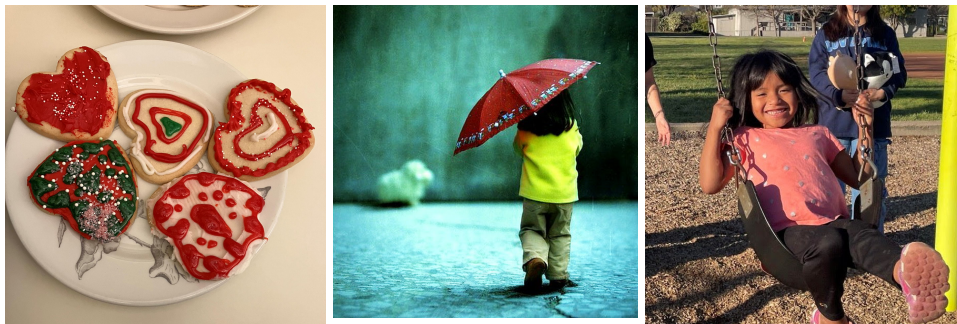




WINTER NIGHTS
Family Shelter

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

FEBRUARY / MARCH - 2023



News from February & March at Winter Nights

February was a busy month and March was too. So this is a combined February & March summary of Good News from Winter Nights.

It's cold and wet outside as I write. But I'm grateful, very grateful. We are sheltering families in warm spaces with warm meals, some fun for their children, and lots of support to return them to a place of their own. Adults and families living in their cars are on my mind too as we provide our Safe Parking participants with a safe nights sleep, hand warmers, blankets, breakfast and the chance for a warm evening meal.

Housing has been difficult to find these past months, but everyone keeps trying.

The Family Shelter is full to capacity and includes a family of eight with six children and another family of five with three children, and one adult child.

♥ The first baby of the season is due shortly. A mother and father in the Shelter are expecting their second child mid-April. (One of our staff members is expecting mid-April, too. ♥)

Safe Parking is very close to capacity and includes one family: a mother and child living in their car. Alumni households in Continued Success seem to be doing well.

The Board added two new members in March, both alumni of the Family Shelter: Rena Barajas Moore and Lea Esqueda.

Read on for the details and thank you for your interest and support.

Gratefully,
Ann - your Good News writer/editor

From the Board of Directors

On behalf of Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc. it is a pleasure to announce and introduce two new members of our Board of Directors. On Thursday, March 16, 2023, Rena Barajas Moore, and Lea Esqueda were unanimously elected to fill existing vacancies. Both Rena and Lea are alumna of our Family Shelter Program and, in the words of the Search Committee, "could not be more qualified or enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve on the Winter Nights board."

Rena is currently involved with the Richard Boyd Fellowship Program of the Safe Return Project. She is active in budgeting and planning, office management, and customer relations. Rena is married with three small children and lives in Antioch.

Lea is a Paralegal/Legal Assistant with a Walnut Creek law firm. Her responsibilities include preparing and processing legal documents, researching and analyzing case information, preparing case files, and coordinating litigation calendars. A single mother of two, Lea lives in Pittsburg.

The value of having members on the board who have lived through the challenges of being unhoused and forged a pathway forward can not be underestimated. As Carmella Kowall, our Executive Director, reminds us frequently, "you can't know what it is like if you haven't actually been there." Please join us in welcoming Rena and Lea.

Dan Swander
Board President
March 20, 2023

Family Shelter



These generous congregations and all their volunteers made the Family Shelter possible throughout February & March

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Danville, Joann Oliver Coordinator and cohost Beth Chaim Congregation, Danville, Naomi Ehrlich coordinator.

Lafayette United Methodist Church, Judy Stillman coordinator and their cohosts Ygnacio Valley Presbyterian Church, Walnut Creek, Paula Ash coordinator and St. Perpetua Catholic Church, Lafayette, Karen Kalvass, coordinator.

Orinda Community Church, Lani Shepp coordinator and their cohosts Holy Shepard Lutheran Church, Orinda, Karen Kalvass, coordinator, St. Perpetua Catholic Church, Lafayette, Karen Kalvass, coordinator and The Church of Santa Maria Catholic Church, Orinda, Susan Lundstrom, coordinator.

Concord United Methodist Church, Carolyn Paulson, coordinator and their cohosts Good Shepard Lutheran, Concord, Sue Hertless coordinator, and St. Bonaventure Catholic Church, Concord, Anne Sparks, coordinator.

You are all the best. Thanks for your big hearts and hard work.



St. Timothy's Episcopal Church - Danville



Lafayette United Methodist Church



Orinda Community Church



Concord United Methodist Church

The Family Shelter

March 29, 2023

5 families - 20 guests

7 parents & 13 children

3 Moms & 4 Dads

Children from 1 - 18 years old

♥ One mother is expecting their 2nd child in mid-April ♥



The Safe Parking Program



The Safe Parking Program

March 29, 2023

13 clients in 11 cars

Including one family of a mother and child and their pets

In the past two months, two Safe Parking clients were helped with expenses for important needs. One client was helped with a car repair and another was helped to pay a months storage unit fees where all of her possessions are stored as she works toward housing.

If you are wondering why the family in Safe Parking has not moved to the Shelter, it is because they have pets who are a special part of their household so they

want to stay in their car. Safe Parking not only welcomes minor children but also well-behaved family pets.

Update on Safe Parking - Antioch

Winter Nights is still working on the creation of a second Safe Parking Program in Antioch. The services will be identical to our Safe Parking Program in Pittsburg. We are waiting for official church approval for the proposed site and some other details before we begin hiring and training staff. Our hope is to have Safe Parking-Antioch running in a few months. More updates are coming soon.



Wish List Needs

Diapers: sizes 1 and 6

Pull-Ups: sizes 3T/4T or 4T/5T

Baby wipes

Gas cards - \$25

Questions? Contact the office 925-414-3883

or at info@cccwinternights.org

Continued Success



Quarterly Email to Alumni

We are about to send our quarterly email to 80+ alumni households to stay in touch, share information and shower them with encouragement. The email includes helpful resources for households, an optional survey for Contra Costa's Continuum of Care seeking input from those who have experienced homelessness, and a call for cakes for graduations. It is always wonderful to hear back from alumni in response to these emails.



Cakes4Kids

Helping Winter Nights kids celebrate their special day

You may have noticed that children of alumni families often celebrate their birthdays with very special birthday cakes. Month after month amazing volunteers from the nonprofit Cakes4Kids bake beautiful, imaginative and fun cakes decorated with a theme the child chooses.

In February and March seven children from Continued Success received their own special cake from Cakes4Kids.

Do you know about Cakes4Kids? Here is their story from their website:

Cake4Kids was founded in September 2010 in Sunnyvale, CA by Libby Gruender to provide free birthday cakes to foster children and at-risk youth in the San

Francisco Bay Area.

Libby read an article about a young girl in foster care in the Midwest, receiving her first birthday cake. The girl had just been placed in a new home and upon returning from school, her foster mother presented her with a chocolate birthday cake. The young girl burst into tears. Concerned that she had done something wrong, the mother told her she just wanted to make her happy. "If you don't like chocolate, I can bake you a different kind of cake." "It's not that," the girl replied, "I've just never had a birthday cake." Well, that was it — Libby resolved to make sure the children in her community had birthday cakes to celebrate.

What Libby started in 2010 as a grassroots effort with a few volunteers baking 13 cakes for a few agencies, has turned into a robust operation with hundreds of volunteers baking over 3,000 cakes per year for over 140 agencies!

Thank You Cakes4Kids for making birthdays special for the children of Winter Nights. Check out their website for more information.

<https://www.cake4kids.org/>



Thank you, Julie's Purse

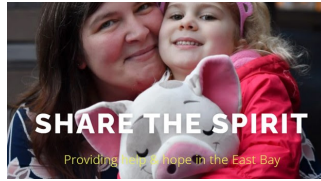
In late February, Nicole, from Julie's Purse dropped by the Winter Nights office with a donation of 30 new and gently used women's purses filled with essential items that women would want or need in their purse. Each purse also contains a note that says, "I care about your situation. I wish you peace, safety and the kindness of strangers." To everyone at Julie's Purse, you are just wonderful to remember the women in our programs. Thank You.



Karen Kalvass, St. Perpetua and Holy Shepard Lutheran Thank You!

We always have urgent needs and Karen Kalvass, a wonderful volunteer and supporter of Winter Nights, called and asked "What do you need right now? St. Perpetua and Holy Shepard have money left over from serving as cohosts" Her timing was perfect. Teri and Carmella gave her a very long list to choose from. A few days later Karen arrived at the office and filled the room with a large donation of sleeping bags, sheets, tents, pillows, blankets, flashlights, food for SPP, gas cards and Target and Safeway gift cards ... and more. Our cup runneth over and so did the office space.

Karen - you are amazing.... and everyone from St. Perpetua and Holy Shepherd- thank you for your generosity and so much more.



sharethespirit

A Very Generous Grant from Share the Spirit

In March, Winter Nights received a grant for **\$31,084** from the Share the Spirit East Bay campaign of the Bay Area News Group – East Bay Times. Share the Spirit is a holiday campaign to highlight the needs of our communities most vulnerable residents and raise funds from their readers for nonprofits who help them by interviewing and publishing articles on each nonprofit that was awarded a grant.

We were amazed at the size of the gift and so appreciative. We expected (hoped for) an amount similar to last year's \$19,000 donation. Receiving \$31,084 was just incredible. Winter Nights clients in all three of our programs will benefit through assistance addressing their unique needs, help with employment and housing and support to remain housed. What a Gift!

If you missed it, here is the link to the article published on Winter Nights this year. Our thanks to Lea Esqueda and Rick Felix for being interviewed and Rachel Mercader, journalist and photographer Ray Chavez for a wonderful article.

[Article Link](#)

MORE
Help ▲ Families Home

Year to Date

We are entering the last three months of the Shelter season and of our fiscal year. It costs about \$53,000 a month in staffing, client services, supplies, and gas.

We are a bit short in our estimates to finish the year having raised all the money we will have spent. Another \$75,000 would really help.

If you are able to help with a donation of any amount we would be so grateful.

DONATE ONLINE

**Or you can mail a check to:
Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc.
404 Gregory Lane #7
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523**

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

It can double your impact.

Whatever way you choose, for whatever amount,

**your gift makes a real difference in the lives of the children, parents
and individuals of Winter Nights.**

Thank You.

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

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

➔ **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, where you can also
subscribe

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

CONTACT US



Stories from Two Families - Family Shelter 2020



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.