



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

MARCH, APRIL, MAY - 2024

Good News is BACK

My goodness. It has been months since I've reached out to you with Good News from Winter Nights.

As many of you know, I wear many hats at Winter Nights and I think it just got the best of me. Nature's way of saying "slow down". I got a respiratory infection that rapidly led to an ambulance ride to the emergency room. I was hospitalized for a week and have been laying low recuperating. Doctors' orders. Good News! I'm feeling better and have begun to resume some of my WN roles.

I've missed you, and missed keeping you in the loop with everything that is going on.

So let's get started. March, April and May.

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

News From the Board: Emily Hanson Joins Winter Nights Family Board of Directors

We have some very Good News to share with you. In April we welcomed Emily Hanson as a new member of the Winter Nights Board of Directors. Emily brings a wealth of experience in business development strategy and leadership, having served for over 20 years in the fields of affordable housing, resource conservation, alternative energy, recycling and waste diversion.



Emily was Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity-Santa Cruz and for the Resource Conservation District-Monterey County. She has also managed Business Development, Marketing, Outreach and Communications for Chewie Labs Inc. and GreenWaste Recovery. She has her JD from Santa Clara University School of Law.

Perhaps most importantly, Emily brings a caring, energetic and thoughtful approach to working with people and a deep passion for serving the unhoused. We are delighted to have Emily on the Board and look forward to her contributions to Winter Nights.

Bruce Smith
Board Nomination Committee

Winter Nights' Insurance Costs Rise Dramatically



Early in January we were notified by our insurance carrier that, when our policy came up for renewal in May, they were unwilling to provide coverage for Winter Nights two Safe Parking Program sites in Pittsburg and Antioch. They were willing to continue to provide coverage for the remainder of our needs (Family Shelter, Van, Corporate, etc.), just not Safe Parking. Yikes!

Over the next four months our insurance broker and board members looked high and low trying to find carriers that would provide coverage for our entire program. As the deadline approached, Carmella had to put emergency plans in place to possibly close both Safe Parking sites until insurance could be found.

Finally, just five days before our coverage was set to expire, one nonprofit insurance organization expressed interest and agreed to provide coverage for all of Winter Nights. We were ecstatic.

Then they quoted Winter Nights their rates! Shock! Apples to apples, our total costs for insurance would be almost five-times what we are currently paying.

With some trimming and the ability to retain portions of our previous coverage we were able to hold the actual increase to "just" over three-times our current annual premiums. From our current expense of about \$25,000, to a bit over \$80,000 a year.

Just eight hours before our existing insurance coverage was set to expire we reached an agreement with the new carrier on both the cost and the terms.



We are happy to report that Safe Parking continued uninterrupted, and all programs of Winter Nights are fully insured. But, an additional \$ 55,000 will have to be raised.

We will continue to search for a more affordable carrier, but for now we have to manage a significant increase in costs for the coming year.

*Dan Swander
President, Board of Directors*

Family Shelter



There have been many, many congregation who generously served from February - May. In order to thank them all, here is a brief report.

Their love and service is so appreciated. Thank you to everyone.

Apologies in advance for anyone I may have missed while I was out.
We do not list the current location of the Shelter to protect the privacy and safety of clients.

Special thanks to the Orinda Community Church for serving for 4-weeks in February.

Because of a scheduling mix up in January, we suddenly had a 2-week gap between St. Timothy's host site and the Orinda Community Church's host site. What looked like a disaster was transformed by the amazing generosity of the Orinda Community Church (OCC) and herculean efforts of Lani Shepp. They added an additional two weeks of hosting to their already scheduled two weeks. Yes, they hosted for four full weeks, January 29 - February 26. Let's all stand and give them a round of applause!

Lani Shepp, Anne Pierce and Ann Lawrence reached out to fill the two extra weeks. On very short notice, St. Mathew's Presbyterian, St. Stephen's Episcopal, the Lafayette Juniors, Lamorinda National Charity League, and Acalanes High School provided one or more meals and homework/activity helpers Incredible!

The Winter Nights Way.



**Orinda Community Church
Host Coordinator - Lani Shepp**

Co Hosts:

- St. Mathew Presbyterian Church - Walnut Creek; Anne Pierce
- St. Stephen's Episcopal - Orinda; Dan Swander, Andie Sheets, Ann Lawrence, Susie White
- Lafayette Juniors; Catherine Mesgar
- Lamorinda National Charity League; Sheryl Ahrens
- Acalanes High School; Katherine Walton



Lamorinda National Charity League
Stacy, Cavan, Madison, Eva, Avery, Greta,
Rachel, Mara, Sheryl & Lara

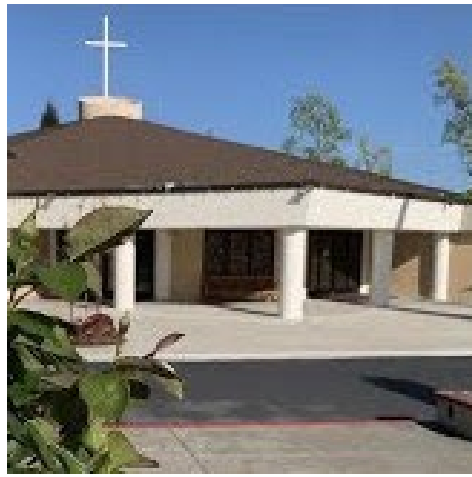


Dan Swander of St Stephen's St Stephen's Breakfast Team
setting up for dinner Fred and Tom





February - March
Walnut Creek United Methodist Church
Host Coordinator - Judith Hall
Cohosts-
 • St. Mary's Church of the Immaculate Conception - Walnut Creek; Barbara Erickson
 • The Contra Costa Korean United Methodist Church
 • First Christian Church of Concord; Diane Maltester
 • Ygnacio Valley Presbyterian Church - Walnut Creek; Paula Ash



March
Christ the King Catholic Church - Pleasant Hill
Host Coordinator - John Alonso
 They served without cohosts



March-April
Mount Diablo Universalist Unitarian Church - Walnut Creek
Host Coordinator -Rodney Lemery
 They served without cohosts



April
San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
Host Coordinators - Kal Peters, Nancy Garnick
Cohosts-
 • St. Isadore's Catholic Church; Pat Black
 • Danville Congregational Church; Richard Stein



April-May
Concord United Methodist Church
Host Coordinator - Carolyn Paulson
Cohosts-
• Good Shepherd Lutheran - Concord;
Sue Hertless



May
Episcopal Church of the Resurrection
- Pleasant Hill
Host Coordinator - Janelle Towles
Cohosts- no information

Family Shelter



The Family Shelter

June 3, 2024

4 families - 12 guests

5 adults & 7 children

(The children are 9 months to 13 years old)

ANOTHER FAMILY HAS BEEN HOUSED - A mother and her 3 children moved into their new home in April.

A JOB! - A mother is now employed which gives her income to make housing applications easier. Yeah!

Only two weeks left until the end of the Family Shelter season.

It's that time of year when families know that the shelter must close for the season. That will be in two weeks, June 17th. After 38 weeks of operation, it's hard to believe. Carmella is working with Contra Costa's CORE (*Coordinated Outreach Referral & Engagement*) to be able to transfer these families into permanent shelters with services.

Why Do We Close The Family Shelter?

You may wonder why we close the shelter in June and start again in September. During the summer months, when children are out of school, we do not have enough volunteer Host Sites: congregations with facilities to accommodate 20-25 clients and the volunteers to provide services. Many rent out their facilities to summer camps and other programs. Others have members who are vacationing or have homes filled with kids returning from college or grandkids for the summer. It's a busy time.

We continue to reach out to additional groups and we hope, in the future, to be able to operate the Family Shelter year-round. **If you are interested in hosting, please let us know.**

Next Season's Schedule for the Family Shelter Season #21



The work to recruit congregations and to create a schedule of 2-week commitments began in March. To get all the pieces to fit always feels like a game of Tetris. As of today, it is almost complete. Teri and others are working on filling 4-weeks in December 2024 and 1-week in May 2025.

The Safe Parking Program



June 3, 2024

The Safe Parking Program in Pittsburg

5 cars - 7 participants

Includes one family: mother, father, and 2 children.

The Safe Parking Program in Antioch

5 cars - 7 participants

FANTASTIC!

A Client was Quickly Housed.

This month we had the privilege of assisting an SPP-A client with moving into her new home. She joined SPP-Antioch on March 1 and found a home May 21.

In her words, "It rained in my home, flooded my house March 1, 2024. I tried staying until I found another place but the smell made me leave. And lucky for me I found Winter Nights Shelter that took me in and have been helping me all along".

We helped her with her first month's prorated rent, security deposit and leasing fee. She was so moved, she asked if she could give me a hug. After I gave her some gift cards to help her get her house set up, she asked for another hug. She hopes that sharing her story will help other people find us, too. ~Teri

» And Another Client was Housed «

A woman found employment in the city where her children live. She has moved and is living with her family. We wish her every success.

Clients Send their Thanks

SPP clients have really appreciated getting warm leftovers from the Shelter meals. They send their thanks to the cooks at the Shelter and the Staff who deliver the food in the evening.

~ Teri Lundvall

Continued Success



Our Quarterly Check-In with Alumni

An email was sent to check-in with 78 former clients/families. We've already heard back from four of them. In the emails, I usually remind the clients that we are able to get them cakes, cupcakes, cookies, bars, or brownies from Cake4Kids for their child's birthday and graduations. One mom responded with "Yessss I sure do would like place us in line for those good ol cakez."

Another mom told us "I love everything about your program I'm always bragging about to people". Another said "Thank you all so much. We appreciate you and everything you do".

Happy Birthday, Happy Graduation

Four children of alumni received cakes for both Birthday's and Graduation

~Teri Lundvall - Continued Success



Wish List

If you, or your group, would like to donate items to Winter Nights here is a list of things we can really use:

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

Individual Serving Snacks for Safe Parking - (grab and go)

***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





Carmella reported that Winter Nights clients in all programs are taking advantage of the programs of **Spark Point** where they can get help with finances, resumes, and jobs. SparkPoint values each client's strengths, builds motivation, and provides monitoring and accountability.

"Their one-stop centers bring together a full range of services, and they encourage clients to take advantage of two or more at a time. By combining services, SparkPoint clients reach their financial goals faster.

Every SparkPoint client gets a coach who helps create a step-by-step plan to set and achieve personal financial goals – from getting out of debt, to going back to school, or finding a job.

SparkPoint recognizes that lasting changes do not happen overnight. Therefore, SparkPoint commits to working with clients for as long as it takes to achieve their goals – for many, that is two or three years."

SparkPoint is part of the United Way Bay Area. <https://uwba.org/what-we-do/sparkpoint-program/>



Winter Nights is working with **The Bay Church** on two important programs.

- In partnership with **Convoy of Hope**. The Bay Church has connected us to Convoy of Hope's food warehouse where Carmella and staff can pick up a carload of food every two weeks for all of our client programs. It is wonderful being a partner of both amazing groups.

- The Bay Church** is also working with Winter Nights as they bring their second mobile shower trailer online. **Clean Start Showers** is one of many community outreach programs of The Bay Church. They serve our clients at the Oasis Day Center at St Vincent de Paul in Pittsburg on weekends. Carmella has been discussing the use of their second trailer at the Antioch Safe Parking Program. Wouldn't that be wonderful?



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

Thank You
For Checking if your Employer has a Matching Fund.

Employee Donations have been received from employees of:
*Abbott Laboratories, Chevron, Google, Levi Strauss, Lawrence Livermore Labs,
Nike, Sherwin Williams, Target, Wells Fargo*

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

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

For questions or assistance please call the office **925-414-3883**
Or email Winter Nights at the **CONTACT US** link below

DONATE ONLINE

CONTACT US

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/>



Our Contact Information

Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc.
404 Gregory Lane #7
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925-414-3883
<http://www.cccwinternights.org>

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