



The **GOOD NEWS** Letter

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

June / July 2019

It's the End of Season #15 for the Winter Nights Family Shelter

"Upon entering Winter Nights, I was unemployed and in need of mental and emotional healing. I was tired, broken and scared. Winter Nights has given me and my family the time, safe place, resources and direction to get back on our own with confidence, health, healing and knowledge. I have confidence in myself and the job I have been blessed with, that I can sustain our needs and finally give my kids a place of their own. They have never had their own bedroom and I am so excited to give them that." - Mother of 2 children

"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 – 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



From Bill Shaw, Winter Nights' Program Director

Our strength is our ability to meet the changing needs of the growing population of homeless families in Contra Costa County. Each family's circumstances are different, and it is our goal to work with each of them to provide support and services that address their particular needs and assist them in finding stable and affordable housing.

This season Winter Nights served 17 families with a total of 65 clients; 28 adults and 37 children. Five of the children were newborns. 13 of the 17 families are now in housing. Of the 4 who are not, 1 family left the shelter and has not stayed in touch, one family is waiting on a lease, and 2 families came to the shelter in the last 2 weeks of the program. Just not enough time to turn things around, but we are following up with them this summer.

There were many "firsts" and highlights from the year:

- 36 weeks of shelter. Our longest season ever.
- A service dog in residence for a special-needs child
- 5 pregnant mothers to plan for prenatal care, hospital births, post-natal care and baby supplies. At one point there were 3 newborns in residence at the shelter at the same time.
- Large families at the shelter. Four families of 6-7 members. Three families with Mom & Dad and 5 children were in the program at the same.
- More 2-parent families this season than in the past 5 years; 8 families with a Mom & Dad
- 3 families moved from our Parking Lot Program to the Shelter when space became available.
- Donations allowed us to financially assist 2 families with auto repair enabling parents to keep their jobs
- Arrangements with Extended Family, a program of the Walnut Creek United Methodist Church, to furnish client's new apartments.

The Parking Lot Program

Last year's only secure, overnight parking program in Contra Costa

Winter Nights provided a full 16 weeks of secure overnight parking for families and individuals living in their cars; twice the time of the 8 week pilot program. The program helped over 30 people; 8 individuals and couples and 5 families with 20 children.

3 families from the PLP moved to the shelter when space was available. PLP staff found housing for 1 family and 1 individual. Another family, and an elderly couple, stayed until they were able to move out of state for housing.

The number of homeless families, and their needs, continue to grow in Contra Costa County Our 16th season begins September 2019

- We are adding an additional 4 weeks of shelter. The season will be 40 weeks long, from September 2019 (versus October) through mid-June 2020. 281 nights. This adds about \$38,000 to our staffing and supplies budget.
- Winter Nights will pilot an 8-week stay at a single East County congregation, rather than move every two weeks to a different faith community. Families will have a chance to settle in and focus on their goals and the work to achieve them. East County congregations will serve meals and provide volunteers. We are budgeting an additional \$5,500 in costs.
- The Parking Lot Program currently is the ONLY overnight, secure parking program in Contra Costa. It has proved itself to be a vital service for local homeless individuals and families living in their cars. We will operate for another 16 weeks, and are bringing the costs of the PLP into the Winter Nights' budget this year rather than depend exclusively on restricted donations to fund it, adding \$35,000 to our budget.
- Bill Shaw will fill the newly created full time position of Program Director to focus on expanding partnerships in housing and services, as well as hiring and training additional staff members, and planning 2020/2021. Our Oasis manager has been promoted to Program Manager. New staff positions, pay increases for returning staff and payroll costs will add \$46,000 to the budget, over and above the 4 weeks of additional staff hours.



End-of-season cake bought by the families of Winter Nights for the volunteers and staff

Judy Stillman, Executive Director and Bill Shaw, Program Director • Randy Long, Traveling Tutor; Kathleen Garcia, Program Manager; & John James, site supervisor • cake • Mike Alexander, Traveling Tutor • Harry Miller, Traveling Tutors coordinator and Jim Pfohl, Employment/GED volunteer

Offering hope One Winter Night at a time.

This year One Winter Night will cost \$1256.

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, 404 Gregory Lane #1, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

(Note – A new office for Winter Nights)

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.