



BRIDGES AFTERCARE

Family Supportive Housing (FSH) opened its doors in 1986 with a mission to help families who are experiencing homelessness remain intact, while addressing their needs for food, shelter, employment and education. Our San José Family Shelter is the only shelter in Santa Clara County that exclusively serves single- and two-parent families with children.

Getting families off of the street—providing emergency shelter and food—is just one part of what we do. From the moment they enter our Shelter, we work with each family to develop a step-by-step plan for them to become self-sufficient.

Our on-site Case Managers provide counseling, referrals for housing, employment services, budgeting services, health care services, workshops, parenting classes, and ESL education. Services for children include our on-site, licensed Voyager daycare facility for infants and pre-school children and our year-round Homework Enrichment Program that keeps children in grades K-12 on track for success.

In 2008, FSH launched our **Bridges AfterCare** program. AfterCare offers families who successfully complete our Shelter program the chance to opt in for extended case management and access to supportive services, for up to **24 months after they move into permanent housing**.

This innovative two-phase service model aims to reduce the average length of shelter stays and to ensure that the families we serve do not return to homelessness.

Phase One

We address families' immediate need for food and shelter and help them to forge a path back to housing as quickly as possible.

Phase Two

We extend AfterCare support to help families eliminate barriers to maintaining stable housing. We focus on finances, education and health—three pillars of long-term independence.

OUR PROGRAM MODEL

Bridges AfterCare helps families to **build the skills and community connections** that they need to put homelessness behind them, forever.

Participants commit to **ongoing case management**, utilize FSH **supportive services**, and participate in FSH's **financial literacy, health and wellness educational activities**.

At the same time, our trained AfterCare staff develop a **customized strategy** with each family to guide them from crisis to self-sufficiency. Our staff create a safe space where families can share setbacks and challenges, while encouraging them to practice and build skills in key areas like budgeting, being a good tenant, and remaining healthy and active.

AfterCare staff **focus with families on problem solving**. When needed, they can negotiate with landlords or mediate conflicts that arise. They can help families to deal with near-term needs that would otherwise be difficult for the families to meet. Even basic items like diapers or a work uniform can present real obstacles to a family who is striving to exit homelessness.

Our staff also connect AfterCare families to **community-based services and resources** that include job search centers, school and enrichment programs, healthcare and dental clinics, legal services and credit counseling agencies. These program partners help AfterCare families to build mainstream community ties.

OUR VISION

Family Supportive Housing's vision is for Santa Clara County to become a national model for effectively guiding families from homelessness to self-sufficient lives in the community.

What does that vision look like? What specific changes do we aim to achieve?

Our impact goals for Bridges AfterCare include:

- Increase in percentage of families who are **stably housed**, by the time they exit the program;
- Increase in **employment rates and income levels** of families, by the time they exit the program;
- Increase in **savings, decrease in debt levels and increase in credit scores** of families, by the time they exit the program;
- Increase in **education levels** of families, by the time they exit the program (this includes child and youth school retention rates, as well as adult certificate, vocational and/or GED completion rates);
- Increase in **health screening and immunization** rates of families, by the time they exit the program;
- Decrease in health-related absences from school or work of families, by the time they exit the program.

