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You found housing for 198 homeless children through the Society's collaboration with CalWorks.



2017 NEWS

St. Vincent de Paul Society of Marin County

You Save Lives!



SPEAKING UP



You found the lasting cure for homelessness!

At the age of 62, Kay had lived out her addiction and mental health issues on the streets of San Rafael for more than a decade. In a perpetual state of panic, Kay's physical health and emotional state were deeply affected by not having a place to live. She was aging rapidly on the street, her health and breathing noticeably deteriorating. But each winter, she found shelter and solace at our Rotating Emergency Shelter Team (REST) program.

At REST, Kay met Laura, a 64-year-old Novato native who had become homeless despite working in the government sector for decades until retirement. Laura had done her best to support her adult children; her daughter suffered from a lifelong chronic illness while her son suffered from PTSD as a result of his years in the military. Eventually, these obligations depleted her savings and she could no longer keep up with her skyrocketing rent in Greenbrae. She searched for a less expensive rental but was shocked to discover that many landlords frowned upon her fixed income. After finally recognizing that her situation had turned perilous, Laura was forced to stay at our emergency shelter.

Kay soon connected to Kristen, another woman staying at the emergency shelter. Kristen found REST at a time in her life when she was underemployed and feeling disconnected from her family. Kristen was impressed by the sense of community she experienced with other homeless women in

the program and wanted to continue to nourish that feeling after the shelter season ended. Feeling proactive, Kristen even organized some of the women to camp together in the spring so that they could continue to support each other through their crises. *But this was clearly not a long-term solution and each of the women feared for the future.*


What happened next?

Rather than watching three senior women suffer the dangers and indignities of homelessness on our streets any longer, you found the lasting cure for their homelessness.

With your help, the Society secured two properties in Marin this year to give permanent housing to people who have been the "hardest-to-serve" and yet need the most help – chronically homeless and medically fragile men and women in our community.

One of these homes has been designated for five formerly homeless women. Guess who were the first three women chosen to live in this beautiful and safe home? Yes, thanks to you, Kay, Laura and Kristen are now renting together with two other senior women in a home that is their own, with no more fear, no more illness and no more indignities. Thanks to you, their years of suffering are over.

DID YOU KNOW?



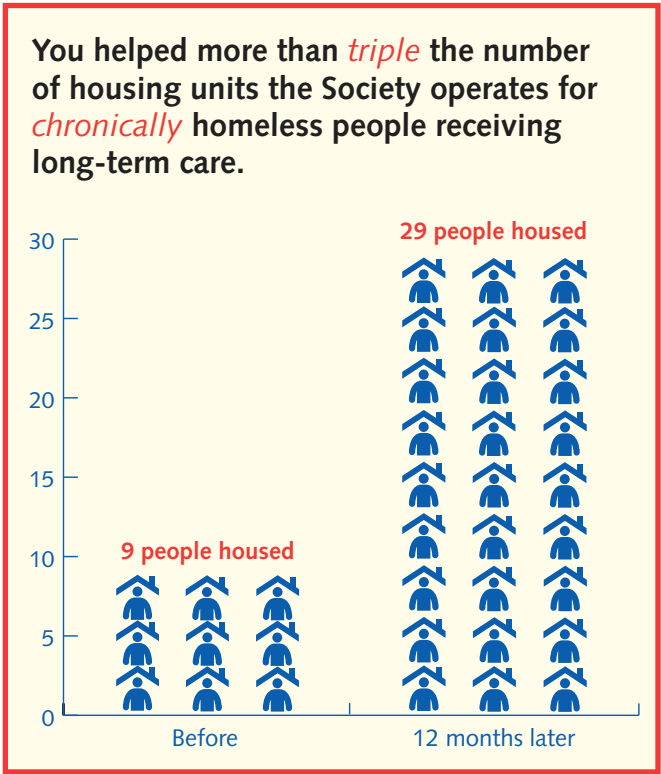
Housing First Saves \$

Chronic homelessness is defined as long-term homelessness (greater than 1 year) accompanied by a debilitating condition such as serious mental illness, severe substance abuse, traumatic brain injury, development disabilities or, typically, multiple issues at once.

In Marin, **less than 20%** of the homeless community is chronically homeless, however, they account for **more than 80%** of our challenges.


The average chronically homeless person costs **\$60,000 per year** in public services and generates a significantly higher number of 911 calls and community complaints.

Housing First reduces the need for costly public services by providing chronically homeless people with permanent housing and supportive services to help them maintain their housing.



FIRST STEP TO HELP





A Veteran Finds His Way


Recently, a 36-year-old man in a work uniform started coming to our Free Dining Room to eat every day. He was quiet and kept to himself, but we made a point to get to know him to see if we could offer him more help. We learned that his name was Jamie and that he was a veteran who was not comfortable relying on others for help. Jamie was in a dire situation; his hours at work had been reduced and his smaller income did not allow him to pay his rent and purchase groceries. Jamie reluctantly came to the Dining Room to eat for free, while putting every penny toward keeping his apartment in Corte Madera.

Jamie came to us because he was hungry, but he never thought to ask for more. He was quietly suffering through this crisis without any help while on the brink of eviction. *But because he came to the Free Dining Room, Jamie got more than a free meal.* Thanks to your generosity, our Homeless Prevention team sprang into action. You paid Jamie’s rent for a month and kept him on track until he could catch up with his next paycheck. Grateful that someone cared, this veteran continues to meet with our counselors for help. Connecting Jamie with Veteran’s Administration benefits to which he may be entitled may alleviate his financial strain and stabilize his life even more. Stories like Jamie’s remind us that when you give to the Free Dining Room, you give more than a meal; you change a life.

- 60% of our guests who eat in the Dining Room are precariously housed; 40% are homeless.
- Approximately 200,000 meals are served every year at Marin’s only Free Dining Room.

YOU REUNITE FAMILIES





You Saved Amy From Homelessness

Throughout her life, Amy constantly made the best of bad situations. Born to parents with long-term substance abuse issues, she was brought up by her maternal grandmother in Colorado. She married at a young age and was blessed with a beautiful baby girl. When her husband became abusive, the marriage ended badly. Thankfully, Amy qualified for a federal housing voucher and came to California to reconnect with her parents.

Amy was fortunate to settle into a tiny apartment in Mill Valley, with her housing voucher covering 70% of the rent every month. But as rental prices increased, Amy found herself paying more and more from her own pocket to cover the difference between how much of the rent her housing voucher would cover and what the landlord was charging for her unit.

Despite her best efforts, Amy became overwhelmed by the cost of living in Marin. When she fell behind on her rent, she called the Society for help. Our caring volunteers wanted to prevent Amy and her 10-year-old daughter from being evicted, but recognized that this problem could not be solved just by paying the back rent that was owed.

Because you believe in lasting solutions, we spent a lot of time listening to Amy. It became clear that there was no reason for Amy to continue to struggle against the upward tide of rent in Marin. The reality of reuniting with her parents had been disappointing. She missed her grandmother. Once these details came out, you helped Amy change her life once more, this time for the better.

Society volunteers contacted Amy’s grandmother in Colorado and discovered that she desperately wanted her granddaughter to come home. Our housing experts found a property manager willing to work with us to accept Amy’s voucher and tenancy, sight unseen. A very generous donor of the Society stepped in and paid for all of her moving expenses. No longer at risk of becoming homeless in Marin, Amy arrived at her new home – with her daughter, all their belongings, and the family cat – and into the welcoming arms of her grandmother.

Every year, over 100 people are reunited with family support through the Society’s Return Home Program.

UPDATE FROM OUR DIRECTOR





A Vexing Problem, A Viable Solution


What is the cure for homelessness? The cure for homelessness is “housing.” On the surface, this is not a difficult question, is it?

And yet, in our community we must find this housing **without putting an excessive burden on any one group or community.** How do we find housing for high-needs men and women experiencing homelessness while also mitigating concerns regarding traffic, neighborhood safety and other important factors? At the St. Vincent de Paul Society, this is the question that keeps us up at night.

How have we tackled this important issue? First, we asked for your help! Thanks to your constant support and generosity, we raised enough funds to create three creative, successful and low-impact solutions that are changing the landscape of homelessness in Marin County right now.

- 

With your help, **we have purchased and master-leased houses and apartments in four cities in Marin,** so that our efforts are scattered community-wide and have a low impact on neighborhoods. There has been no bearing on traffic, as only one person out of every 10 people housed owns a vehicle. Our formerly homeless tenants are thriving in their new environments and are even creating new “family” traditions as they learn to live together in a peaceful, safe and respectful environment together. *How fantastic is that?*
- 

With your donations, **we have created the HOT (Homeless Outreach Team) which focuses on housing the most afflicted, chronically homeless people in our county.** Through HOT, you have housed people who are legally blind; who have battled cancer; who have escaped domestic violence; and who have survived the perils of mental health disorders and addiction. You have provided respite for the weariest among us. *How amazing is that?*
- 

With your generosity, we have also launched a pilot program with the Marin Housing Authority and a private sector landlord to show that private housing can be a successful way to house chronically homeless residents. With the launch of this program, **you are educating landlords about the financial benefits of getting high-needs people off our streets for good.** This private/public/non-profit partnership is the perfect example of our new and creative approach to ending homelessness in Marin County. *How hopeful is that?*

According to the most recent statistics, there are only 360 chronically homeless people in Marin who need these kinds of services. Can you see how these new approaches that you helped create will have a profound impact on solving these problems? Last year, St. Vincent’s provided supportive housing to 9 people. Today, it’s 29 and growing rapidly. Your contributions are solving this vexing problem with a variety of approaches, one person at a time.

Isn’t this the solution that we all want?

Christine Paquette
Christine Paquette, Executive Director