



Winter 2014

FAMILY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

SAN JOSE
FAMILY
SHELTER

GLENNART
ARMS

BRIDGES
AFTERCARE

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2013 YEAR IN REVIEW

Ending Homelessness One Family at a Time

Family Supportive Housing newsletters tell the story of our collective impact. One way for us to tell that story is through numbers. Thanks to you—our remarkable donors, partners and volunteers—in 2013, we provided temporary housing and targeted supportive services to approximately 180 homeless families with children from cities throughout Santa Clara County. Our San Jose Family Shelter delivered 186,000 hot meals, with help from over 50 community churches and service organizations. We offered close to 150 homeless parents help with their employment and housing searches, and offered more than 300 children opportunities for normal play and intensive learning through our Voyager Childcare center, Homework Enrichment Program, and evening childcare program.

Other important numbers, which tell the story of our collective impact, measure the positive changes for the homeless families we serve in terms of income, employment and stable housing. In 2013, Family Supportive Housing saw a 62% increase in stable housing, a 23% increase in income and a 20% increase in steady employment for our client families. These numbers attest to the hard work that we see homeless families do every day to return to self-sufficient lives in our community.

Yet numbers alone can't convey the impact of the Family Supportive Housing programs that you make possible. How do you measure the value to an anxious student of having a caring adult mentor him or her through a challenging time? Or the value to parents of having free, quality daycare that they can rely on, as they struggle to regain control of their lives? Our newsletters include family and program profiles, to share more of the stories behind the numbers. We invite all of you to visit, volunteer...become involved...to see the impact of your support, first-hand.

The impact of your financial support has never been greater! Family Supportive Housing is entering the final months of Year One, in our exciting two-year **Sobrato Family Foundation** Grant. In Year One, the Foundation's generous grant will match \$70,000 in new or increased donations, if we can reach that goal by June 30, 2014. Thank you to all of our new and returning donors, who have given so generously.

We still need support, in order to reach our goal! Please consider becoming a donor, or increasing your monthly or annual donation, during this time when your gift will have double the impact. Thank you!

Music Program Returns to Family Supportive Housing

Starting this February, the all-volunteer, San Jose-based **Guitars Not Guns Music Program** will lead an eight-week workshop for a group of students from our Shelter's Homework Enrichment Program. A fun activity with a serious purpose, the workshop offers free guitars and lessons, as an innovative way to encourage children and teens to tap into their creativity, to practice skill development and perseverance, and to seek alternatives to drugs, alcohol and gang-related activities. Students who complete the full eight-week program are allowed to keep the guitar!



The Guitars Not Guns Music Program's message to youth is, *Believe in yourself and you can accomplish anything.*

We are excited to partner with Guitars Not Guns again, and look forward to hearing our Spring 2014 program graduates perform!

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From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Perhaps a novelist like Charles Dickens could articulate the complex reality of Silicon Valley in 2014. Those of us who live and work here rightly take pride in the region's reputation as a hub of innovation, an incubator, job engine and thought leader. Yet a 2012 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development report found that Santa Clara County also had the nation's highest percentage of unsheltered homeless people. Our community contains astonishing resources and significant unmet need.

I'm no Dickens. But in my conversations with the media and with local, regional and national stakeholders, I highlight certain realities that public discussions of homelessness often overlook. Those include that families now make up over 1/3 of the U.S. homeless population and are the fastest growing segment of that population, and that the vast majority of the families we serve through our Family Supportive Housing programs are not chronically homeless. For many, Silicon Valley's basic lack of affordable housing and of work opportunities for people with limited education combines with some triggering event--an unexpected illness, or a landlord who decides to sell--to propel a family who has been getting by paycheck-to-paycheck out onto the street.

The point is that if we don't make an effort to understand the particular, often-complex needs of each homeless family, then we are unlikely to create effective strategies with that family to move beyond crisis to self-sufficiency. Creating and implementing those strategies successfully is our goal. Like many here in Silicon Valley, we seek to transform lives in meaningful, lasting ways.

For almost twenty-eight years, Family Supportive Housing's approach has been helping families with children to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness. We have a great story. Will you help us to tell it?

Sincerely,



Beth Leary

Executive Director
Family Supportive Housing



Another Amazing Holiday Season at Family Supportive Housing



Family Supportive Housing transformed into a winter wonderland over the holidays. Volunteers designed and created our annual Christmas Shoppe where parents and children "shopped" for one another and chose from many items donated by our community. We also continued our Adopt-a-Family program where generous donors "adopted" families and purchased gifts on the wish lists of families in our Transitional Housing and AfterCare programs.

Perhaps the biggest treat of the holidays was for all of the children at Family Supportive Housing who woke up Christmas morning to a wonderful surprise: a bicycle, helmet and lock donated by our fantastic friends at Turning Wheels for Kids!

We thank all of the volunteers, donors and friends of Family Supportive Housing who made the holidays so memorable for our families.

“Hotel 22” News Story Raises Awareness About Homeless Families

It’s often hard to see the human stories behind the statistics about homelessness. Last November, when the *San Jose Mercury News* ran an article, “Homeless turn overnight bus route into Hotel 22,” readers learned one story, about a father who had been spending nights for the past five months riding a Santa Clara VTA bus with his 10-year-old daughter. Without work or permanent housing, he had struggled to keep his daughter safe and warm each night. On weekdays, the pair would ride the 22 until it was time for the girl to catch her morning school bus. The father told the *Mercury News* reporter with pride and amazement that this had been one of his daughter’s best years so far, academically.

The public response to this family’s story was overwhelming. Readers from around the world contacted the *Mercury News*, wanting to know how they could help. Local community members started an assistance fund for the family and helped to find them temporary lodging, until we were able to enroll them in our San Jose Family Shelter program. There was an extraordinary outpouring of support. Some of you became Family Supportive Housing donors, which we value tremendously.

The challenge--for our organization and community--is that this family’s story is so common. Family Supportive Housing serves approximately 180 homeless families with children each year. Our San Jose Family Shelter remains full, with an extensive wait list, at all times. The fact is that in our community, hundreds of families with children are unable to meet their basic human needs for shelter, food and safety.

At Family Supportive Housing, we see the human stories behind the statistics every day. Each family’s story and needs are unique. Our programs offer precious stability to families in crisis; each family entering our San Jose Family Shelter knows that they will have a private room and supportive services, in a clean and safe environment, for up to 90 days. Knowing that, families can focus on the hard work of finding employment and permanent housing, with ongoing support from our experienced staff.

The kindhearted response to the “Hotel 22” news story illustrates what we can accomplish as a community for homeless families with children. Together, we can *change the story* for families like the father and daughter on the VTA bus. Together, we can resolve to end homelessness in Santa Clara County, one family at a time.

Volunteer Spotlight: Assistance League of San Jose

Family Supportive Housing is committed to ending homelessness in Santa Clara County for families with children. Each year, over 1,500 volunteers who share our vision dedicate their time and talents to help us move homeless families beyond crisis toward self-sufficient lives in our community. Since 2012, the **Assistance League of San Jose** has provided terrific support through its Assist-a-Shelter program. League volunteers prepare dinners monthly at the Shelter and help the staff in our Voyager Daycare for children age 5 and younger. The League’s holiday help includes decorating and donating Halloween costumes and Christmas gifts, so that our families can celebrate in style. Thank you to the Assistance League, and to all of our faithful Shelter volunteers!

If you would like to make a difference in the lives of homeless families, then please contact Community Resource Manager Christi Moyer Kelly at (408) 926-8885, ext. 226 or visit our website to learn about the many ways that you can get involved.





**FAMILY
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Our Mission

*To provide shelter and
supportive services to
homeless families in Santa
Clara County, to empower
them to move from
homelessness to self-
sufficiency in our
community.*



FSH ONLINE



Want to keep up with our latest news? Find “San Jose Family Shelter” on Facebook and stay up-to-date with our news, volunteer opportunities and more. Follow @SJFamilyShelter on Twitter for tweets on FSH, homelessness and more.



THANK YOU to our Meal Team Volunteers!

In 2013, our fantastic Meal Team Volunteers donated an amazing **11,430** hours to Family Supportive Housing! If you are interested in volunteering for this program, contact Community Resource Manager Christi Moyer Kelly at (408) 926-8885, ext. 226.



A group of employees from Xilinx, Inc. after preparing a warm and nutritious meal for our families.