



WINTER NIGHTS Family Shelter

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

MAY /JUNE- 2023



News from Winter Nights

My apologies that this newsletter is so very late. I dropped the ball , or maybe just had too many balls in the air through June. This newsletter covers happenings at Winter Nights in May & June. The Annual Summary – End of Year issue will follow after we crunch the data, create the lists and look back on the successes of another year. ~ Ann

Season 19 of Winter Nights has come to an end

Can you believe it! June 12th was the last day of the Family Shelter Season. By the end of May, Winter Nights programs had served 195 clients: 87 clients in the Shelter, 62 clients in Safe Parking and 18 alumni (assistance to stay housed). 195 adults and children. Pretty amazing, isn't it?

And YOU are absolutely amazing! You have volunteered, donated, encouraged and supported every one of these clients with your efforts. We can't thank you enough.

Watch for the End-of-Year Summary coming soon.

Looking ahead.

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” ~ Peter Drucker
Even when we were busy with the last few weeks of the Shelter Season, we were planning for next year. Creating our future.

2nd Safe Parking site

Funding for a 2nd Safe Parking site has been secured through a generous grant from the City of Antioch. St. Ignatius Catholic Church has been working with us to be the Antioch SPP site. They are so wonderful to work with and have been both enthusiastic and inviting. Their team visited the Pittsburg Safe Parking in early June to get a feel for how we care for clients living in their cars. Another 15 cars and as many as 20 clients will be able to park and sleep safely each night. **We will open SPP-Antioch July 8th.**

The website needs an update!

Winter Nights has a great website, written in 2020, packed full of information. <https://cccwinternights.org/> But have you ever tried to find Safe Parking, or Continued Success on the site? Try it. It is a clear reminder of how much we have expanded in the three years since the site was created and how badly we need to update it.

Last year the **Community Foundation of Lafayette** provided funding to revise our site to reflect all of our programs and to provide easy access for potential clients. We want to simplify the layout, make it visually inviting and easy to navigate. It will also be ADA compliant and allow pages to be read in multiple languages. We have a great contractor with abundant expertise to advise us and code the site. We have the talents of volunteer photographers lined up.

If you have experience creating websites, short videos, graphics, text copy or would like to be a part of the review team to catch our glitches, please contact me (Ann Lawrence – ann@cccwinternights.org) We could use your help! Now we just need a few weeks of uninterrupted effort to pull it together. Fingers crossed.

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

Family Shelter



The Final Host Sites of Season 19

In May and June, we have two generous congregations to thank, plus all their volunteers who made the Family Shelter possible.

Orinda Community Church

Coordinator - Lani Shepp

This is the second time this season that Orinda Community Church has donated its site to host Winter Nights Family Shelter. They served for a total of 4 weeks with grace and heart. Thank you so much.

A note from **Lani Shepp**, Coordinator

*Orinda Community Church had individual volunteers every night for the Winter Nights stay in May. They came from **Moraga Valley Presbyterian, Santa Maria, community groups and the OCC congregation**. A few people doubled up on their volunteer time, but one major volunteer, **Lin Lyons**, came every day and washed all of the dishes-- for which all of us were very grateful.*

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church – Pleasant Hill

Coordinator – Decky Thornton

St Andrew's hosted for a full month at the end of the year. These 4 weeks of love and generosity brought the Shelter to the end of its season. You are the best!

A note from **Decky Thornton**

We made it! Congratulations and a HUGE thank you to all of our volunteers for going above and beyond to help our families move onward in their life and to housing- some temporary and some more permanent.

*St Andrew's co-host congregations for the first 2 weeks were **Martinez First Congregational Church** (Barbara Patchin and team), **Concord First Presbyterian Church**, (Maren Stanczak and team), **Lafayette Christian Church**, (Jan Warren and team), **St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church** (Darlene Sinclair and team); **Bill Pickle and team**. Other partners who stepped up were **David Chavez** who convinced his Mom to make a spectacular feast. In fact, we had several gourmet style meals.*

The families got along together very well. Our Honduran family of 13 were fabulous. They stayed together most of the time, creating a small community with their tents. Though they did not speak English (and we did not speak Spanish) we found ways to communicate- via phone translation apps and a few Spanish speaking volunteers. Rather than being a challenge, it was actually fun. A lot of love and respect was shared.

*The kids were all great, easy to entertain...they were all very good at finding ways to entertain themselves and each other with the variety of appropriate toys, games and equipment we provided. We were able to arrange a field trip to the **Alexander Lindsay Museum** which was enjoyed by all. There were also special movie nights with popcorn on weekends plus the always favorite cookie making and decorating.*

Winter Nights' Teri Lundvall was the coordinator for the final 2-weeks. Here are her notes:

Dinners were provided by :

***The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection** - Pleasant Hill. (Jenelle Towels)*

***First Baptist Church** - Pittsburg. (Eron McGee)*

***Restoration Church** - Bay Point. (Teri Lundvall)*

***St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church**- Concord (Darlene Sinclair)*

*As well as Teams lead by **Guyarti, Barbara Price and David Chavez**.*

David Chavez and Team from his church made breakfast burritos one morning. Too. He was a huge help for the whole month. He helped with translating, connecting with congregations, etc. He is a treasure for St Andrew's as their Office Administrator and Music Director!

Clients loved cooking breakfast for everyone and one of the teens helped the mom(s).

Several of the kids graduated from one school to another (middle to high and elementary to middle) - graduation celebrations for Jazmine and Alexis.

We had a reading contest. Everyone met their goals and received gift card awards. Yay!

You are all truly remarkable.
Thanks for your big hearts and hard work.



Orinda Community Church



Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church

The Family Shelter

May 31, 2023

5 families - 17 guests

7 adults & 10 children

4 moms, 4 dads, 1 grandmother

3 boys & 7 girls, from 1 - 14 years old



**Something to Really
Celebrate!
13 clients housed at the end of
May**



On Friday, May 26th, there were seven families at the Shelter. Two families were newly arrived, even though it was nearing the end of our season: a single mother with 6 children, and a single mother with one adult child and two minor children (Remember, an adult child can be an 18-year-old, still in high school).

That left seven families waiting for housing before June 12th. But, miracles do happen.

For many months, the Shelter had a family of 8 from Honduras and their relatives- a family of 5. They received asylum in the US after a 2-year wait in Mexico. Trying to find housing for 13 was challenging. But, it seems your prayers were answered. They were at a park with the kids, met a pastor also from Honduras, and a conversation began. Over time they told him their story. He called and said he had found housing for all 13 family members. They moved in at the end of May.

By Saturday, May 28th, there were 2 families housed, and 5 families remained at the Shelter. Keep those good thoughts and prayers coming!



Four children from the Honduran Family
and two young ladies who were volunteers and translators.

The Safe Parking Program



The Safe Parking Program - Pittsburg

May 31, 2023

14 clients in 12 cars

Including one couple and one family: a mother and child and their pets



Something to celebrate!

A client was housed with Winter Nights help covering the deposit and first month's rent. Welcome Home!



WISH LIST NEEDS

For Safe Parking Clients

Cases of water bottles

Individually wrapped, grab and go, snack food

(like Trail mix, cookies, Cheez-Its)

Meal-in -a cup – Microwavable

(like Macaroni, Cup of Noodles)

Gas cards - \$25

Spray Disinfectant (like Lysol)

Questions? Contact the Office

925-414-3883 - or - info@ccwinternights.org

Continued Success



It's Graduation Season: Elementary School, Middle School High School and even College. Congratulations to all the new graduates who are alumni of Winter Nights! You have worked hard and we send you our best for the next steps in your life.



Something to celebrate!

Continued Success helped 3 households with rent/utilities and car insurance and repairs.

All remained housed





It's a pizza cake!

The sausage is Milk Duds, the pepperoni is fruit leather, the olives are black licorice and the cheese is grated white chocolate. So clever!

Joyful Generosity

Thank You for Making Blankets for Winter Nights

Toni Noleroth, of Dublin, made 33 fleece blankets and donated them in May. She read about Winter Nights in December's Share The Spirit article in the East Bay Times. There are going to be many warm and toasty clients because of Toni's work and generosity.



Carmella with blankets made and donated by Toni Nolroth

Camino Pablo Elementary School Donation

Through Bobbie Preston of Moraga, we were offered Camino Pablo Elementary School's excess inventory of disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer before it went out of date code. I'm not sure we appreciated the size of their "generosity" until we arrived to pick it up. We will share our windfall of good fortune with other nonprofits.

Thanks go to Alison Levy of Camino Pablo, Ben of Camino Pablo who helped load the van to the top, Amy Chen Yee, a former parent who helped coordinate the donation and Dan Swander who picked it up and delivered it to Winter Nights.



Donation from Camino Pablo



Ben managed to make it all fit in the van.

Winter Nights in the Community



Russell



Russell and two of his children with Teri Lundvall



Bruce Smith, WN Board Member and friend Bob.

At the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection's fund-raising **Party with a Purpose** in May, two former clients of Winter Nights shared their stories of finding their way to our Safe Parking Program in Pittsburg and ultimately achieving sustainable housing.

Two alumni of Safe Parking and the Family Shelter spoke. Russell, a father with children, and Rick, a single man from Safe Parking kept the audience spellbound as they described how our "meet you where you are" approach to understanding their circumstances and supporting their steps forward was so helpful.

Russell's family benefited from our connected programs by moving from SPP into the Family Shelter and found housing from there.

The pictures of the event, above & below, were taken by Rick Felix and alumni of Safe Parking. He was also featured in December's Share the Spirit article about Winter Nights in the East Bay Times.

Four members of Winter Nights staff and two members of the Board of Directors also attended the event and were able to meet members of the parish, share information about our programs, and to personally thank Resurrection for their participation as a Family Shelter host site and funding support.



A bit of jazz at the BBQ



Rev. Liz Tichenor of Resurrection



**Remember our original logo?
Of course you do!**

In July we begin our 20th year, having expanded from a Family Shelter, to also include Safe Parking Programs and Continued Success for alumni.

Judy Stillman and Ann Lawrence have begun to gather ideas about how we might celebrate this milestone and celebrate everyone who made it possible. Like YOU.

Who were the original congregations? Who were the original Tutors? We have an archive of photos, but it is pretty thin. Do you have any snapshots of the early days? Maybe before we had tents?

Let us know

Judy Stillman jstillma925@gmail.com

Ann Lawrence ann@cccwinternights.org



2016 - Sewing Table



2017 - Children in Halloween Costumes



2017 - 3 little boys



2018 - Executive Team Meeting: Stephanie Baker, Harry Miller, Will McGarvey



2018 - Staff End-of-Year get together: Jo Kerner, Bill Shaw, Teri Lundvall & Donna Zukauckas



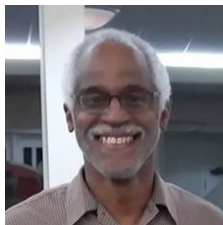
2018 - Staff End-of-Year get together: Dan Swander, Harry Miller, Jim Pfohl



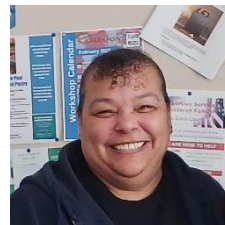
Gwen Watson
2004-2014



Judy Stillman
2014-2021



Bill Shaw
2021-2022



Carmella Kowall
2022 - present

Winter Nights Executive Directors

MORE **Help ▲ Families Home**

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/>

[Winter Nights Video - The Faces of Homelessness](#)



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>

[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.