

FROM THE

# ROOFTOPS

SPRING / SUMMER 2015

GIVE



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MOUNTAIN VIEW EMERGENCY  
FAMILY SHELTER

## Rebuilding Families

“When we got to the shelter, my relationship with my girls was very rocky,” says Celani.

Celani and her daughters Kendra, age 16, and Emily, age 10, were living in a spare room of their pastor’s house before they came to Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter. Celani was in recovery and the family had recently moved out of a very unhealthy living situation.

“Even though I had been clean for many months, my kids were angry with me for the things I had done in the past,” says Celani. Both of the girls were upset. Kendra was constantly running away from home and cutting school.

When they moved into Mountain View, Terry Webb, Celani’s case manager, suggested she participate in the onsite parenting class and work on her relationship with her girls. Offered three times a year, the class uses the Positive Parenting Program curriculum to promote

relationships between parents and their children. With training from First 5 Contra Costa, Webb and a co-facilitator help parents identify and address issues they’re having with their children.

“When parents enter the program, they’re often very stressed,” says Webb. “They may have let too many things go and their children aren’t listening to them.”

In classes, parents set their own goals for what they’d like to achieve with their children and learn how to act on misbehavior, be assertive, send positive emotional messages and solve communication problems.

“By week 3 or 4 of the program, parents start practicing what they’re learning,” says Webb. “Because I’m on-site, they can come to me with questions and I can praise them when I notice they’re using tools they’ve learned.”

Next to homelessness, Celani’s greatest challenge was her relationship with her children. Both of her girls were throwing her past life in her face and she needed to have a hard conversation with them about the past.

“They were tearing her down,” says Webb. “She felt guilty about her past, but they weren’t going to be able to heal if they wouldn’t let her move past it.”

With Webb as a facilitator, the family sat down together and over many sessions began to address the girls’ anger.

“I was afraid I was a terrible parent but Terry patted me on the back and told me I was doing the right thing,” says Celani. “Being reassured and supported was empowering. It made me feel like I could do anything.”

Because the program teaches relationship problem solving skills, the

tools parents learn can also be used to improve many other aspects of their lives.

Celani is now actively interviewing for jobs and has moved into her own apartment with her daughters.

“It was a blessing to come to Mountain View,” says Celani. “The employment specialist has helped me with gas gift cards and preparing for interviews. My case manager has supported me as I’ve worked on myself and, most importantly, it has brought my children and I together.”

Supporting families at the shelter means providing them with access to critical resources to work through their issues to become self-sufficient. From day one, tutors, counselors, experienced case managers and employment specialists are available to help families work toward ending their homelessness.

Mountain View is facing a funding gap and we need your help. Please help us raise \$65,000 to ensure this shelter can continue to offer these critical life-changing services.

If \$65,000 isn’t raised by June 30th, SHELTER, Inc. may need to cut some of these life-changing services which help homeless families rebuild and move into stable homes.



**DONATE**  
SUPPORT THE SHELTER

To donate, please return the envelope inside with your donation, visit [shelterinc.org](http://shelterinc.org) or scan the QR code with your phone.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

OPEN HOUSE  
WEDNESDAY  
JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2015  
4:30-6:30PM

We've moved! Please join us for an open house at our new administrative office located at 1333 Willow Pass Rd., Suite 206, Concord, CA.

To RSVP please email Elaine Carr at [ElaineC@shelterinc.org](mailto:ElaineC@shelterinc.org)

SWING FOR SHELTER  
MONDAY  
JULY 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2015

Calling all golfers! Join us for the 24th Annual Swing for SHELTER Golf Tournament to prevent and end homelessness. Enjoy a beautiful day of golf followed by no-host cocktails, silent and live auctions and dinner. Not a golfer but still want to enjoy the festivities? Join us for dinner!

For more info, visit [shelterinc.org](http://shelterinc.org) and click on special events or contact Elaine at [ElaineC@shelterinc.org](mailto:ElaineC@shelterinc.org)

HIKE FOR SHELTER  
SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2015

Take in sweeping views of the East Bay while hiking to end homelessness. Choose from four trail options, enjoy a fabulous lunch and hear how your participation is making an impact on homelessness in Contra Costa County.

For more info, visit [shelterhike.org](http://shelterhike.org) or contact Chris at [ChrisF@shelterinc.org](mailto:ChrisF@shelterinc.org)

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

At this time of year, when we have gotten through the cold and dark days of winter, we're reminded of the hope and promise that comes with spring. While many of us enjoy longer days of sunshine, life for struggling families in Contra Costa can feel like a long, lonely winter that never ends. Finding jobs that pay a living wage can be difficult and the daily costs of living in the Bay Area can be prohibitively expensive for families trying to survive in Contra Costa County on minimum wage. An illness, a major car repair, and divorce or separation can quickly lead to the loss of housing, the loss of possessions, the loss of pride and the loss of hope.

Our experience with thousands of families over the years tells us that every family's situation is unique. The circumstances that led to homelessness for one unemployed family might be very different from another family who is underemployed or unemployed.

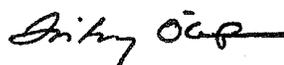
When homeless families get connected to SHELTER, Inc., it is the beginning of a new life and the first stop at SHELTER, Inc. is often the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter in Martinez. The critical objective of our Mountain View program is to stabilize each family and create a foundation where we can begin to work interactively with them on building their skills and resources and, eventually, self-sufficiency. Families are connected to critical resources such as case management, employment services, educational tutoring for children and adults, therapy and counseling, budgeting and parenting workshops, all of which, most importantly, will ultimately lead to permanent housing.

Last year—for the 6th consecutive year—at least 90% of the Mountain View program participants exited to housing. This extraordinary success rate would not be possible without the generous support of our community: from financial support to daily meals, diapers, baby bottles, high chairs, bedding and books, the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter program would not exist without the involvement of hundreds of volunteers and supporters.

The Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter is a critical resource for our community and is one of only two family shelters in Contra Costa. As we move towards the promise of spring and the opportunity and hope that comes along with it, we invite you to join us in our mission to prevent and end homelessness for every struggling family in Contra Costa so that we can continue to provide these vital services and keep families together.

Thank you for your support of SHELTER, Inc. and the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter.

Tim O'Keefe



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### THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS MOUNTAIN VIEW CONTRIBUTORS

- Anonymous
- William A. & Marilynne Armstrong
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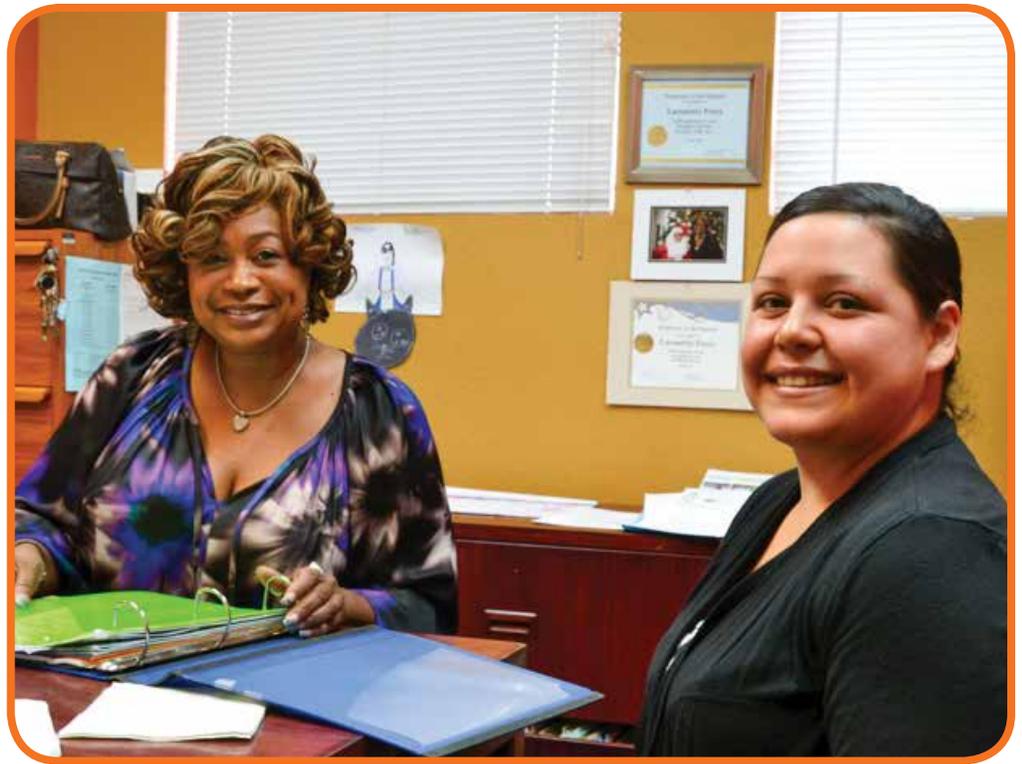
And to the 162 other donors, who gave up to \$2,499 and we are limited by space constraints from listing, thank you!

## PROGRAM UPDATE: HousingWORKs!

With the assistance of a new grant provided by Contra Costa County's Employment and Human Services Department, SHELTER, Inc. is now serving more of the county's neediest families. The grant funds HousingWORKs!, a new program developed in partnership with Contra Costa Health Services and Employment and Human Services aimed at ensuring access to stable housing for homeless families enrolled in CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids). The program is designed to address the growing challenge low-income families with children face in finding affordable places to live.

"Child homelessness is at an all-time high across the country, and California ranks among states with the highest number of homeless children," says Tim O'Keefe, SHELTER, Inc.'s Executive Director.

Families enrolled in CalWORKs tend to be among the neediest, often relying on government assistance for food, child care and employment assistance. Previously, housing for these families was



SHELTER, Inc. Case Manager Laronette Perry meets with a participant

restricted by their low incomes.

The addition of HousingWORKs! services to CalWORKs families allows SHELTER, Inc. to provide greater assistance in locating housing, funding security deposits for rent and utilities, temporarily subsidizing rent and providing case management.

"We are pleased that our experienced housing specialists and case managers can provide their expertise to more CalWORKs families," says O'Keefe. "This program is another step toward achieving our ultimate goal - ending homelessness for families in our county."



## SUCCESS STORY: A Family Made Whole

Allison was homeless when she found out she was pregnant with twins. Her husband, Grant, had just lost his job and they were sleeping on the floor of his parent's house with their 11-year-old son. For months they struggled to keep their family together but eventually they made the difficult decision to send their son to live with relatives until they found a home of their own. "Housing was everything to us. In order to get our family back together and be ready for the birth of our twins, we needed a home. It was such a stressful time." Desperate and afraid, Allison called SHELTER, Inc. "Our case manager worked quickly to find us housing and referred Grant to an employment specialist. Finding a job was challenging with twins on the way, so I stayed home until after the babies were born." Their older son was able to move back home and after just one year they are stable. Allison just graduated with her phlebotomy license and is working at an assisted living facility for veterans. Grant was able to get his union license reinstated and is working part-time as a contractor and taking care of the kids when Allison is at work. "SHELTER, Inc. not only helped us with our housing problem, they helped us build a foundation for our family! We are so very thankful," says Allison.



Skip Weinstock, Educational Liaison and Tutor at SHELTER, Inc.'s Transitional Family Centers

PROGRAM UPDATE:

## Teacher Offers Hope

Dozens of certificates proclaiming "Certificate of High School Equivalency" and "California Nursing Assistant" cover the walls of the tutoring room at SHELTER, Inc.'s Lyle Morris Family Center in Antioch.

"I think seeing the certificates gives people confidence," says Skip Weinstock, Educational Liaison and Tutor from the Contra Costa County Office of Education.

"Most of the clients that I work with did not graduate from high school," says Skip. "They come in thinking they will never pass the GED because they've tried in the past and haven't been able to."

Over the past 20 years, Skip has helped hundreds of adults work toward their dreams of finishing high school, earning a GED (General Equivalency Degree) and getting into college.

Working one-on-one with his students, Skip helps homeless parents not only learn the materials needed to pass tests and receive certificates, but teaches test taking skills. "The lack of confidence is huge," says Skip. "I'm that voice that's always here saying, 'You can do this.'"

The range of challenges each individual faces is different. Skip has worked with students who needed to pass the high school exit exam to receive their diploma, as well as parents who never attended school beyond 2nd grade.

"I've worked with parents who are

functionally illiterate. I've taught them how to read," says Skip. "Now, instead of just looking at the pictures in books, they can read with their kids."

Skip's work is part of SHELTER, Inc.'s larger comprehensive tutoring program geared toward assisting adults and children achieve educational success. Credentialed tutors are available at set times throughout the week to guide and teach parents and children who are living at Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter and at SHELTER, Inc.'s two transitional housing facilities.

For many adults who haven't succeeded in school in the past, the idea of going into a classroom with other students is frightening. For families living at SHELTER, Inc. facilities without their own transportation, getting to and from school is a struggle. And single parents face the greater challenge of finding childcare in order to attend school.

"We understand the challenges of raising children in a shelter," says Skip. "We're constantly working around the other needs our clients have."

Having tutors onsite makes it easier for a parent or child to come and get the help they need to catch up in their education.

"Sometimes it's baby steps," says Skip. "But as long as someone is trying to move forward, there's hope. I never give up on them."

## MEET THE NEW BOARD MEMBERS



**David Alvarado**

*Managing Principal at EPIC, President of Pacific Coast Subcontractors Insurance Group, Founding Partner of HMSA Insurance Services*



**Deirdre Biagi**

*Senior Vice President, Small Business Credit Products, Wells Fargo Bank*



**Patrick Clarke**

*Retired SHELTER, Inc. Case Manager*



**Mitch Randall**

*Senior Vice President & General Counsel at Recurrent Energy Development Holdings, LLC*



**David Waal**

*Founder & Principal at Presidio Realty Advisors & Alliance for Revitalized Communities*

## Giving for Good



National Council of Jewish Women, Contra Costa Section

“When you give to anybody, you get back more than you give,” says Janet Ladner, Vice President of National Council of Jewish Women, Contra Costa Section. Since as early as 2000, the local chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women has worked together to support SHELTER, Inc.’s Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter. During their monthly meetings, the group asks its members to make small donations to help support the shelter by providing food and household items. From milk to paper towels, their support helps meet some of the basic needs the families at the facility have every month. The organization also supports numerous other organizations, including Shalom Bayit Jewish Domestic Violence Center and Crestwood Behavioral Health Center.

“The National Council of Jewish Women is a group of dedicated citizens committed to making a real impact in their community,” says SHELTER, Inc. Executive Director Tim O’Keefe. “We are fortunate to be one of the organizations they have chosen to support.”

## Paying it Back

For over 20 years, local Concord residents Ron and Ashley Latteri have been showering SHELTER, Inc. families with gifts on Easter and Christmas. Passionate about giving back, the couple personally shops, packs and assembles dozens of holiday gift baskets for children living at SHELTER, Inc.’s emergency family shelter and transitional housing facilities. “We are incredibly grateful to them for putting smiles on so many children’s faces year after year,” says Theresita Gonzalez, SHELTER, Inc.’s Resource Coordinator.



SHELTER, Inc. is just one of the 20 organizations that the Latteri family supports. All year long, the Latteri garage looks like a novelty store with tables filled with candy, toys and Halloween costumes waiting to be distributed to local and national organizations. “The children really pull at our heartstrings,” says Ron. “Ashley and I were not well off as children and we said, if we ever could, we were going to give back to the community.”

## DONOR CORNER: THANK YOU

SEPTEMBER 1, 2014 – FEBRUARY 28, 2015

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Westphal Family Foundation

And to the 1,620 other donors who made personally significant contributions up to \$2,499, who we are limited by space constraints from listing, your contributions will be listed on the website at the end of the year. Thank you!

SHELTER, INC. TAX ID #68-0117241



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**NOTE  
OUR NEW  
ADDRESS!**



Since 2009, UnitedHealthcare has been a dedicated supporter of SHELTER, Inc. As a presenting sponsor of Swing for SHELTER and Hike for SHELTER, UnitedHealthcare has helped increase awareness about the issue of family homelessness in Contra Costa County and the need for SHELTER, Inc.'s services.

Joe Cannizzo, Regional Vice President of UnitedHealthcare and President of SHELTER, Inc.'s Board of Directors, has been a key driving force behind the company's involvement with SHELTER, Inc.

"UnitedHealthcare is a compassionate organization focused on improving the health and well-being of the people and communities we serve," says Joe Cannizzo. "Our mission is incredibly aligned with that of SHELTER, Inc. in those efforts."

## GIVE NOW AND GIVE LATER

**GIVE NOW** and your financial gift to SHELTER, Inc. will make an immediate difference in the lives of families in Contra Costa County. In turn, it will give you maximum tax benefits, especially attractive if you are in high earning years.

**GIVE LATER** by making a gift from your estate through your will or revocable trust. You may also designate SHELTER, Inc. as a beneficiary of your life insurance or retirement plan. Even though SHELTER, Inc. cannot use this gift immediately, it will be critically important to the long-term financial strength of the organization.

You will need professional assistance to set up most estate plan gifts. For more information, contact Cynthia Dial at (925) 957-7572 or [CynthiaD@shelterinc.org](mailto:CynthiaD@shelterinc.org).

INSPIRING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES. ENDING HOMELESSNESS.