



HOUSEWORK

news from transition house • santa barbara, california • spring 2021

Ingrid's Story *By Ben Bird*

After living at Transition House as a child, Ingrid is now giving back

In the late 1990's Ingrid and her young mother were met with what can only be described as incredibly bad luck culminating all together at once. They were living comfortably in Section 8 housing, Ingrid a sixth grader at Roosevelt, and her mother working a steady job, when Ingrid's grandmother passed away without warning. This devastated Ingrid's mother, causing her to move home for a short period of time in order to grieve her unexpected loss. The trauma she experienced caused her to lose her job once she returned to Santa Barbara, and in turn they lost their housing. To top it all off, Ingrid's mother was pregnant at the time. After the crushing blow of throwing out all things deemed expendable and surfing from couch to couch to ensure a roof over their heads, Ingrid and her mother were introduced to Transition House. Transition House was one of the only shelters at the time that would take them in due to her mother's pregnancy.

By the time they arrived at Transition House, Ingrid remembers feeling safe and stable, glad to finally have a reliable place to sleep after the initial shock of their sudden homelessness had subsided. She recalls activities during her time here, including biking in the mountains, going camping, and even taking a boat out to see Santa Cruz Island. Though she later admitted through laughter that she doesn't think they actually made it out to the islands,

it was because of those activities that she realized the kind of life she wanted. She wanted to have the opportunity to freely explore the world without being burdened by the weight of living day-to-day. There was a sense of connection with her peers at Transition House, where she remembers, "It was nice to have a group to belong to." They were able to bond in solidarity over their feelings about living in a homeless shelter, although they eventually lost touch after Ingrid left Transition House.

After their time at Transition House, the journey through struggle did not end for Ingrid and her mother. They went through several more shelter programs, as her mother found it nearly impossible to find work with a young child and a newborn to care for.

As soon as Ingrid was able to, she started working. She kept up with school, going to Santa Barbara City College at a young age and receiving her Associates of Arts degree, but due to lack of funding, she was unable to continue her education. One of her first jobs, starting a little over fifteen years ago, was at a local game shop on State Street called Gameseeker. For Ingrid, Gameseeker was a way of amending her childhood that was, in a way, stolen by circumstance. She didn't have growing up what she seeks to give others, the gift of getting lost in a game and forgetting about the world, even just for thirty minutes at a time. After maintain-



Ingrid and her husband, Steven
Photo by Ruben Alvarado, Jr.

ing a good relationship with the owners of Gameseeker over the years, when it came time that the store was up for sale, Ingrid knew she had to find a way to buy it. It was always her dream to own her own business, and with the help of

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Where's That Light? *By Kathleen, Executive Director*

Can you see a light at the end of the Covid tunnel? As more people get vaccinated, case rates diminish, and children return to a hybrid model of school, it feels like there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon that soon we will return to a new sort of normal. I myself can see a bit of that light, but at T-House, we are still a long way away from it.

While this past year has been difficult, we have witnessed a massive outpouring of community concern in the form of both financial donations and other expressions of support for both our residents and our staff. We are so grateful as it has kept our spirits high and our souls determined.

Volunteers are the backbone of Transition House. Since Covid began, we have been operating with a bare bones contingent of volunteers: our phenomenal board of directors, our Auxiliary, plus a small dedicated group of folks who are doing errands for us such as bringing children birthday gifts and acquiring school supplies. Some of our dinner providers have been dropping off desserts to compliment shelter dinners. We kept the holidays merry thanks to a small group of helpers collecting and wrapping christmas gifts and preparing Christmas Eve dinner.

We've thought it over and realized, unfortunately, that it will be a long time before we can welcome volunteers back onto the premises. While our staff is almost fully vaccinated, our shelter residents are not, and we cannot see mandating vaccines as a requirement of service for reasons both practical

and humane, especially if a first and second vaccine plus a waiting period are required. When people lose their housing, they need help *now!*

Given these factors, we are going to do everything we can to bring volunteers back in a safe manner. We've begun to call on dinner provider groups to cook meals offsite and deliver food to the shelter in the evening. We are also exploring ways to bring vaccinated volunteers back to the Infant Care Center. Soon, we'll work on plans to offer some form of onsite education in the fall—the same anti-poverty classes we offered pre-Covid in our Family Support Center. We will need volunteer help.

So many past volunteers have asked us over the last year, "What can I do to help?" My answer has always been the same: "Don't quit! Don't go away! It might be months before we can call you again to help, but when we do, we need you to be there."

Truly, we miss you so much, and we will need you soon. That light at the end of the tunnel will soon be really bright—and it will be you. 🏠



Kathleen Baushke

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her fiancé (now husband), that dream came true.

Now, Gameseeker and Ingrid are donating games to Transition House as a way to give back to the organization that gave her so much, while also allowing kids to play and have the unadulterated fun that she feels was missing in her own childhood. She wants to be able to ease the burdens of not just children affected by homelessness, but life in general for people of all ages, in any way she can. Ingrid to this day is immensely grateful for all of the resources she received from the philanthropy of members of the Santa Barbara community along with the programs in place. She says that they gave the opportunity for, "My mom to grow up, and me to grow up with her." Her story is inspiring, because Ingrid herself is inspiring. Her family was not dealt a good hand, yet she persevered and is to this day living her dream, a dream she never grew up

thinking she could achieve, all while also giving back to other "young Ingrids" that are currently living her past.

Ingrid's origin story, unfortunately, is not an uncommon one. So many families living in affordable housing are met with unthinkable crises, and in turn are unable to continue to pay their bills, ending up homeless. When asked if she had any advice for current or future families at Transition House she said, "Take all the resources, every single one. Expose your kids to every experience provided by Transition House. It could make all the difference, it did for me." Ingrid's message is clear: Take the cards you are dealt, do the best you can, accept help when offered, and allow yourself to have fun in spite of the world's ability to make it seem impossible. And, what better way to do that than with board games! 🏠

If you happen to be in need of a game, you can find Ingrid and Gameseeker at 537 State Street in Santa Barbara.

Applying a Race Equity Lens to Our Service Delivery

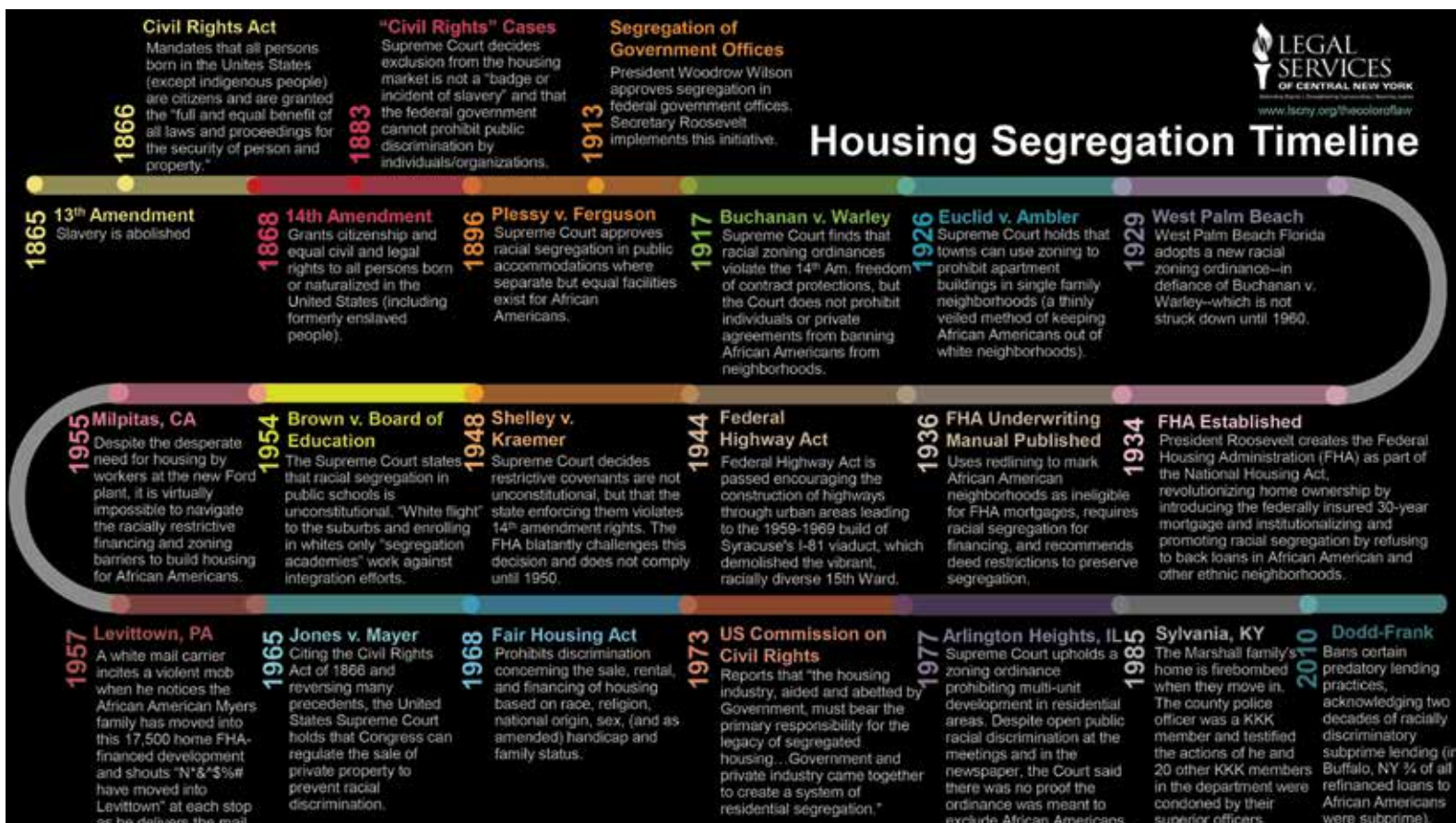
Transition House has built a case management methodology over the last three decades that addresses the root cause of homelessness for our families—poverty—and provides the tools and life skills parents need to achieve financial independence and remain stably housed. Over the last few years, we’ve studied the experiences shelter families have lived through, and have refined the way we deliver services to increase our effectiveness. For example, we learned that at least 70% of homeless families have experienced significant trauma. We realized that if our program does not take into account their trauma in the way we deliver services—including the way we speak to clients and the expectations we have of them—not only will we fail to help them, we may risk retraumatizing them. By educating ourselves on the psychological and physiological impact of trauma, we have been able to adjust our program to take these impacts into account.

We know that people of color are significantly over-represented in the homeless population. African Americans represent 13% of the general population but make up 40% of individuals experiencing homelessness and more than

50% of homeless families with children. Similarly, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and people who identify as two or more races make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population. Hispanics make up a share of the homeless population approximately equal to their share of the general population, while whites and Asians are significantly underrepresented (National Alliance to End Homelessness).

A direct cause of homelessness for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) is centuries of institutional housing policy racial discrimination. Several examples of this can be found in Richard Rothstein’s “The Color of Law”, a book detailing the government’s role in segregating America. A specific timeline of the laws that created the racial inequities we see today is shown below. The resulting segregation due to these laws has created a lack of wealth building opportunities in these neighborhoods as well, keeping residents stuck in a cycle of poverty. Just as we realized that we need to adjust our program to address trauma, we have also realized that

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Housing policy has created segregated neighborhoods with little wealth opportunity and ongoing generational poverty.

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we need to view our services through a racial equity lens in order to better serve our BIPOC families.

Recently, Transition House hired C4 Innovations, a national consulting firm providing training and technical assistance to agencies serving the homeless, to help guide us in launching a racial equity assessment of our organization. Included in our efforts will be a review of program outcomes for our BIPOC clients, as well conducting focus groups with these constituents to learn more about their experience with our program offerings and how we might need to change in order to improve our ability to help them succeed.

Just as we learned that we can inadvertently retraumatize victims of trauma, we are also learning that BIPOC often have different experiences dealing with potential landlords and employers, and we want to better understand those experiences to help support them in achieving successful outcomes.

We expect that our efforts will be ongoing, enlightening, and sometimes difficult. Transition House staff are determined to learn all we can, and put into practice what we have learned, to better help ALL our homeless families have an equal opportunity to succeed. 🏠



Join Transition House's

Home Maintenance Crew

12 gifts in **12** months can make a difference in the lives of homeless families all year long.

If you would like to join our crew of faithful and consistent monthly donors, whom we affectionately refer to as our *Home Maintenance Crew*, you can visit us online at **www.transitionhouse.com** and click on **Donate**. Choose the monthly frequency option and your desired contribution amount. Or, contact Kelley Topar, Marketing and Communications Associate, at 805.966.9668 ext.128.

Dinner Groups to Return!

After what feels like the longest hibernation, Transition House's dinner providers are waking up to a new way of serving the shelter dinner. While it is still too soon to welcome volunteers into our shelter and office buildings, we've come up with a plan to have provider groups cook all components of a meal offsite, and then deliver those prepared dishes to the shelter door.

Since early on in the pandemic, Transition House has partnered with Arnoldi's Café to procure meals for shelter residents. Staff would collect the food each evening from the restaurant, then plate and serve meals to families in their private sleeping areas. This was the safest method we could think of to keep people fed. It has been a year now, and we are anxious to welcome back our volunteers, even if they cannot cook in our kitchen.

Working in phases, dinner service will be provided by our volunteer groups on Friday and Saturday nights beginning in April. We've been contacting each group leader and asking them to query their group members to see what their availability and interest is in reinstating dinner service for Transition House shelter families. Next, we'll bring back Sunday evening dinner providers, then Thursday night providers, and so on, until we have the entire calendar full once again.

We began planning for a return of our volunteers by sending out a survey and conducting a focus group with several experienced dinner providers to help us decide under what conditions all might be comfortable returning to in-person service. The consensus was that it will be a very long time until we can enjoy seeing our volunteers working inside our facilities. We don't see having volunteers come back until the local case rates decrease drastically, more people are vaccinated, and vaccines are available to homeless residents.

In the meantime, we'll continue to work with our dinner provider groups as they assume their duties. At this time, Transition House staff will continue to serve meals and make sack lunches for the following day.

If you have questions, please contact us at 805.966.9668. 🏠

Transition House has attempted to contact leaders of all Dinner Groups providing service before Covid-19 began. If your phone number or your group leader has changed, we may not be able to locate you. Please call us at (805) 966-9668 and let us know if your group is ready to help again. Thank you!

“How puzzling all these changes are!” – Alice

Transition House Auxiliary’s 2021 Mad Hatter Fundraiser

The past year feels like we slipped down the rabbit-hole indeed. Everything is different! And yet, as puzzling as the last year has been, Transition House has accepted the need to adapt because pandemic or not, homelessness continues to plague our community and children in poverty are suffering.

The Transition House Auxiliary’s Mad Hatter Fundraiser is just another way we have had to pivot the way we do things. Although it is disappointing that we are once again unable to gather in person, it hasn’t stopped our Auxiliary from having fun and giving our supporters the chance to help Transition House’s programs for children with a virtual auction, a raffle and the opportunity to double their contribution. That’s right... This year a donor agreed to match every dollar raised, up to \$100,000!

Funds for our programs for children are more important than ever as Transition House remains open to help children attend school while their parents get back on their feet and back into housing. We are providing a distance learning program for children so they won’t fall behind their housed classmates. Our licensed infant care center is also open providing care while parents go to work, earning money to return to housing. All funds raised directly benefit programs for children like these.

Our grand prize opportunity drawing, and the closing of our online auction takes place on April 15th. To find out more information or to see if we have met our goal of \$100,000, visit us at www.transitionhouse.com.

A big thank you to all who have supported the 2021 Mad Hatter and helped children experiencing homelessness. 📌

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\$5,000 + – Mad Hatter

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Thank you!

We are so grateful to everyone who helped make the holidays special for our shelter residents, especially the Secret Santas who helped cover the cost of gifts and the Elves who donated food and fun. We appreciate all you did for the children!



THE WAY HOME
Transition House

425 E Cota Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 966-9668
www.transitionhouse.com

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pillows • towels
twin sheets • blankets (no wool)

Gently used items can be donated to our administrative offices at 425 E. Cota Street Mon.-Fri. 9AM to 4PM. Please call ahead to make a drop off appointment. Unfortunately, we cannot accept clothing, toys, or furnishings at this time, but our friends at Catholic Charities at 609 E. Haley can Mon. through Thurs. and Sat. from 10:30AM to 3:00PM. For questions call Catholic Charities at 805 966-9659.

THANK YOU!