

Building a Better Future for Children



During Kevin Quinn's first year teaching 13 years ago, he had one student in his 6th grade class who he will never forget.

The boy and his family were homeless. The boy was behind his peers with schoolwork and defensive

about both his educational status and his life out of school. He was not familiar with the school or his classmates, and he had no routine in place because he and his family were forced to stay on the move to find shelter.

Kevin worked hard in hopes of gaining the student's trust, but then one day the boy was gone.

"And I never saw him again," Kevin said.

Staying enrolled at the same school for an entire year is a luxury for many children who are homeless. Families searching for a safe place to sleep are frequently forced to move, and those moves often take children out of a specific school or even school district.

Kevin remembers tutoring a 9-year-old boy who had already attended six different schools by the time the boy entered Kevin's classroom.

"They are in and out of school, and before a teacher can find out how much help they need, they're long gone," Kevin said. "Moving once is traumatic enough. Their lives have been so unstable and their parents have been so busy just trying to provide the basic necessities of life."

On a given night last year, there were 753 children under 17 years old who were homeless in Alameda County.

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From the office of the **Executive Director**

Earlier this summer, Abode Services lost a dear friend and tireless supporter with the passing of Mary Mitchell, one of the founders of our organization. In thinking about the impact Mary had on both Abode Services and the community, I think about the importance of volunteerism.

Mary devoted countless hours to Abode Services and to the mission of ending homelessness in our community. She did it all as a volunteer. She knew, like many of you do, that an organization like ours would struggle to provide the level of care needed by the people we serve without the support of volunteers.

In the 25 years since Mary helped start Abode Services, we have had hundreds of community members volunteer their time. In fact, last year alone, volunteers spent 18,497 hours helping Abode Services and our participants.

Volunteerism comes in all shapes and sizes, and does not always involve a physical activity. Members of our Board of Directors are volunteers, as are groups of supporters who coordinate fundraising drives. The pages of this newsletter highlight two forms of volunteerism: tutors in our Children's Program and volunteers who cook meals for people staying at our shelter.

I could fill this entire newsletter with examples of all the ways that people volunteer for Abode Services. These donations of precious time create a strong foundation from which our organization and community can grow. Volunteering builds personal connections and gives our community a better understanding of the struggles some of our neighbors endure.

It's also important to recognize how important volunteering efforts are to the people we serve. Your sacrifice of valuable time to help a person in need is a powerful symbol of caring. And it's a symbol that is not lost on our participants.

Your work is an inspiration to us all. Thank you.

Warm regards,


Louis Chicoine

For Darryl, Things Are Better Now

Darryl spent most of the last 15 years living on the street.

The 57-year-old was always on the move as he sought a safe place to sleep. Some nights he slept in a park, other times he slept under a bridge. For safety, Darryl said he sought locations near hospitals, and if he was desperate, he would sleep in a bush just to have some shelter.



Eventually, Darryl, who has a disability and suffers from chronic pain, found himself in downtown Oakland, not the best location for someone living on the streets, he said. He was seriously assaulted several times, with each incident requiring a visit to the hospital and major surgery.

“This old bag of bones has been through a lot,” Darryl said.

Fortunately for Darryl, he now has a place to live, thanks to AC Impact, a collaborative supportive housing program that brings together government agencies and nonprofits, including Abode Services, to re-house people who are chronically homeless.

Darryl recently moved into an apartment and is surrounded by supportive services that will help him remain permanently housed.

Living with chronic pain is bad enough, but living without a home, on the streets, with that pain is unfathomable. Yet, thousands of people every day live under these circumstances.

Darryl says he was lucky AC Impact found him and gave him the assistance necessary to move into a new apartment. He said he plans to start playing guitar again and hopes to build his own personal computer.

Despite dealing with chronic pain from his disability, Darryl said he'd also like to get a bike and ride around a little.

Most importantly, however, his 16-year-old daughter and his mother are a lot less concerned about his safety. And so is he.

“They worry about me, you know, I’ve been through it,” Darryl said. “But now things are better.”

A New Addition Heats Up the Sunrise Village Kitchen

After playing a role in the preparation of more than 13,000 meals over an 18-year career, a convection oven at Sunrise Village Emergency Shelter recently ceased operations and could not be repaired.

But a generous donation from the Foundation for Initiatives Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation allowed us to purchase a new oven, ensuring hundreds of residents a year will continue to receive warm, nutritious meals three times a day.

The Vulcan convection oven was delivered and installed in June and immediately began filling the kitchen with the savory smell of garlic bread, the first item cooked in the new oven.

“Ensuring residents at Sunrise Village receive a hot meal is vital to our goal of moving people off the street into homes,” said Community Outreach Director Jean Morgan. “A daily hot meal brings stability to many who have come to the shelter for support.”

Approximately 300 people who are homeless in Southern Alameda County turn to the shelter each year, including single adults and families with children.

Households can stay at the shelter for up to three months. During this period, they receive three meals daily and comprehensive services, including help finding permanent housing and jobs; primary and mental health care; child care and parenting support; and other services that help them escape from the crisis homelessness causes and lay the foundation for a better life.

All meals at Sunrise Village Emergency Shelter are prepared and served by groups of volunteers representing various organizations and companies throughout the Bay Area. We would not be able to provide three hot meals a day if we did not have dedicated volunteers like those in our meal groups.

And volunteers in the meal groups say they couldn't cook the meals if it was not for the oven.

“We appreciate having this oven to help prepare the food we need to serve all the people at Sunrise Village,” said Denise, a volunteer who prepares and serves lunches. “I love this oven. I wish I had one in my house.”

On behalf of everyone at Sunrise Village Emergency Shelter, we'd like to thank the Foundation for Initiatives Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation for this generous grant.



Back to School Supplies Needed

This year, like every year, there is a child in our programs whose family is homeless, and who does not have the supplies necessary to start the school year. You can help that child. We are seeking donations of school supplies including backpacks, pencils, spiral notebooks and other items that will send every child in our programs to class ready to learn. For more information, contact Community Outreach Director Jean Morgan at jmorgan@abodeservices.org or 510-252-0910 ext. 804. Thank you!



BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR CHILDREN (cont. from page 1)

Kevin remembered his experience trying to teach students who were homeless when he decided to volunteer at Abode Services. Kevin looked for an opportunity in which he could help students and found that he could tutor for our children's program.

Tutoring is offered at four of our supportive housing sites and at Sunrise Village Emergency Shelter. There is at least one tutor at one of our sites Monday through Friday, and the children who are being tutored are always eager to learn.

Currently, there are more than two dozen students receiving the one-on-one help and six volunteers tutoring them. Volunteers help students with homework and, if there's time, lessons in basic math skills and reading comprehension.

Many of the children Kevin works with are thrilled to have the personalized lessons. Often, the children's parents are so busy just trying to find a home that they don't have time to read to their children or help with homework, Kevin said.

That's where the tutors step in and lend a helping hand. The most rewarding aspect of the volunteer work is watching it make a difference in the lives of the children. Many of the students are attentive during the sessions and their



Kevin and his wife Carol are both volunteers in our Children's Program.

work is improving, Kevin, who has been a tutor for eight years, said.

"They soak up our attention like a sponge," he said. "They pay 100 percent attention and that is a huge reward."

If you are interested in becoming a tutor or learning about other ways to help our children's program, contact Jean Morgan, Community Outreach Director, at jmorgan@abodeservices.org or 510-657-7409 ext. 804.

Thanks to Kevin and all our volunteer tutors.

Why Do Abode Services Supporters Create Legacy Gifts?

The answer may seem obvious: they donate these gifts, most often bequests in a will, knowing their lasting donation will build our capacity.

However, the reasons we receive legacy gifts are often more complicated.

Some supporters want to help sustain an organization that has become a significant part of strengthening our community. Others want to memorialize themselves or a loved one.

There are even more reasons why donors make legacy gifts. A family may begin with one of the values above, and then decide to make this gift as an example for future generations. Or maybe, a long-time volunteer wants to express appreciation. Still others make legacy gifts to achieve a reduction in taxes through careful financial, estate and charitable planning.

Whatever your reason, we thank you for considering joining their ranks in the Harriet Despeaux Legacy Circle. Contact Carol Arata for more information: (510) 657-7409 x203 or carata@abodeservices.org.

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***Because everyone
should have a home.***

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