

For families who are experiencing homelessness, health challenges can include stress, limited access to healthy (or any) food, and chronic conditions like diabetes that often go untreated. These challenges are tough but surmountable.

When Family Supportive Housing (FSH) welcomes a family to our San Jose Family Shelter, we immediately start to work with them on building a strong new foundation for **long-term health and wellness**. We know that good health promotes stability and independence.

Activities include:

## **NUTRITION**

Family Supportive Housing provides the daily essentials of a **nourishing**, **balanced diet** to the families we serve. We supply three healthful meals and two snacks a day, 365 days a year, to ensure that our clients—close to 60% of whom are children under 18—receive the nutrients that they need for development and effective school or work performance.

In 2014, Family Supportive Housing launched an innovative shelter-based **Learning Garden** program, in partnership with Silicon Valley HealthCorps, a joint initiative of The Health Trust and AmeriCorps.

Our onsite garden educator presents hands-on classes in growing your own produce, leads field trips to farms and farmer's markets, and more. Our **Family Garden Cookbook** (free to client families) shares affordable no-cook, microwave and stovetop meal ideas that families can prepare using a few basic tools.





## PREVENTIVE HEALTH

Family Supportive Housing provides **onsite medical screenings and health education** to the families we serve, through visits by Gardner Family Health Network, and referrals to community-based health providers. We educate families on **preventive health and wellness** strategies, such as developing individualized health management plans; providing healthy food and restricting unhealthy food; managing stress and raising healthy families (for adults); and increasing physical activity and eating right (for children and youth).

We believe that structured support helps families to move from knowledge to action. To that end, FSH connects individuals with identified risk factors to preventive health services and resources. We offer one-on-one family sessions with our **Health and Wellness Case Manager.** We share information on affordable local resources for healthy foods and physical activity.

## **OUR IMPACT**

Family Supportive Housing strives to provide the baseline knowledge, incentives and support that families need to become and remain healthy and active. We see evidence of our impact, when:

- Parents can explain the importance of healthy eating and list ways to prepare cheap and nourishing meals with limited access to cooking facilities;
- New or expectant mothers understand the special nutritional needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women;
- Families create a customized health selfmanagement plan with our Health & Wellness Case Manager;
- Parents and children know how to grow, harvest and prepare fresh produce;
- Family members report, and our staff observe, improved energy and concentration;
- Teachers report improved school attendance and homework completion rates.

## **OUR PARTNERS**

**Second Harvest Food Bank's** in-kind contributions help FSH to provide families with three nutritious meals and two healthy snacks daily.

Gardner Family Health Network provides weekly medical screenings onsite at the Shelter. They offer help with management of chronic diseases, and health maintenance support for adults.

**San José State Nutrition Students** offer onsite weekly group and individual sessions for families on healthy eating, exercise, and lifestyle.

San José State Occupational Therapy Interns, in consultation with FSH Case Managers, offer group and individual sessions on topics including diabetes, chronic health problems, exercise, eating habits, and self-help.

FSH's dedicated, skilled and diverse volunteer base supports our health and wellness activities. Silicon Valley professionals, and undergraduate and graduate students from area institutions, help K-12 students in our Homework Enrichment Program complete hands-on and in-class learning projects, including care and maintenance of the Shelter garden.

Volunteers with training in social work, education and child development help young children in our Voyager Daycare program participate in daily outdoor play, plus activities that develop gross motor skills.

