



**WINTER NIGHTS**  
Family Shelter

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

**OCTOBER - 2023**

**Here We Go !**

**The Family Shelter  
is Celebrating 20 Remarkable Years  
of Compassion, Care and Community**



**Happy Halloween!**

**The Family Shelter opened September 25th.**

**We are off to a smooth start.**

For the third year in a row, Walnut Creek Friends Church was the first host site for the Family Shelter. They welcomed 4 families. St Anselm's Episcopal Church was the next host site hosting 5 families. We are thankful everyone who is scheduled to serve later this season. There is a full schedule of hosts,

cohosts and volunteers ready to share their generosity with Winter Nights families through mid-June.

Our staff is providing case management already, working with CORE Outreach, Coordinated Entry, Hope Solutions and other agencies to find potential housing solutions for as many families as possible this year.

Our Safe Parking Programs in both Antioch and Pittsburg have been helping clients all year. They have provided a total of 63 adults and children living in their cars with safe, supervised overnight parking so far. Isn't that great?!

Just letting you know, we have welcomed and trained 3 new staff members since July. At the Shelter there are two new members of the team, Chantel and Desiree. Both are Family Shelter alumna, and at Safe Parking, Woody has joined us. He can also draw on his lived experience of being homeless in the past. Oh, we also held an all-staff CPR & First Aid training in September.

At the office we are busy working on grants and organizing Appeal 2023 to ensure we have funds for all our expenses. A "Help Wanted" post to Facebook has generated lots of interest so we are still interviewing and hiring for the last few openings. Thanksgiving Food Boxes for alumni are planned as well as an Alumni Reunion in early December. Agencies throughout the county are inviting us to Resource Fairs and offering opportunities to speak to describe our programs. Tax forms are due mid-November and we are still working on the revision of the Winter Nights website to better reflect all three Winter Nights programs.

Read on! There's lots to tell you about what's happening at the Shelter, Safe Parking and Continued Success.

Gratefully,  
Ann Lawrence - your Good News writer/editor  
ann@cccwinternights.org

***P.S. Our 2023 Annual Appeal starts November 1st. Our goal is to raise \$175,000 by December 30th to fund these amazing programs. Your support would be greatly appreciated.***

## **Family Shelter**



These generous congregations and all their volunteers started the Family Shelter season for the first four weeks.



**Walnut Creek Friends Church,**  
**Maria Coburn, coordinator**  
*Co-Hosts*  
**Church of the Resurrection,**  
*Janelle Towle coordinator*  
**Grace Episcopal Church, Martinez**  
*Christina Reich coordinator*  
**Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church,**  
*Heather Ramamurthy coordinator*  
**Young Men's Service League-Pleasanton,**  
*Mili Shah coordinator*



**St. Anselm's Episcopal Church-**  
**Lafayette**  
**Eva Woo & Anne Brown coordinators**  
*No Co-host information - sorry*

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***From Maria Coburn***

***Host Site Coordinator for Walnut Creek Friends Church***

"September 25th marked the opening day for Winter Nights 20th season. Our congregation, Walnut Creek Friends Church, had the privilege to welcome the first guests. That evening two families joined the Shelter; a couple with a very energetic two year old girl and a single mother with a six year old girl. As the guests settled in, the parents seemed to stay at a distance but the girls had no problem playing happily together. Four co-host groups joined our effort to feed and provide activities for the Shelter for two weeks. Thank you all for an excellent job.

At the end of the two weeks we were at our maximum capacity of four families (maximum our facility can house. Six adults and five children, ages 6 months to 6 years..

Our part is done. As the Shelter moves on we pray for a successful season and hope that the stay at the Shelter will better the lives of many families." Maria Coburn, Walnut Creek Friends Church

***From Christina Reich***

***Coordinator for Grace Episcopal Church - Martinez***

"Breaking bread with the families at Winter Nights is always such a blessing to our Outreach Team at Grace, and this year was not different. While there were only three families the week we were there, we enjoyed getting to know them more intimately. Their stories about overcoming adversity are awe-inspiring. I think that those of us that volunteered received as much of a blessing as those we served. We even enjoyed coming up with alternative food choices for the varied allergies and food intolerances this time around, too. Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve. ~ Christina Reich, Grace Episcopal Church



Shelter Volunteers from Grace Episcopal Church, Martinez  
Shelley Pighin, Marty Eppenberger, Janet Kennedy, and Marj Leeds

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**The Family Shelter**  
October 26, 2023  
4 families - 11 guests  
5 adults & 6 children  
(5 months to 13 years old)

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## The Safe Parking Program



**The Safe Parking Program in Pittsburg**

3 cars - 3 participants

**The Safe Parking Program in Antioch**

7 cars - 14 clients

including a family with 7 children

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### **A client from SPP-Pittsburg found housing in October!**

He is so happy, and Winter Nights is happy to have been able to help him with part of his first month's rent to get him started. Extended Family from Walnut Creek United Methodist Church is helping with furnishings. Good luck and stay in touch.

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### *Continued Success*



### **A couple who was with us at SPP-Pittsburg found housing in October!**

They are very excited. Not only are they now in their own place, but their children are now able to join them in a real home. Again, we thank Walnut Creek United Methodist's Extended Family program for furnishing their new place. Best of luck and please stay in touch!

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### **CPR & First Aid Training for Staff**



Winter Nights held a CPR & First Aid course for all employees in September. What a great day! Russell McDaniel was the instructor. He

was incredible and patient and made it really fun. Everyone received their certificate and feels well prepared to handle these types of emergencies, should they arise.

Huge thanks to Russell for sharing his expertise and his talent as an instructor. Russell and his family were clients of the Family Shelter and now he is generously paying it forward. Thanks Russell!



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## Winter Nights in The Community

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### "WINTER NIGHTS" Shelters Families to Nurture Success

Jody Morgan, of the Alamo Today and Danville Today News, has spent the last month interviewing many of the people originally involved with the start of Winter Nights and with its 20 years of service and growth. Her article was published yesterday.

I won't spoil it for you. Read it at the link below. Thank you, Jody!

[Link to  
Alamo & Danville TODAY](#)

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Contra Costa Council on Homelessness

Homelessness Awareness Month 2023  
Recognitions for "Outstanding Volunteer"

### NOVEMBER IS HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness has announced its  
**2023 HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH AWARDS.**  
Winter Nights received one of them for "Outstanding Volunteer"

## Ann Lawrence

**Nominated by: Carmella Kowall, friend and co-worker**

**Supervisorial District:** District 2 ( San Ramon, Danville, Alamo, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Canyon, Rossmoor, Parkmead, Saranap and a portion of Walnut Creek))

### **Congratulations!**

**You are being recognized by the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness as an Outstanding Volunteer as part of Homelessness Awareness Month.**

**Nominee's service:** Ann Lawrence has been volunteering with Winter Nights for more than 10 years. Ann began as a co-hosting church volunteer. Ann's passion and skills didn't keep her in that one position for very long. She has been the lead coordinator for many years. In about 2017, she came up with the idea of the One Winter Night fundraiser. She calculated what it cost us to keep the Family Shelter open for one night and solicited donations on that basis. It was a great success. Ann was the powerhouse behind filing the paperwork for Winter Nights (toward the end of our 16th season) to become Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc. - an independent 501C3.

She has decorated for dinner, decorated for parties, and decorated for luncheons. She has washed linens, knit hats, transported, donated, organized, led teams, led meetings. Ann cooked for, cleaned up after, read books too and played with the children.

Ann has written letters, written thank-you cards and written emails. Ann is one of our original Board of Directors and is now Board Treasurer. Ann has written numerous successful grant requests. She has worked on fundraising, our website, and our incorporation. There really isn't much Ann hasn't worked on.

Ann has worked with our clients for many years, both at the shelter and behind the scenes. She works tirelessly for the homeless, and for our programs ... somedays working more hours than our staff. She is passionate and driven to helping the homeless in our county. Ann wears so many hats in our organization that it would take 10 people to do all the things she does as a volunteer. We are forever grateful for all she does for Winter Nights and for our clients.

Ann bakes a fabulous tomato pie, is an incredible gardener, and, you can't have her.



### **Winter Nights First Annual\* Mini-Fundraiser Mini-Pumpkins with Succulent Crowns**

Winter Nights Staff and volunteers had so much fun making succulent topped mini-pumpkins for Halloween as a mini-fundraiser. Our thanks to Diablo Foods in Lafayette for the pumpkins and Ann Lawrence for hundreds of succulent cuttings from her yard. And Thanks to Teri , Stephanie and her daughter Gabby, Ann and Dan for doing the gluing. They made over 120 small gems.

Over \$2,562 in donations were raised by offering them at various congregations and to those who stopped by the office.

\* Get Ready! Now that we know how much fun this is, we are planning to do it again next year. Ann is already planting more succulents to be ready for next October.



Teri, Ann, Dan, Gabby & Stephanie

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**MORE**  
**Help ▲ Families Home**

**November is the start of Winter Nights  
Annual Appeal 2023**

**We want to help more families home with Your help.**

In the next week or so, you will receive a letter or an email from us asking for your support.

Our goal is to raise **\$175,000** before December 31st.

*"We, as a family, have worked very hard and have a new life ahead of us.  
We don't know what we would have done without Winter Nights"*

*~ Mother and Father with one child*

**Donating is as easy as mailing a check to:**

**Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc.**

**404 Gregory Lane #7**

**Pleasant Hill, CA 94523**

**Donating ONLINE is easy, too.**

**DONATE ONLINE**

***You are the heroes behind the success  
of countless families and individuals.***

***"I'm very grateful for the program. It gives me somewhere to sleep  
that's safe and that's so important for me."***

~ A gentleman in the Safe Parking Program

**Don't forget to check if your employer has a Matching Fund.**

If you donate through a financial group or advisor, like a personal trust, charitable IRA, DAF or appreciated stock **remember, we are now**

**Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc.**

**EIN 84-4775540**

**Whatever way you choose, for whatever amount,  
YOU are helping us serve more families and individuals.**

For questions or assistance please call the office **925-414-3883**

Or email Winter Nights at the **CONTACT US** link below

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## Wish List

*Gas cards, Wal-Mart cards, Target cards,  
Twin-size fitted bottom sheets, pillows, sleeping bags,  
Lysol spray, Lysol disinfecting wipes,  
Diapers (size 2, 4 and 5) and baby wipes.*

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➔ 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





**Our Contact Information**

**Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc.**

**404 Gregory Lane #7**

**Pleasant Hill, CA 94523**

**925-414-3883**

**<http://www.cccwinternights.org>**

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.