



The GOOD NEWS Letter
Celebrating the Families, Volunteers, Donors and Staff
of
Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc
JANUARY - 2024

2024
Happy New Year

Celebrating Our 20th Season

Hello 2024!

**Wishing you a year of peace and joy
and endless possibilities.**

Happy New Year! January 1 marked the half-way point in our 20th year. The Family Shelter is going strong and two Safe Parking programs, Continued Success and the Oasis Day Center continue to operate year-round.

The Family Shelter was scheduled for 36 weeks this season. However, a scheduling mix up suddenly left two weeks open without a host site. Yikes! What at first looked like a disaster was transformed into an additional two weeks of operation. A congregation expanded their two weeks of hosting to FOUR weeks. Yes, four full weeks! We put the word out and congregations and community groups stepped up to provide meals, homework help and activities.

Lemons into lemonade: The scheduling mix up ultimately became a gift of two additional weeks. The congregation that was unable to serve in February will take two weeks added to the end of the season. Now, the Family Shelter will remain open through June 17th, 38 weeks. Because we do not publicly announce where the Shelter is until after families have left, I won't be specific. But trust me, there were many congregations and community groups who generously and nimbly stepped up to turn lemons into lemonade. Incredible! The Winter Nights Way.

Winter Nights 2023 Appeal was a great success. Thank you so much. 211 donations were received and \$183,500 was raised. That was 105% of our \$175,000 goal. We are so blessed to have such generous and loyal supporters. Adding two additional weeks of Family Shelter in June will mean adding about \$15,000 to our budget of \$590,000 this year. Fingers crossed. More Lemonade?

Wishing you a wonderful New Year.

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



**Thank you to the generous congregations
who served the Family Shelter in December & January**

*We do not list the current location of the Shelter
to protect the privacy and safety of clients.*



Temple Isaiah - Lafayette
Coordinators - Joani deVries and
Margaret Sawyer



St John Vianney Catholic Church
Coordinator - Liz Rogers
Co Host: St Stephen's Episcopal Church -
Orinda
Coordinators-Andie Sheets, Dan
Swander, Susie White and Ann Lawrence



St Timothy's Episcopal Church - Danville
Coordinator - Joann Oliver
Co Host: Beth Chaim Congregation
Coordinator - Naomi Ehrlich

Many thanks to EVERYONE who served so generously.

Thank You, Temple Isaiah

Temple Isaiah hosted Shelter families for two weeks. They served through both Christmas and New Years. Yes, Temple Isaiah provided Christmas for the families.

A member of their congregation is a professional photographer. He continued his tradition of taking family Christmas portraits as gifts for each family. And Christmas morning was the typical excitement of kids finding an abundance of gifts for them under the tree.

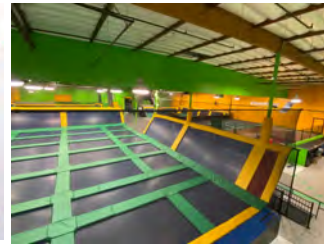
There were crafts for the kids, and a volunteer brought 3 puppies to visit, which the children loved. On New Year's Eve the families were treated to a visit to Rockin' Jump where the children were worn out trampolining.



Temple Isaiah volunteers getting crafts ready.



A child's art



Rockin' Jump Trampoline Park for New Years

A note from St. Stephen's-Orinda:

St. Stephen's cohosted at St. John Vianney again this year. It is a great partnership that just flows from season to season. St. John Vianney takes the first week and we take the second. During our week we had over 100 volunteers prepare and serve meals, help with homework and play with kids, be the overnight back-up to WN Staff and morning cleaners to keep the facility swabbed down. Our St. Stephen's Book Club donated so many coloring and activity books that they should last for years. We fell in love with every family and loved hearing "You're back" each time we arrived to serve. Our pleasure. It's a gift to be able to give.

~ Andie, Susie, Dan and Ann



Choir members can really cook and sing!



Coordinators Susie White and Andie Sheets



Families cook together



Weekend Hot Breakfast - Wayne, Crissy, Russ & Karen



The Friars - A Men's Cooking Ministry. Tom, Scott, Russ, Ned & Peter



Sisters serving together: Sarah & Katie

A note from Joann (St. Timothy's) and Naomi (Beth Chaim):

The shelter families arrived at St. Timothy's on a Monday, and with the help of St. Timothy's and Beth Chaim volunteers, the Parish Hall was transformed into a family shelter. We welcomed six families with special Teddy Bears provided by our Outreach partners, The Comfort Cubs, and handmade pillowcases provided by the St. Timothy's Stitchers Group. Meal Teams provided delicious dinners; volunteers helped the shelter children with homework and fun activities and the Overnight volunteers took care of the facilities and made sure the families had a good breakfast before leaving in the morning. We have enjoyed the families so much this year. Everyone got along and they were so gracious. Thank you, St. Timothy's and Beth Chaim, for providing your loving support to these families during a time of crisis.





Family Shelter



The Family Shelter

February 15, 2024

5 families - 13 guests

6 adults & 7 children

(The children are 6 to 16 years old)

The Rolling Reader at the Family Shelter



The Contra Costa County Library recently introduced their Rolling Reader, a brand-new, all-electric, early literacy outreach van, and its mascot Roxy the fox. Winter Nights families were excited when The Rolling Reader visited the Shelter at St. John Vianney in early January. Lynne, Deputy County Librarian and Bella, the librarian for the Rolling Reader, stopped by had a great time reading bilingual stories (Spanish/English), doing crafts and activities with the kids, and providing free books for both children and adults to keep.

One of the kids told a volunteer "That was so much fun. I had the best time. We got to read and do art". Our volunteer was grinning ear-to-ear to see someone so

excited!



Employment Opportunities for Shelter Families Having a job and saving for housing is a big step toward the goal of stability for each family.

A Family Shelter client started a wonderful skills training program with 12 weeks of computer and life skills training then up to 4 months of paid work experience. It also provides wrap-around support including mental health counseling, job placement assistance, and long-term alumni advancement support. Congratulations and we are very proud of you.

Another client began pre-employment training with the County that she hopes will lead to a full-time job. We do too. Good Luck.

One more: a client got a job as an in-home caregiver. Bravo!

The Safe Parking Program



February 20, 2024

The Safe Parking Program in Pittsburg

5 cars - 5 participants

The Safe Parking Program in Antioch

6 cars -6 participants

HOUSED!

A mother and daughter from Safe Parking- Antioch moved into their new place in January. She had things in storage but said she'd let us know if she needed anything. We received an email from her saying *"Thank you all so much for all of your help. You have been a great blessing to me and my family."*

HOUSED!

A mom and dad from Antioch Safe Parking moved into their new place in January with their three children. Extended Families is helping them with miscellaneous items they need for their new home.

Employed!

At Pittsburg's Safe Parking three of the clients are employed and saving for housing. Another has begun pre-employment testing for a great job. At Antioch's Safe Parking three clients are employed and two have a fixed income.

Snug As A Bug

A huge shout out to Allison Norris, with Snug As A Bug, for the amazing totes for Safe Parking Program clients filled with handmade blankets, socks, scarves, gift cards, and more. Your gifts were so well reviled. Thank you.

Hand Warmers for these very cold nights at Safe Parking.
Gas cards (\$25) to help clients get to work, training or appointments,
Wal-Mart cards (\$25) to help purchase food for Safe Parking breakfasts,
Target cards (\$10) to give as Reading Awards to kids who reach their goals.

**Twin-size fitted bottom sheets, pillows, pillow cases, sleeping bags,
Lysol spray, Lysol disinfecting wipes.**

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

Winter Nights in The Community



Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club New Sleeping Mats

Shelter clients have members of the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club to thank for new sleeping mats. The replacement and refurbishing of our inventory was long overdue. We were able to purchase of new mats and and refurbished others, 38 mats total. Thank you so much to everyone at Moraga Valley Kiwanis.



Carmella Kowall, Executive Director & Dan Swander, Board President with 18 new mats.



Orinda Rotary

Thank you Orinda Rotary for your generous donation of over \$800.
We promise to put it to good use!



John Donnelly, Orinda Rotary and Dan Swander, WN Board President

MORE **Help ▲ Families Home**

*This season it takes **\$1622 per day** to fund Winter Nights*



My mom and I were frequently homeless when I was growing up because of financial insecurity and mental health struggles. It is truly a sacred thing to be able to show up for people at the most vulnerable and hardest times of their lives. I'm honored to support your work and thank you for all that you do! ~ Winter Nights donor to the 2023 Appeal

DONATE ONLINE

Don't forget to check if your employer has a Matching Fund.
Employee Donations have been received through
The Benevity Community Impact Fund, YourCause, United Way Bay Area, Community Health Charities, Genentech, CyberGrants, Lawrence Livermore Labs, Target, Sherwin Williams

Checks can be written to:
Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc.
404 Gregory Lane #7
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

**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

DONATE ONLINE



Celebrating our 20th year and those who made it possible
Winter Nights Shelters Families to Nurture Success

[Link to article in Alamo & Danville Today News](#)

 **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

Faces of Homelessness



Our Contact Information

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

<http://www.cccwinternights.org>

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