



The **GOOD NEWS** Letter

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

APRIL 2020

Sheltering-in-Place at Winter Nights What an Adventure



Students continue to study during twice-a-day quiet times



Evening Hikes with Social Distancing



Groceries for staff and clients are donated and delivered (COVID-style) by Lafayette Juniors



Bingo has been fun while sheltered-in-place. Thanks go to two Winter Nights' alumni clients who donated bingo sets.

One alumnus also dropped off gift cards and goodie-bags as prizes!



Ceramics are the most popular activity.



Kathleen Garcia, Program Manager tried her hand at the ceramics too. Nice pie plate, Kathleen.

All of the Clients and Staff of Winter Nights Remain Healthy!

Kudos to all, as they observe and supervise the shelter-in-place, hygiene and distancing protocols

Winter Nights Family Shelter
is currently serving

3 families * 10 guests * 3 adults & 7 children
3 girls, 4 boys: 9- 17 years old

Winter Night's Parking Lot Program
is currently serving

3 adult clients in 3 cars

Winter Nights Update – Adaptations for the Coronavirus

As one of the essential services open during the coronavirus crisis, **Winter Nights has been operating as a 24-hour, supervised, shelter-in-place facility since March 16th**. Volunteers may not enter the shelter site and the staff is putting in extra hours to make sure the facility is clean, the clients are healthy and observing all protocols and children are completing their on-line schooling.



Two congregations, **Walnut Creek United Methodist Church** and **Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church** generously extended their 2-week commitments as shelter sites to allow families to stay put. WCUMC was a site for 3 weeks, and MDUUC will be the site for 4 weeks, though May 4th. Both of these host sites, as well as other congregations, are ordering and delivering restaurant take-out meals each evening. Volunteers and donors have been arranging for activities such as new games, online-activities, and art projects to be delivered to the door. We can't thank them enough!

Currently there are 3 families (3 adults and 7 children) at the shelter. By the end of this week a mother with her three children will be in housing, leaving 2 families at the shelter.



In light of these circumstances, Winter Nights has decided to close the shelter May 4th, a full 6 weeks before the normal "end of the season". However, **the program will not end**. Winter Nights will provide motel-stays for the two remaining families, if necessary. Reservations at motels with kitchenettes are being made and arrangements for food delivery and/or grocery gift cards to provide food and shelter for up to 6 weeks. Staff will continue to provide client services, too.

The Parking Lot Program was originally scheduled to run through April 30th, operating from 8 pm - 6 am, seven nights a week with restrooms and breakfast. With shelter-in-place at the Shelter, the Oasis Day Center was no longer needed for families, but has remained open 3 times a week for PLP clients to shower. Now, with the closing of all parks and fast-food restaurants, PLP clients living in their cars have been cut off from day time access to restrooms.

Winter Nights has responded by extending the PLP through May 31st, allowing clients to stay all day with access to restrooms and client services on-site. Our thanks to our host site, **East County Shared Ministries** for extending their welcome. **The Oasis, at St Vincent de Paul**, will continue to be staffed for showers 3 times a week. In effect, the PLP will be open around the clock through the end of May. We appreciate the staff's flexibility and concern for Winter Night's clients as we try to meet the changing needs of our community.



Funding challenges are being met. Grant writers for Winter Nights, **Jo Kerner** and **Stephanie Baker**, have been hard at work responding to generous offers for funding from county agencies and foundations. They have been writing applications reflecting both our ever-evolving operational needs and the increased costs associated with them. We are delighted to report that **United Way Bay Area** and **Sunlight Giving** have responded with grants to help with our increased costs. We are so grateful for their generosity and recognition of the vital need that Winter Nights is filling.

We also want to extend our thanks to the many **congregations** who have donated funds for meals and increased staffing costs. **Community groups** have responded too. Thank you, **Lafayette Juniors** for delivering groceries for breakfasts and lunches, and **I Heart Art** in Pleasant Hill for donating crafts. Thanks also to **community donors** who have given through our **Facebook** link and the **Winter Nights Family Shelter website**. It all adds up. Families and individuals will be sheltered, fed and cared for, staff will all be paid and supplies will continue to be replenished.

Long-Time Staff Member Moves On



Destinea Tucker and Judy Stillman - 2018

Destinea Tucker, a long-time overnight staff supervisor, will be leaving Winter Nights. She is about to graduate from Los Medanos College and has secured employment in her chosen field - welding. We are sorry to see her go but so proud of her many accomplishments and for following her dreams.

In a note to Winter Nights she said,
"Bill - Thank you for hiring me and taking a chance with me. I was rough around the edges but at times you saw potential in me that no one else could. You've taught me a lot about how to be a good employee. I learned how to make a timesheet. Lastly and most importantly I learned how to persevere from you. It may not seem like it, but I have a lot of respect for you."

Winter Nights - As a whole, this program changed my life. I was initially looking for a job. However, this turned into much more. It was a learning experience. I learned how to treat people. I learned that as an employee of Winter Nights you are not above the clients, or below them, you are by their side. I truly appreciate you all".

Destinea is truly special. She would frequently bring in job postings she found at school or print ones she found online that she thought might be a good fit or good opportunity for clients. Thanks for going that extra mile for the families!

Best of luck, Destinea. You will be missed.

Winter Nights has produced a short video celebrating the shelter's spirit of working with families on their path forward to housing



Click Here:

[Winter Nights Family Shelter VIDEO](#)

We hope you enjoy it.



Click here to visit us on Facebook

[Winter Nights Family Shelter in Contra Costa County](#)

Like Us, Friend Us, Share Us

Offering hope, One Winter Night at a time.

One Winter Night costs \$1256.

If you would like to support Winter Nights with a donation of any amount, checks can be made out to **Winter Nights** and sent to:

Winter Nights Family Shelter, 404 Gregory Lane #1, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Online donations can be made at <https://cccwinternights.org/contribute/>

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.