

The Power of a Story

In this newsletter, we share stories of the people you help in order to shed light on their lives and highlight the tremendous impact of your generosity. When we compose a newsletter, we ask ourselves “Whose success story do we want to tell and --more importantly-- how can sharing this story help others who are still suffering in our midst?” You see, we do not merely “celebrate” the happy endings on these pages as much as we use these stories and their positive outcomes as a model to tackle the next perplexing problem for the next Marin resident who may desperately need our intervention, compassion and positive outcomes, too.

With much work and determination, this “one story at a time” approach became the framework for the Society’s launch of our Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), which aims to find permanent housing for our homeless residents living on the streets of San Rafael, like David in our cover story. HOT gathers every stakeholder involved in homelessness issues in Marin County (Health and Human Services, City of San Rafael, Marin Housing Authority, San Rafael Police and Fire Departments, Ritter Center, Homeward Bound and others) to **focus on one chronically homeless person at a time**. Clearly, our community’s existing approach--expecting homeless individuals to self-navigate our complex, rigorous and contradictory systems --was not working. Now, our HOT members traverse these systems personally, for each person, and find permanent housing for each high-needs individual. “Giving up” is not an option.

How is this “one story at a time” approach working? HOT is finding housing and resources at a rate never seen before in this County; as of this writing, 11 of our first 12 chronically homeless participants are off of the streets and getting the treatment and housing that they need. The St. Vincent de Paul Society started HOT without any outside funding; with your generosity, we have absorbed six months of administrative costs because you helped us raise \$175,000 additional dollars in our 2016 Leadership Campaign **to prove that our concept could work while personally assisting our chronically homeless residents with housing and other stabilizing resources**. It does work, and we are now seeking a contract with the County of Marin to support this important program. **Your generosity made this happen.**

We believe that HOT is a community asset. The chart below shows the drastically reduced arrest rates once we help people get off the streets and get the care they need. HOT shows that when we focus on the stories—one person at a time- we find lasting solutions for each person and our community, too.

