with anyone who wants to know more. Volunteering with Winter Nights has put me in touch with hundreds, if not thousands, of people. Those people either through their religious beliefs or their own personal moral code are drawn to help those less fortunate. Winter Nights has helped all of us see the value of not only giving a hand-out, but that there is more value in giving a hand up. It is so exciting to see a family move from a tent to an apartment and know that we had a small part in making that happen.



If I were asked what was best about being a part of Winter Nights, I would say there were three things. One is to be with a child who is being helped with schoolwork and for them to look up with an "Oh, now I get it" gleam on their face. Another is to be with some of the volunteers who support the Shelter, and as they coordinate others, or work at the Shelter, or organize to keep the Shelter going, see that they love what they are doing. The third is to see the wonderful staff and their interaction with homeless families and individuals. We have seen how they relate with those who are homeless and help them find the help they need to get stronger and be successful.



Winter Nights is changing and growing. There are now three successful programs and a much larger budget. Bill Shaw and I have worked as a team for the past 7 years and he is the perfect person to lead the Shelter in its growth. The Shelter has been a good part of my life for the past 14 years and 7 years ago I became Executive Director. I have now stepped aside from that role, but I will continue to lead the Summit (volunteers who coordinate other volunteers), maybe write a grant or two or return to tutoring kids. Winter Nights is so successful because of the goodness of people. I know that will continue under Bill's leadership and with the work of many volunteers.

~ *Judy Stillman*

Executive Director Emeritus

## The Safe Parking Program



**Safe Parking Program**, for individuals and families, provides staff-supervised overnight parking from 8 pm – 7 am, as well as restrooms, breakfast, snacks, hygiene supplies, and access to showers. The same assistance and client services are offered as at the shelter, including help funding things that will lead to employment and stable housing like car repair, vehicle registration and driver's license fees, and deposits on apartments. This program has proven to be a great success and in huge demand. It is currently the only safe parking program in the county.

This year, the program began in February and was scheduled to run through May. However, due to increased interest and participation this year, we are now operating for at least 7 months and have the goal of expanding into a year-round program. People sleep in their cars in the summer too, and still need some place safe to go. We are also increasing financial support for clients to help make that little bit of difference that puts them on the road to stable housing. Funding will be key.

Thanks to the amazing staff: Donna, Heather, Elijah and Denice. You are the BEST!

### Impact:

At the end of June, after 5 months of operation, SPP had served **24 clients in 18 cars**. This represents a **mother with her son, a woman who is pregnant, 5 couples and 2 individuals**. There was a wait list of **10 cars: 2 families with children, 1 couple and 7 individuals**.

Support and client management services have been offered to all participants. In that 5 months 8 people were given gas cards to help with climbing gas prices, 2 were helped with the cost of renewing driver's licenses and vehicle registration, allowing them to drive legally and seek employment, 2 others were helped with car repair by Winter Nights and HOPE Conference



**Continued Success** is a program to assist Winter Nights alumni families in ways that enable them to stay connected and to remain housed. For example: rental or utility assistance, car repairs, gas and store gift cards, referrals for jobs, items for the household, babies, and children.

**Impact:**

We reached out to 53 alumni families, 26 replied and 10 of them asked for some type of assistance.

- We helped two families with over-due rent because of job loss and kept them from eviction.
- We provided baby items for a family after the father unexpectedly passed away and the mother was expecting their third child.
- We are now helping a family of 7 with car repair costs.

It is so much easier to keep a family housed than invest in returning them to housing.



**FY 2020-2021 DONORS**

**Individual Donors**

**FY 20-21**

**325 Individual Donors**

\$2000 - \$10,000	8
\$1,000 - \$1,999	18
\$500 - \$999	29
\$100 - \$499	207
Up to \$99	77



**Congregations – Funding Donors 20-21**

Brentwood Community United Methodist Church	Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church - Walnut Creek
Christ the King Catholic Church - Pleasant Hill	San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
Church of Santa Maria - Orinda	Shell Ridge Community Church - Walnut Creek
Concord International Seventh-day Adventist Church	St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church - Pleasant Hill
Danville Congregational Church	St. Bonaventure's Catholic Church - Concord
First Baptist Church - Pittsburg	St. John Vianney Catholic Church - Walnut Creek
First Congregational Church of Antioch	St. Luke's Lutheran Church - Walnut Creek
First Congregational Church of Martinez	St. Mary's Church of the Immaculate Conception - Walnut Creek
First Presbyterian Church - Concord	St. Perpetua's Catholic Church - Lafayette
Hillcrest Congregational Church - Pleasant Hill	St. Stephen's Episcopal Church - Orinda
Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church - Orinda	Unity Center of Walnut Creek
Lafayette Christian Church	Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church
Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church	Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church - Walnut Creek





## Foundations - Local Cities and County - Businesses



### Antioch Community Foundation

I am pleased to notify you that the ACF Board of Directors has awarded Winter Nights a *Community Impact Grant* in the amount of **\$1,000** to support your ***Safe Parking Program***. We are delighted to support such a valuable program that is providing year-round safe parking for families and individuals living in their cars.

~ *Keith Archuleta, Executive Director, Antioch Community Foundation*

100+ Women Who Care – Contra Costa	Firedoll Foundation
Adobe Employee Community Fund	Hamsa Fund
All Breed Grooming & Pet Daycare	Idahoan Foods, LLC
Anonymous Foundation	Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation
Diablo Foods, Inc.	The Morton Foundation
City of Antioch - CDBG	National Council of Jewish Women
City of Concord - CDBG	Ik Onkar Peace Foundation
City of Pittsburg - CDBG	Orinda Woman's Club
Contra Costa County - CDBG	San Damiano Retreat Center
Danville Children's Guild	John and Beverly Stauffer Foundation
Emergency Food and Shelter Program	Sunlight Giving
Facebook Birthday donors	Y and H Soda Foundation

### Donations from Local Individuals, Community Groups, and Businesses

Gifts included: Meals, gift cards for gas and stores, sheets, towels, bedding, blankets, cleaning supplies, clothing, art supplies, car seats, bicycles, baby & toddler toys and supplies .....

*I know I have left someone special off the list. Please forgive me and know that you too are appreciated!*

Mike Alexander

John Alonso

Cindy Avila

Milana Battaglia

Rick Bikoff

Barbara Bisel

Bizzy Home Service Cleaning

Boy Scout Troop 200

Café Oasis

California Watercolor Association

Camp Tawonga

Checkers Catering

Courtney Coon

Leticia Cooper

Daisy Troop #32411

Linda Doran

Patricia Doughty

Gina Drakes

Girl Scout Troop #30602

Chris Graham

Margie Goldware

Guild of Quilters of Contra Costa

Sandy Heller

i heart art

Indian Valley Elementary School

Sandy Inouye

Judy & Marty Berg

Julia Farthing Kitay

Lamorinda Angel Stitchers

Larkey Market & Deli

Ann Lawrence

Candace Leong

Shielah Morrison

Urijah Olson

Ginny Paulsen

Christine Pitt

Barbara Reber

Katherine Rieder

Katie Roberts

Michaela Rossen

Jennifer Sabroe

Steve Saudy

Karen Schroter

See's Candies

Sensitive Home Inc.

Julie Storm

Virginia Stuart

Meg Swenson

Walnut Creek Neighbors & Newcomers

Community Outreach Group

Justin Wedel

Bobbie Yaeger

First Presbyterian Church - Concord

Lafayette United Methodist Women

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church

San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church

Shell Ridge Community Church - Walnut Creek

St. Isidore Catholic Church - Danville

St. Perpetua's Catholic Church - Lafayette

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church - Danville



## Update – Update – Update

July 29, 2021

- **Family Shelter**

There were two families who left at the end of the season unhoused and unsheltered, BUT in the past week both have been placed at other shelters.

- A mother with 2 young children is now in an Oakland shelter.
- A mother and father with a young daughter are in a shelter in Hayward.

- **Safe Parking Program**

There are now 12 cars with 15 clients. Mother & son, 2 couples and 9 individuals

The wait list is up too. 11 cars, 18 clients that include FOUR Families with children.

Two clients have been helped by funding auto repairs and vehicle registrations.

One man was assisted with the cost of replacing stolen professional barber's clippers and shears, and he is now looking for work.

- **Continued Success**

We have been able to help another family stay housed. Rental assistance was provided last week for a father, mother and their 3-year-old daughter.

He just texted Bill Shaw:

**“ Thanks soooo much Uncle Bill ur an angel, to an uncertain world.”**

Here are two very short videos that share the special qualities of the Family Shelter and its impact on real families.



[The Faces of Homelessness](#)



[Family Stories from Winter Nights](#)

Website



<https://cccwinternights.org/>

Facebook



[Winter Nights Facebook Page](#)

Contact

[info@cccwinternights.com](mailto:info@cccwinternights.com)

### Change Lives Help Fund Winter Nights

Checks can be made out to

**Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc** and sent to:

**Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc · 404 Gregory Lane, #7 · Pleasant Hill, CA · 94523**

**Online donations can be made through this link:**

**DONATE**

**THANK YOU!**

**Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc** is a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit, public benefit corporation

Tax ID # 84-4775540

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law,  
and no goods or services are provided in exchange for a donation.