



WINTER NIGHTS
Family Shelter

TheGOODNEWSLetter
Celebrating the Families, Volunteers, Donors and Staff of
Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc

SEPTEMBER - 2024

September 30th began our 21st year of the Family Shelter.

Welcome to Season 21 of the Family Shelter. We opened on September 30th and will operate through June 9th, 2025. Thank you to all the congregations, community groups and individuals who will serve meals, help with homework and organize activities throughout this season for many, many unhoused families. You are the strength and heart of the program.

We have two new Shelter Staff members and one opening. Welcome to both Angelina and Marvin. We are glad you are here. Winter Nights is still hiring for one more Shelter position. Contact the Office if you are interested. 925-414- 3883. info@cccwinternights.org.

The 2024 Annual Appeal begins NOW! We have a goal of \$200,000.

If you have been following us in Good News you might remember we got hit with a \$55,000 increase in insurance costs. I guess we could have shut down the Safe Parking programs, but that was unthinkable. Last year Safe Parking served 143 clients including 20 families with 31 minor children. This year's appeal reflects this increase in the costs for this vital program. We would be grateful for your generous support.

Very soon (only a few days more) we will be up and running with Double The Donation - an application that lets you easily see if your employer or the company you retired from will match your donation to Winter Nights. Then it lets you make your application online. So easy!

You can also see if your company will donate to Winter Nights based on your volunteer hours. Wow!

Read on to hear about the first 3 families at the Shelter and households from Safe Parking and Continued Success who have been housed ♥.

Read on for Succulent-Pumpkins news, and thanks to those who have had special fundraisers benefiting Winter Nights.

Gratefully,

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

Family Shelter



The Family Shelter

October 1, 2024

3 families - 8 guests

4 adults & 4 children

(The children are 9 to 15 years old)

The Family Shelter Begins Its 21st Year

Winter Nights began 20 years ago as a program of the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. In 2004 Gwen Watson, Natalie Russell, and Dorothy Vance co-founded the Shelter in response to an explosive growth in the population of homeless families in the county as economic conditions fluctuated.

There was only one true family shelter in the county at the time. Other shelters separated a family by age or gender into single-sex shelters: fathers with sons went into the men's shelter, mothers with daughters and pre-teen sons went to a "family" shelter.

But families are stronger together, and there was no place for a single father with a daughter or a mother with a teenage son to stay together. There were also no shelters to serve an intact family unit. Like a mother & father and their children. And, if the family unit were multi-generational with a grandmother or an adult, 19-year-old child they could be separated from the family unit.



The first 3 families at the Shelter this season are exactly the families Winter Nights sought to serve 21 years ago. A mother and father with a young son. A father with a teenage son and daughter. A mother with a son.

So, we welcome each of you to Winter Nights. We know it's not an easy time for you, but we are glad you are now here. We will listen and help you plan your way forward and support you finding housing.

~~~

We do not disclose the location of the Family Shelter while clients are present for their privacy and safety. We will thank the first 2 host sites and their volunteers next month.

## The Safe Parking Program



October 1, 024  
**Safe Parking in Pittsburg**  
5 cars - 6 participants  
**Safe Parking in Antioch**  
3 cars - 4 participants

---

♥ **HOUSED! (Almost)** ♥

A Safe Parking client received a housing voucher last month and is just waiting for the required inspection of the apartment to move in. Hope it happens soon!

~

Clients are all working hard on finding housing. Unfortunately, currently several do not have enough income to even qualify for subsidized housing. A catch-22.

As we write this a mother with twins is in the intake process. She has chosen to go to Safe Parking instead of the Family Shelter because they want to keep their pet with them. Not uncommon.

---

Continued Success



♥ **Permanently HOUSED!** ♥

A mother and her two children, who were with us during the Shelter-in-Place months of COVID, went from Winter Nights to a temporary supportive Shelter. She saved her pay and was able to buy a used car, but it completely broke down within weeks and she was out the money. She told us then that she was ok, and she believed that God would take care of her family. Well, last week her prayers were answered. She and her two daughters, moved into their own apartment. How special is that!





### **Mini-Pumpkins with Succulent Crowns - AGAIN!**

We are doubling our efforts this year and hope to make 200+ pumpkins to raise funds for Winter Nights. **Last year we raised over \$2300, or just under 1.5 days of costs for the programs. Let's raise \$3200 this year, a full 2 days.**

**We are asking for a donation of \$25 for each pumpkin.**  
100% of all donations will go to Winter Nights clients.  
**Would you like one?**

**Are you a Community Group or Congregation  
who would like to help Winter Nights by "selling" some?**

Email Teri in the Office at [teri@cccwinternights.org](mailto:teri@cccwinternights.org)  
or Ann at [ann@cccwinternights.org](mailto:ann@cccwinternights.org)

Our thanks, again, to Diablo Foods in Lafayette for their help supplying the pumpkins and Ann Lawrence and other succulent-obsessed gardeners for hundreds of succulent cuttings, and the many crafty volunteers who layer on the crowns. Did you know that with a weekly spritz of water your pumpkin will last months! And each succulent cutting on top can be removed and planted. Ask Ann!

#### **Orinda Books**

**Orinda Books has joined us to display Winter Nights Pumpkins in their shop.**

**Stop by to see them. Take one home for a \$25 donation. Thank you Pat!**

276 Village Square, Orinda • 925-254-7606 [info@orindabooks.com](mailto:info@orindabooks.com)

#### **Lafayette Pack and Ship**

**You can also stop by and see Winter Nights Pumpkins at Lafayette Pack and Ship. They will give you one for the same low "price". Thank you Susan and Ian!**

3559 Mount Diablo Blvd, Lafayette • 925-284-7444



## The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection's PARTY WITH A PURPOSE



### The Church of the Resurrection really knows how to throw a party!

In late August they gathered over 150 guests for a Party with a Purpose. The purpose? To raise money to help Winter Nights purchase and/or operate a second van for our Family Shelter Program. Last season we had to turn away many homeless families without cars because our current van's capacity was full. It broke our hearts to say no to them, so we are looking at the costs to buy and operate a 2nd van.

The big event featured dinner, a live auction for deserts, a raffle, and a dozen silent auction items. They raised over \$18,000 for the cause.

Carmella Kowall, Winter Nights Executive Director, spoke to the gathering to thank everyone at Resurrection for their unique effort and support, and to introduce special guests Judith and Alexis, alumnae of Winter Nights. Judith and Alexis spoke, describing their family's journey from homelessness to the Family Shelter to sustainable housing, and the impact that the Family Shelter had on their lives, and the lives of their children. We offer our heartfelt thanks to each of them for sharing their stores with us.

Very special thanks to Liz Tichenor, Rector; Janelle Towels, Event Coordinator; and the entire Resurrection Community for a wonderful evening and a spectacularly successful Party with a Purpose.



What a lovely evening!



Carmella Kowall (center) with  
Family Shelter alumnae speakers.

---

## The Bay Church's Clean Start shower truck #2 arrives to support Winter Nights Safe Parking clients



To quote The Bay Church's Facebook page: "We're so glad to roll out our brand new shower trailer! This has been a dream in the making for our church family to reach our community. AND IT'S FINALLY HERE."

Yes, it is, and The Bay Church is bringing their 2nd shower truck to Winter Nights Antioch Safe Parking site every Thursday from 6:00-8:30 pm, complete with towels, shampoo and soap. Participants of both the Antioch and Pittsburg Safe Parking sites are welcome to a warm shower with all the trimmings.

Dan Swander, WN Board president, and Carmella Kowall, Executive Director, celebrated the shower truck's first night at a "ribbon cutting" event with Paul Long, The Bay Church Compassion Director, and the leadership of our Antioch site's congregation. They shared a meal with our Pittsburg and Antioch Safe Parking clients, the Compassion Team, WN staff and site volunteers. As Dan said, "It was so nice to come together with everyone on a very special evening, have a meal together and just talk."

A special thank you to Paul, your Compassion Team from the Bay Church and our Antioch Safe Parking host site. We look forward to this much needed resource for our Safe Parking clients and our growing partnerships. You are a true gift to all our clients and to the community.





October marks the Grand Opening of Creative Upcycle in Pleasant Hill, an exciting crafter's thrift store. Check them out for bargains of recycled yarn, fabric, scissors, scrapbooking supplies, buttons, notions, stickers, templates, ribbon, thread, embroidery thread, unopened paints, pipe cleaners, pom- poms and more. Plus, all proceeds from their sales go to support local nonprofits, extending the reach of your generosity even further.

**Winter Nights is honored to be a recipient of their proceeds this quarter.**

**Creative Upcycle**  
1660 Contra Costa Blvd. #C Pleasant Hill, CA  
925-324-6156



---

**MORE**  
**Help ▲ Families Home**  
**Annual Appeal 2024**  
**Giving Season**

**You are the key to funding so many life-changing transformations.**

Our goal is to raise **\$200,000** before December 31 st.

~~~

"I came to Winter Nights with so much animosity towards everyone, even myself and my kids. I wanted to end my life and give up, but the staff members were so welcoming and willing to give me as much support as necessary and guide me to do the right thing. When I learned that, I changed my ways, buckled down and was working to get where I wanted to be in life. The staff here are incredible people. I love Winter Nights and I will always be grateful for all of them." ~ Mother of two, 2022

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

DONATE ONLINE

**Make Your Gift Go Farther
with a matching donation from your employer.**

Winter Nights is now using Double the Donation.

Check here to see if your employer will match your donation, and apply online.

Many companies also match donations from retirees.

Employer Match ?

Employer Matching Donations have been received from:

*Abbott Laboratories, Chevron, Genentech, Google, Levi Strauss, Lawrence
Livermore Labs, Nike, Sherwin Williams, Target, Wells Fargo*

Does your employer have a Volunteer Incentive Program?

Some employers offer grants to nonprofits where its employees volunteer on a regular basis. And some offer PTO to volunteer for charitable or community service activities.

Check here to see if your employer does.

Volunteer Hours Incentive ?

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 link below

CONTACT US

Wish List

This is a list of things we can really use:

Cases of Water Bottles and Individual sized snacks for Safe Parking - (grab and go)
Twin-size fitted bottom sheets, pillowcases • Lysol spray, Lysol disinfecting wipes •
Gas cards (\$25) help clients get to work • Target or Wal-Mart gift cards for Reading
Rewards for kids who reach their goals, and client needs like diapers, school
supplies, shoes.

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

→ Forward

Share the Good News about Winter Nights with family, friends or colleagues. Just forward your copy. Past newsletters are available on our website

<https://cccwinternights.org/goodnews-archive/>



Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}
{{Organization Address}}
{{Organization Phone}}
{{Organization Website}}

{{Unsubscribe}}

Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc
is a 501(c)(3) public benefit nonprofit.
Tax ID # 84-4775540
Donations are tax deductible to the
extent allowed by law, and no goods or
services are provided in exchange for a
donation. Winter Nights respects and
supports the privacy of all our clients.
Any photos of clients are used only with