



The **GOOD NEWS** Letter

*Celebrating the families, volunteers and staff of the
Winter Nights Family Shelter*

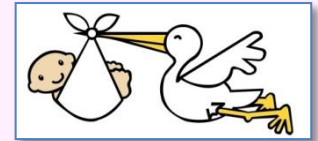
February 2019



It's a girl! We are pleased to announce another birth: a healthy daughter to a family at Winter Nights. She is named Halo Naomi Charlee. Mom and baby are doing well, and are back at the shelter with the other kids.

Two additional families are expecting babies in the next 6 weeks. That will make 4 newborns this season.

Our thanks to everyone who donated "baby-stuff" to welcome and care for the new arrivals.



NEWS from the Shelter

Great news for a Winter Nights' family:

Mom, Dad and their 1-year old are moving into their own place. Mom was promoted and her new job, as the apartment complex manager, comes with an apartment included. Wow! They are very excited and will be receiving help furnishing their new place.

From a father at the shelter:

I tell the other families to do what they tell you. Bill has been such a big help to me. The way they were at Christmas time – Bill and Judy and the staff and Temple Isaiah - I cried in my tent. It was the first time in four years my son got a real Christmas.

I hope every family makes it. The program is designed for people to make it. If you can't make it here, I don't know if you can. We are so thankful for everything they do for us, all the time. When other families say go out on the weekends, I say save the money. If it costs nothing to live and eat here, I can save on a fast food salary. Everything is free. Take advantage of the opportunity here. We can save all our money. And there are activities on the weekends.

It is always nice to hear from families of prior years

A Mom and Dad with 2 children recently touched base to report that since they left the shelter last season they both have better full time jobs. Their toddler was growing and lively, and their older child was doing very well at school and still practicing his reading like he did with the tutors at Winter Nights.

"Thank you for all you do and thanks to every volunteer and staff member who was there for us."



Game Time at Winter Nights

Parking Lot Program UPDATE

The Winter Nights' **Parking Lot Program** opened in Pittsburg on January 1st and will operate until April 30th, four full months. It serves individuals and families living in their cars. The following text-message was received from an older couple who stayed at the PLP:

Hi! I'm sorry we forgot to say something yesterday. You took such kind care of us, but we had to try to get to his mom's house. We are too old and too medically fragile to maintain our health under these conditions. We both were declining very fast. We blew his whole check on that U-Haul for those few days and I'm blowing mine on a rental van trying to get to his mom's house. We have 13 more hours to drive.

Thank you so much for taking care of us. Of all the people I contacted you guys really cared. Thank you again! Please wish us luck.

Parent's Group at Winter Nights

A Reflection by Stephanie Baker

This is the second year that I have facilitated a parent group for the adults in the shelter. Last season (2017-18), I was blessed to work with two Winter Nights' moms in a small group setting. Our little group met weekly for about an hour during the winter months. I worked to make this a time for the parents to relax, reflect, and pause and talk. They were guided in a journaling project in which they reflected on their life to this point. We did an art process that helped them look to where their future might lead. We did a yoga session, led by a friend, and a little crafting with open conversation. We practiced meditation together. We sang. We even did a little dancing – a hula led by one of the moms!

The group this year (2018-19) has been a little bit the same and a little bit different. The most consistent participants are a married couple. We have also had a single Dad, two other Moms and a Grandma! Our time together has included art projects and journaling. One of the moms is quite an artist! We also completed a vision board process in January. In addition, we were fortunate to have Jennifer Shaw who came to guide the group in poetry therapy. This was a very special way for the parents to express their feelings in writing and experience “Aha” moments.

All of the participants expressed their gratitude for

the time we spent together. My life was truly enriched by their courage and strength. As they felt safe enough to share some of their story with us, our hearts broke open with the hearing. I think that most people who volunteer at Winter Nights, in whatever capacity, leave the experience with a healthy respect for the struggle of these homeless parents and children. As Fr. Greg Boyle says, *“Quite possibly, the ultimate measure of health in any community might well reside in our ability to stand in awe at what folks have to carry rather than in judgment at how they carry it.”* (Barking at the Choir: the Radical Power of Kinship)



Stephanie Baker is a volunteer grant writer for foundations and the leader of the parent group she has described above. Thank you Stephanie for all you do for Winter Nights.



Bill Shaw, Shelter Director; Teri Ludval, Shelter Supervisor and Stephanie Baker, Parent Program and grant-writer.



**Winter Nights Family Shelter is currently serving
7 families * 26 guests * 11 adults & 15 children
7 girls, 8 boys: Newborn to 16 years old.**

*One child is special needs with a service dog
TWO families are expecting babies in the next 6 weeks*

It costs \$952/night to fund *One Winter Night*

\$952 pays for staffing 24/7, transportation of the children to school and parents to work, a tent/bedding/towels for each family, plus the costs of The Oasis day center for family services. Lives are changed One Winter Night at a time.



If you would like to support Winter Nights with a donation of any amount, checks can be made out to **Winter Nights** (with ***One Winter Night*** in the memo) & sent to:

Winter Nights Family Shelter, 1543 Sunnyvale Ave, Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Online donations can be made at <https://cccwinternights.org/contribute/one-winter-night/>

Winter Nights Family Shelter is a program of the **Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County (ICCCC)**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit.
Tax ID # 94-1693225 Donations are tax deductible, and no goods or services are provided in exchange for a donation.

Did you know you can use your Credit Card Reward Points
to donate Gift Cards to Winter Nights?

It's an easy way to help out. Just use those "extra" points.

The shelter can always use

Gas Cards (like Shell, Chevron, Valero)

Grocery Cards (like SAFEWAY, Grocery Outlet, Smart & Final)

Store Cards (like Target, Walmart)



Order gift cards through your credit card rewards program, and mail the cards to:

Winter Nights
1543 Sunnyvale Ave
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Please add a note with **your name & address & email**, as well as the **face value of the cards**.
We will send you a donation receipt.

Gratefully,
Winter Nights Family Shelter

Questions:
Email us at OneWinterNight@CCCWinterNights.org