



WINTER NIGHTS
Family Shelter

**The GOOD NEWS Letter
Celebrating the families, volunteers and staff of
Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc
APRIL - 2022**



I'm never sure how to celebrate the many causes whose "month" it is, but **April is/was Volunteer Month. And Winter Nights IS its VOLUNTEERS.**

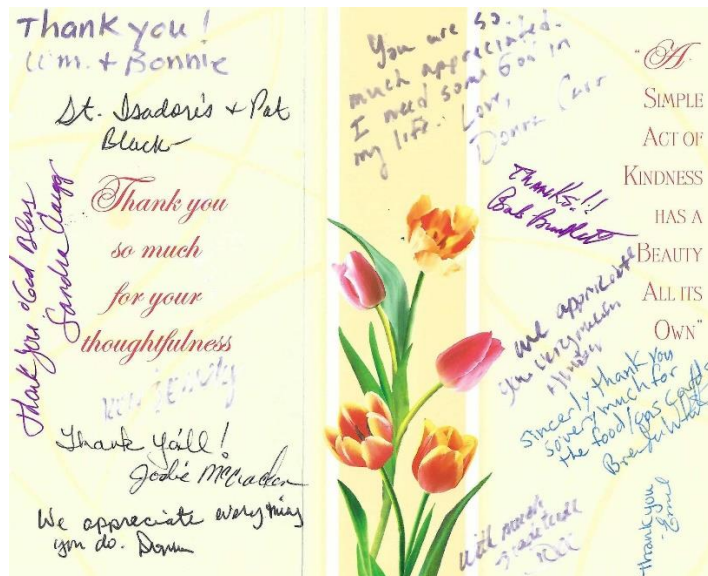
You are the amazing people who make such a difference in the lives of the families, children and individuals at Winter Nights.

Your energy, compassion and generosity makes Winter Nights special.

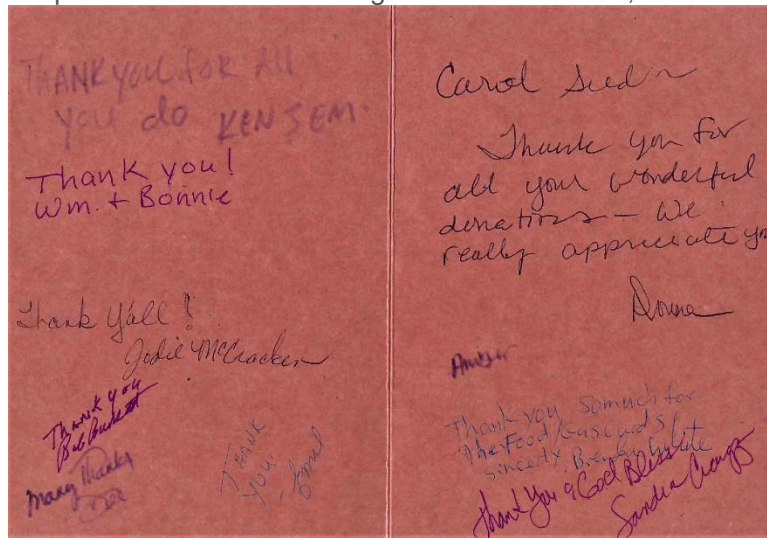
We know because clients tell us how important you are to their journey.

"One of the clients came up to me on Monday morning as they were packing to move and said "thank you for being there, for being so kind and for feeding us so well; particularly the weekend breakfast." Then I got a hug!"

This is a thank you card sent by the Clients of the Safe Parking Program to Pat Black and St Isadore's Church



An April card from Safe Parking clients to volunteer, Carol Seed.



Jo Kerner An outstanding Winter Nights Volunteer



We all know that one thing that makes Winter Nights successful is the volunteers. There is a super volunteer that comes to mind when we think of volunteers, and that is Jo Kerner. Jo started volunteering 15 years ago to help with tutoring kids. She and Judy Stillman tutored every Monday and determined if they could do it once a week, then others could as well and thus the Traveling Tutors were formed.

While tutoring children Jo found a need to find out the family stories and began interviewing them. She did that with all families and then published the reports for use for those writing grants. And then Jo began writing grants while still tutoring and interviewing.

Jo has written many grants for Winter Nights that have resulted in thousands of dollars for the Shelter, and she has recruited other grant writers and trained them to write very successful grants. She turned foundation grants over to them to focus on government grants for cities, the county and federal agencies. Those are most difficult grants to write because they require very specific details and hours of collecting data.

Jo retired from her work as a Public Health Administrator in Alameda County where she had grant writing experience. She has raised two children and has four grandchildren. In addition, to volunteering with Winter Nights she has been the chair of the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council. She is also on the board of her homeowners' associations and plays tennis and bocce. We honor this busy woman for her volunteer spirit and the many hours she has served Winter Nights.

~ Judy Stillman

Sheltering Families

Our thanks to the Host sites and Co-hosts who took such great care of the parents and children of the Family Shelter in March & April.

Concord United Methodist Church

Delores Logue, Host site coordinator.

Co-hosts: **Good Shepherd Lutheran - Concord.** Sue Hertless, coordinator
The Bay Church - Concord. Carey Gregg, coordinator

Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church - Walnut Creek

Rev. Rodney Lemery, Host site coordinator.



Family Shelter



Housing Success

This month a father and his 4-year-old son found housing. He had had his own business, which closed during the pandemic. They were only in the shelter a short time when he was offered a well-paying job that included housing for them. Isn't that great!

The Family Shelter

Due to Covid restrictions the Shelter is limited to 4 families

3 families - 6 guests

3 adults & 3 children

2 years - 8 years old

The Safe Parking Program



The Safe Parking Program

14 cars - 18 participants

4 adult couples and 10 individuals

Wait-List of 4 cars



A Safe Parking Update from Donna

Spring is in the air, even at Safe Parking. There are two clients in the program: she has been with us for about 8 months he just joined us a month ago. Well, they have hit it off so well that they have started "dating". Yup, and they are both 73 years old.

We helped 2 clients with storage bills this month and 1 client with Brakes and Registration for his car.

3 clients are actively searching for a place to move into and 1 couple was approved for move in assistance but decided not to take the unit so they are back on the search for a place as well. The 2 clients that have been looking for a place through Rapid Rehousing are still looking as well. We are doing our best to give them leads on places they may be able to afford. There are a very limited number of places within the price range of our clients and they go fast so I try to do a search twice a day (morning and at night). We try to keep the spirits up and their hopes high but realistic.

Over a month ago Shelter, Inc offered us gas cards that they had received specifically for clients of a parking program- so they picked ours. There was a lot of paperwork, but I had the clients work on it as a group. I delivered the completed applications to Shelter Inc. about 2 weeks ago and WOW! All that paperwork and time was well worth it! Each client

received \$200 in Safeway Gas & Gift cards (they can be used for food too) The clients were so grateful a couple even cried. HOORAY! GOD is GOOD ALL the TIME AND RIGHT ON TIME!!

Ginger is our new Saturday Overnight site supervisor and she is a great fit with our SPP Family.

Heather, a long time site supervisor, wrote the piece below. This is not only Volunteer Month, but **Autism Awareness Month**. Heather's son is autistic and wanted to share their story.

Thanks for all of your support,
Donna, SPP Manager



*Donna is hospitalized with an ongoing condition.
Please hold her in your thoughts and prayers.
5-4-22*



My name is Heather Aguilar and my son's name is Gage. We were at the Winter Nights Family Shelter in 2017 when he was 4 years old. My son had delayed speech. Some thought he had autism. I wasn't sure. But while I was in Winter Nights, through the support of the shelter staff, I was able to get him assessed. My son was diagnosed with severe autism. The process was difficult for me to deal with and to accept. It was a very emotional process for me, not knowing how I'd be able to take care of my son being homeless.

Being at Winter Nights and having the assistance of the staff to attend the meetings with me helped me better understand what was going on, and I was able to get the assistance that my son needs. Everyone was understanding that my son did not know how to communicate, and everybody still communicated with him and gave a lot of love. Nobody treated him any different or treated him special as I didn't want him to be.

My son was able to start school and was referred to the regional center. Having him in school and having the assistance of the program helped tremendously. The kids in the program were awesome so were the parents.

He is now 9 years old and is still in school at Spectrum Valley, working towards being able to communicate with others. I have to say that if I had not gone to Winter Night shelter I might never have had my son assessed and would have been in denial that there were further problems. Winter Nights is the reason why my son is able to have a chance at life being somewhat normal for him though, so many things are so hard for him to understand.

And though we have not been in the program for several years now we still continue to get their support which means a lot to me and my son.

I currently work for Winter Nights in their Safe Parking Program, where we were also clients in 2020. Being able to help others and to give back as I was given to, is truly a blessing. Sometimes you can't help everybody, but being there listening and trying to understand sometimes means everything to somebody who is struggling on the streets of homelessness.

So, as Winter Nights was there to support of me, my son and his autism I continue to do the same for anybody who comes into our program.

Thank you very much for everything. Thank you for what you've done, and continue to do, for me and my son in dealing with his autism and learning to cope. You've made a major change in our life.
~ Heather and Gage

To learn more about Spectrum Valley School : <https://www.spectrumschools.com/>

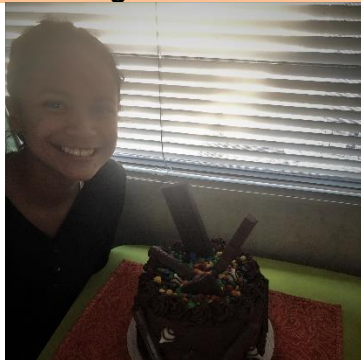


Update:

We sent the quarterly Continued Success email to 66 families to check in with them and ask how it was going. We heard back from 4 families.

Two families got birthday cakes made by Cakes for Kids, and that made their birthdays very special.

Teri - Continued Success manager



A 16th birthday chocolate-chocolate marvel! And a Minecraft cake for JJ



REMEMBERING EACH OTHER

Two weeks ago we were saddened by the sudden loss of one of our Safe Parking clients who had been with us since October. She was 63 yrs old and having trouble finding her way. But with help, she seemed to be making progress. When she hadn't shown up or called in for a few days, Donna, the SPP manager, reached out to her daughter. They made some calls and discovered that her mother had passed away in Oakland and the coroner was trying to locate next of kin. Her daughter will be letting us know when services are to take place. We offer our prayers for this child of God and her family.

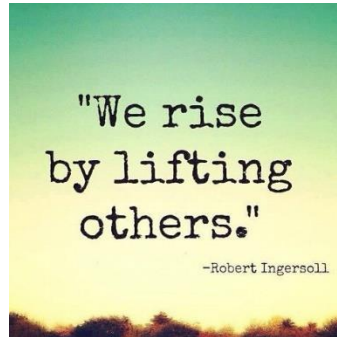


We also want to remember the life of one of our first Safe Parking clients. Jewel was 84 years old, and she and her adult daughter had been living in their car for 2 years. They joined Winter Night's 8-week pilot program for Safe Parking, January 2018. Their time in SPP gave them a chance to the leave stress and fear of parking on the streets behind, and to heal and to gather their strength. They found an apartment and have been in their own home since then.

Recently, Jewel developed health problems. In April she passed away peacefully in her home, in her daughter's care, at 87 years old. They both are an inspiration of dignity and resilience to us all. We give thanks for Jewel's life and the opportunity to have known her.



Jewel (on the right) and her daughter
at the first Alumni Reunion dinner, October, 2019



A Note From First Time Donors

I was recently asked “why” we chose to donate to Winter Nights Family Shelter. It seemed like an easy question, but it got us thinking. There are a number of reasons, but five of these reasons are at the top of our list. First, programs like Winter Nights help FAMILIES, and that’s near and dear to our heart. Second, we enjoy programs that address IMMEDIATE NEEDS. Third, we like the confidence that our contributions to Winter Nights Family Shelter doesn’t support a BIG BUREAUCRACY. Fourth, we like the fact that Winter Nights Family Shelter is right here in the USA. The fifth reason is by far the most important. We GENUINELY LIKE THE PEOPLE at Winter Nights. We TRUST them. It makes us feel good to help them help the clients of Winter Nights Family Shelter!

~Joann and Roger

MORE **Help ▲ Families Home**

Helping homeless families and individuals is what we do.

Every one is different, coming from different situations. We take the time to understand their journey, with a lot of incredible staff, volunteers and donors helping. - Bill Shaw

By donating

**YOU are helping us serve more families and individuals.
Thank You for making Winter Nights possible.**

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

DONATE ONLINE

➔ Forward

If you would like to share the Good News about Winter Nights with family, friends or colleagues, please forward it.

Past newsletters are available on our website

<https://cccwinternights.org/goodnews-archive/>

CONTACT US

Winter Nights Video - The Faces of Homelessness



Our Contact Information

Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc.
404 Gregory Lane #7
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
925-414-3883

<http://www.cccwinternights.org>

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage email preferences](#)

Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc
is a 501(c)(3) public benefit nonprofit.
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. Winter Nights respects and supports the privacy of all our clients. Any photos of clients are used only with their express permission.