



WINTER NIGHTS Family Shelter

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

September 2023

News from Winter Nights

The Family Shelter opened for its 20th Season on September 25th. Eighteen host-site congregations have donated their facilities for a 36 week season of shelter, transformation and support for parents with minor children. Another 25-30 congregations and community groups will join host sites to provide meals, homework and reading projects and family activities. Case managers work with each family to help them gain housing.

Two Safe Parking sites are now operating 7 days a week for unhoused families and individuals living in their cars. They are located in Pittsburg and Antioch. A member of the Winter Nights staff provides overnight supervision as well as light meals and snacks. Case managers support them and help move them toward housing.

Our alumni households, former Winter Nights clients, remain part of the Winter Nights' family. The Continued Success program stays in touch and is supporting them as they provide for their families and remain stably housed.

Read on to find out more about these remarkable programs that are changing so many lives.

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

Family Shelter



The Start of our 20th Season A remarkable milestone

September 25th marked the first night for the Family Shelter's 20th Season. Because we do not announce the location of the Shelter while

families are present, for their privacy and security, we will just say THANK YOU to the congregation who is first to offer its hospitality to homeless mothers, fathers and their children this season. Next month we will properly thank the congregations who served in these first weeks of the season.

We can tell you that our first guests include several families who have been waiting for the Shelter to open. Families with children who have been staying at the Safe Parking programs have also transferring into the Shelter.

Some History

Records are a bit murky from the earliest years of Winter Nights, and numbers don't always tell the full story of lives changed, but here is a sense of Winter Nights Family Shelter by the numbers.

In the first 19 seasons of the Family Shelter, through multiple recessions and a few years of Covid restrictions, Winter Nights has provided ~ 3,800 nights of shelter to ~ 422 families, representing ~1380 parents and children. Children are typically 60% of family members, or about 830 children. Over the years, our records suggest that 56% of families have been stably housed, or 235 families.

The Family Shelter

September 30, 2023

4 families - 11 guests

6 adults & 5 children

Good News from Alumni Shelter Families

Mother and daughter housed.

You may have read the 2021 Bay Area News Group's Share the Spirit article on this family of a mother and her daughter. They have been part of the Winter Nights' family as clients of both the Family Shelter and the Safe Parking programs as they navigated many ups and downs. The wonderful news is that this past month they found permanent supportive housing in San Francisco.



[Link to the Share the Spirit 2021 Article](#)

"Back in February (2023) I received an email and a phone call about qualifying for a housing voucher. I truly thought it was a scam, I almost hung up on the guy. He talked me into going into the office in SF to meet with him. I still thought it was a scam. I really did. Then a week later I went in to HA and picked up my voucher. I still didn't believe that it was real. From February to July I spent a lot of time home searching, applying. I wanted to give up several times. I still was hesitant about believing that it's

happening. But here we go— —I signed the lease and got my keys today." Aug 10th.

Winter Nights' Continued Success gave them a voucher for school clothes, and school supplies. Her daughter bought a sweatshirt that says "Kindness Above All". So true. As mom said "1st grade in the Big City school!!!" and posted photos to her Facebook Page: THANK YOU SO MUCH WINTER NIGHTS CONTINUED SUCCESS PROGRAM!!!!



Housing for a single father and his son

A father and his young son were with us at the end of last season and had not found housing. We provided a few nights in a motel to help.

It is a joy to let you know that they found their own apartment and Walnut Creek United Methodist Church's Extended Family helped furnish their new place. Dad said it was like Christmas. "I got everything I asked them for. This place is now our home!"

His son just kissed the walls and hugged the Extended Family volunteers.

The Safe Parking Program



Two Safe Parking Programs -
Pittsburg and Antioch

September 30, 2023

14 clients in 12 cars

Including two families



Something to celebrate!
Two SPP clients found housing
and
Two families from Safe Parking have moved into the
Shelter.



With the expansion of Safe Parking to 2 sites (Pittsburg and Antioch) a lot has happened since July.

2 clients found housing and we helped with their first month's rent

1 client has housing lined up for November 1st.

2 families with minor children moved into the Family Shelter

3 clients were helped with car repairs

1 client was helped with a utility deposit for new housing



WISH LIST NEEDS

We could use some help.

Gas prices are now averaging \$6/gallon in Contra Costa.
\$25 Gas Cards (about 4 gallons of gas) are needed to help families drive their children to school or get themselves to work or appointments.
A \$30 gas card would purchase about 5 gallons.

For Safe Parking Clients

Cases of bottled water
Individually wrapped, grab and go, snack food (Trail mix, cookies, Cheez-Its)
Meal-in-a-cup (like Macaroni, Cup of Noodles)
Spray Disinfectant (like Lysol)

Join with your congregation, book club, parents' organization, civic group, scout troop to gather items. Drop them off at the Winter Nights office, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

Questions? Contact the Office
925-414-3883 - or - info@cccwinternights.org

Continued Success



Something to celebrate!
Continued Success helped 8 households with rent/utilities and car payments and repairs.
All remained housed



This summer (July - Sept) we have been in touch with so many families, and were grateful to be able to help so many of them.

We helped:

- 3 kids with school clothes
- 18 kids with school supplies
- 2 households with car payments
- 1 household with DMV registration
- 1 household with car repair
- 4 households with rent/utilities



A Winter Alumni Reunion is in the planning. Two years ago, everyone had a great time getting together in early December to celebrate the season and their share their stories. We are going to do it again!

There are also plans to collect and distribute **Thanksgiving Food Boxes** and **Christmas Food** boxes. Stay tuned or contact the Office if you want to help.

And, as always, we helped arrange birthday cakes, baked, decorated, and delivered by **Cakes4Kids**. They made 14 cakes for alumni children.



Joyful Generosity

Blankets for Winter Nights

Toni Noleroth of Dublin did it again! She made dozens of fleece blankets and donated them to Winter Nights. Thank you Toni!

Prayer Squares and Hats

Prayer Squares were knit and donated by the Prayer Shawl Ministry of WCUMC.

These busy knitters are now working on warm hats for clients.

Many thanks for your prayers and donations.



Winter Nights in the Community

A Mini-Fundraiser



Mini-Pumpkins with Succulent Crowns

Winter Nights is having fun making succulent topped mini-pumpkins for Halloween and Thanksgiving as a mini-fundraiser. Yes! They will last through Thanksgiving and beyond. We plan to finish 120 pumpkins on our work day Saturday, October 7th.

Our thanks to Diablo Foods in Lafayette for the pumpkins and Ann Lawrence for hundreds of succulent cuttings from her yard.

Would you like one?

If you would like to take a dozen or so completed pumpkins to your congregation, or group of friends, or for yourself to please email Teri at teri@cccwinternights.org or Ann at ann@cccwinternights.org

They can be picked up at the Winter Nights' Office in Pleasant Hill or in Lafayette at Ann's house near Trader Joe's/BART.
Please email us first for availability and to coordinate delivery.

Retail prices for these decorated pumpkins are about \$30.
We are asking for a minimum donation of \$20-\$25 for each pumpkin.
100% of the donations will go to Winter Nights clients.



Annual Appeal
It's almost that time of year.

Time to help more families home.
Time to support individuals and families living in their cars.
You are the key to funding life-changing transformations.

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

We lived in the car from September to the end of January. I didn't tell my friends and still haven't told most of them. There is a new kind of homelessness today - people like me who have jobs, who have children with activities. I refuse to break down behind it. I have my dignity, my integrity. I've met so many beautiful people here - the volunteers - I'm getting teary about it. My grandma used to say, 'There's storms and rain sometimes, but eventually it clears up!' ~ Single mother of a teenager

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://ccwinternights.org/goodnews-archive/>

CONTACT US



Stories from Two Families - Family Shelter 2020



Our Contact Information

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<http://www.cccwinternights.org>

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Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc

is a 501(c)(3) public benefit nonprofit.

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Winter Nights respects and supports the privacy of all our clients. Any photos of clients are used only with their express permission