



HOUSEWORK

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

Maria's Story

In May of 2008, Maria's Family Came to Transition House



Emilio Vargas and Claudia Rodriguez with two daughters, Maria (left) and Sofia, in 2010.



Maria today with husband, Dane, and daughter Katalina. They are expecting another baby girl in December.

When she was 10 years old, Maria and her family lived in a two-room garage. Without a full kitchen, they survived eating frozen TV dinners. One day, Maria's parents told her they were going to live in a new place—she wasn't sure why. That night, the family moved into Transition House's emergency shelter.

For the first week, she was scared, particularly at night. There were so many unfamiliar noises.

The first evening at the shelter she remembers going to the children's program room where everyone was making sock puppets. Maria remembers hiding behind her mom. When dinnertime came, she felt strange eating with other people who she did not know; it took some getting used to.

Her parents were disheartened, and at first, they didn't want to tell others they were living in a homeless shelter. But ultimately, the shelter began to feel like home. While Maria wasn't sure why they ended up at Transition House, she was aware they were homeless. However, thanks to the programs for children and the kindness of staff members, she didn't feel alone.

Her parents began to attend evening classes at Transition House's Family Support Center. Maria remembers receiving help with her homework. She enjoyed the reading program, doing

Continued on page 5

Covid-19 Testing Has Started in the Shelter! *By Jon Keck, FSC Manager*



Staff member Jon Keck enters confidential test results into a California Public Health Department testing database. Jon is Transition House's IT specialist and FSC Manager. Somehow, he ended up becoming our Covid-19 testing expert. He hasn't spent a minute in med school; he studied computer networking instead.



Recent hire Denise Mendez, Transition House's Education Programs Manager, passes out nasal swabs to the Kent family. Testing for Covid-19 was not in her original job description, either.

In partnership with the California Public Health Department (CPHD), Transition House has started weekly testing of shelter residents for COVID-19. The Abbot BinaxNOW tests are a 15-minute COVID antigen test that will assist Transition House in quickly identifying any infected individuals, and allow us to take steps to mitigate any spread of the virus.

Transition House staff received training from CPHD to administer testing. In fact, all of the shelters in our County are participating in this program.

Tests are being offered to residents

free of charge and results can be emailed or texted immediately to clients after the test is conducted. All shelter residents aged six and up will be included in the weekly tests, and children taking the test will be given prizes for their participation.

Transition House would like to extend their thanks to the California Public Health Department for their assistance and support, and to shelter staff on the front lines providing much needed succor during this ongoing pandemic. 📌



Every kid who tests gets to pick a treasure from the Transition House treasure box.

A thousand thank yous to the Kent family for allowing us to publish photos of them doing their nasal swabbing—you folks rock!

Transition House Takes Covid-19 Seriously, *By Kathleen Baushke, Executive Director*

In July of this year, after spending 16 months without the benefit of volunteer dinner providers, children's programs or our evening anti-poverty classes, Transition House's board of directors in concert with staff decided to mandate vaccination for all age-eligible shelter residents. In addition, staff, volunteers and any onsite consultants must be vaccinated according to a July 26, 2021, health order from the State of California. We determined that we simply could not provide a safe environment for our residents, nor could we ensure families' success, if we could not return to some semblance of normalcy and offer our programs that are proven to help families return to housing. We are both happy and grateful to report that our families and our volunteers have been willing participants in our efforts to keep everyone healthy. 📌

Rapid Rehousing Landlord Helps in Healing, *By Cheyenne Harty, Program Manager*

remember that when Karen entered Transition House's shelter for homeless families with children, she was shell-shocked. Homelessness just seemed to be another way the universe was punishing her family, nevermind that the downward spiral had been so steep.

Karen's ex-husband was now in prison. He would be there for decades to come, and she was grateful for that.

He was serving a lengthy sentence for sexually assaulting Karen's daughter, Ellen, who was barely a teenager.

Her younger son, Edward, could not understand why his father was in prison. At age seven, he was too young to understand.

Though Karen had worked at the same place for more than a decade, Edward's father had been the family's main income earner. And with his income lost after his incarceration, Karen could no longer afford to pay rent for the family's Santa Barbara apartment. Soon thereafter, they entered Transition House.

Karen, Eric, and Ellen, whose names have been changed to protect their identities due to the sensitive nature of their story, are among the cases that have stood out for me during my eight years at Transition House.

In addition to the intensive hardships this family had suffered, their case is among my most prominent memories because of the relationship that was built with a local landlord as a result of working with Karen and her children.

With Karen's permission, I was able to tell her story to a local property manager who immediately wanted to help. I had worked with this property manager to house a shelter family before. She knew that I ran Transition House's Rapid Rehousing program and that we would provide Karen with security deposit and rental assistance until she was able to

afford the rent on her own or relocate to more affordable housing. This property manager also knew that our Rapid Rehousing program would help provide the family with the case management necessary to sustain housing stability and ensure good tenancy.

While Karen and her kids continued to receive therapy and counseling for their trauma through a local nonprofit, our Rapid Rehousing program focused heavily on helping the family budget Karen's income so that she could pay her share of rent and save enough to create a safety net.

Changing spending habits is not often easy for a family whose income has been significantly reduced. And Karen found it hard to say 'no' to her children, who had already had so much taken away. But one day after we looked at her credit card receipts for toys, name-brand clothes, and fast food, Karen agreed that something had to give. She handed me her credit cards, which we locked up in our office safe.

Eventually Karen began to make some of her monthly savings goals, and she also developed a wonderful relationship with her property manager.

About a year after placement into her home, we were able to find Karen a low-income subsidized apartment. We provided the property manager with a 30-day notice to vacate and offered another shelter resident as a tenant.

On the day that Karen gave her keys to the property manager, she thanked the office staff at her apartment complex for all they had done for her. The property manager cried as she was sad to see Karen go, but also extremely happy for her. I know because the property manager called me to tell me the story.

We have many current and future client stories to tell. If you are a local landlord or property



Cheyenne Harty
Rapid Rehousing Program Manager

manager, maybe you can be part of this narrative. If you are interested in renting to a shelter family through our Rapid Rehousing program, please give me a call. 📞

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Children’s Program Is Finally Back! *By Denise Mendez, Education Programs Manager*

We have rebooted our fun and exciting children’s program evening enrichment offerings. When the pandemic began, we had to put most of our children’s programs on hold, but we are so happy to be up and running again. Children’s program takes place before dinnertime. Also, our children’s program staff provides childcare to families in our shelter that are attending evening workshops in our Family Support Center.

The main goal of our children’s programs is to break the cycle of family homelessness by helping to reduce the harmful effects of homelessness on children and to help them overcome the barriers they face that their peers with homes do not. We want to provide a safe place where children can learn and create healthy habits and relationships, and most of all have fun! We meet this goal with a variety of enriching and empowering programs and activities for the children living in the shelter.

This Fall, we have a variety of planned activities for our elementary-aged children from outdoor play, gardening, pumpkin decorating, arts and crafts, reading, and movie nights.

We hope to utilize volunteer help again soon. For information, contact Claire Frandsen at (805) 966-9668, ext. 129. 🏠



Children’s Program Leader Shaba reads to the children. (TH fact: Shaba lived in Transition House when she was a youngster.)



Education Programs Manager Denise Mendez has a definite “Hide-and-Go-Seek” advantage!

Maria's Story, continued from page 1

crafts and working in the garden. The entire family liked the clothing donation bins that staff would pull out in the evenings—they could search for items that they needed.

One day she remembers stuffed animals being donated; there weren't enough to go around, so Maria gave hers to a child who didn't get one.

Her parents moved successfully through Transition House's three stage housing program. They live in the community now—renting their own home, saving money and doing better than ever. Thanks to improvements in the family's economic situation as the result of her parent's participation in Transition House's programs, Maria feels her younger sister had a much more stable childhood than she might have otherwise experienced.

Maria is 24 now. She attended Santa Barbara City College where she pursued her A.A. degree in Administration of Justice and Criminology. Last year, she got married, and she and her husband, Dane, moved to Fresno. He is in the Navy. They have one daughter and another on the way; the future looks bright for Maria and Dane.

For a long time, she didn't want people to know she was once homeless, but now she does. Maria says that her family's homelessness no longer needs to be a secret—they've come out on the other side, and they are thriving! 🏠

WE NEED THESE:

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.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept clothing, toys or furnishings at this time, but our friends at **Catholic Charities** can on Monday through Saturday from 9:30AM to 3:00PM at 609 E. Haley Street.

THANK YOU!

Leave A Legacy of Giving for Years to Come

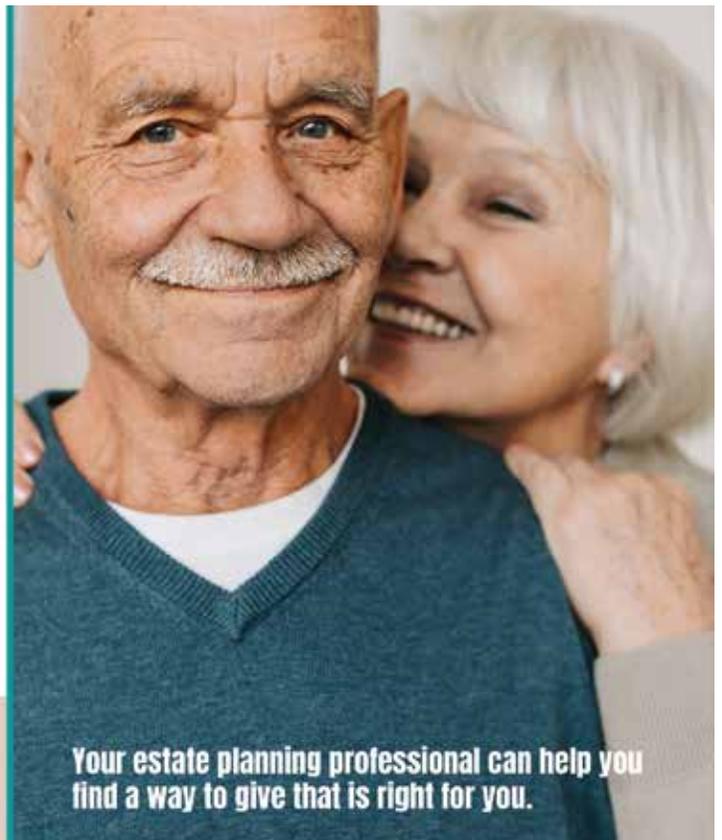
Are you considering making a gift that will transform the lives of homeless families for years to come?

You can, with a legacy gift to The Leni Fe Bland Transition House Tomorrow Fund.

The truth about planned giving:

- ✓ Most planned gifts are simple and affordable.
- ✓ Planning ahead gives you peace of mind and helps Transition House plan for the future.
- ✓ You can make a gift, no matter how big or small, that will have an impact for years to come.

To notify Transition House of your intent to include us in an estate plan, or to learn more, please contact Kathleen Baushke at (805)966-9668 or kbaushke@transitionhouse.com



Your estate planning professional can help you find a way to give that is right for you.

Thanks to You, Shelter Children Are Taken Care Of

You've helped us raise more than ever before with the *Help-a-Kid No-Ball* By *Gina Whitefoot, Associate Director*

You helped to break a fundraising record at a party you didn't have to attend!

Year after year you enthusiastically support Transition House's Help-a-Kid No-Ball—a party that doesn't actually take place—and, this year, your generosity was monumental in making this our most successful No-Ball yet, raising over \$168,000 for our programs for children living at our family emergency shelter!

This “non-event” wasn't always the way we raised funds for our programs for children. Sixteen years ago a decision was made to forego our annual gala, The Casablanca Ball, and streamline our fundraising efforts. The extravagant gala, albeit fun, was taxing on the staff and we found ourselves spending money on an expensive party rather than where it was needed most—to support our programs for children. With the No-Ball, 100% of

your donation is used to support people, not parties.

Years later, it is clear that you agree with the idea behind an event you don't have to get dressed up for! You continue to show with your support of the No-Ball, that what you care about most is the homeless children and families we serve. Now, instead of asking you to get dolled up for a fancy party, we invite children from our program to get dressed up instead. This year, the children in our No-Ball photos all attend one of our most critical programs—our licensed childcare center called “Mom's”. The center serves children living in our homeless shelter and babies from the community. Thanks to you, proceeds from the No-Ball will help underwrite the cost of childcare for homeless families while giving their children quality care.

We would like to sincerely thank our

sponsors, patrons, donors, and those who bought tickets for a chance in the Opportunity Drawing. We are also incredibly grateful to our Corporate Sponsors and the local community-minded businesses that contributed to our four fantastic prize packages. We appreciate your partnership. Together we are working to successfully end family homelessness in Santa Barbara! **↑**

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This year's Help-A-Kid No-Ball theme featured babies from our licensed infant care center dressing up in nautical attire for a sailing party! *Photography by Kendall Klein*

Holiday Help Wanted! *By Claire Frandsen, Volunteer Coordinator*

As a friend of Transition House, you are likely familiar with the traditions in place that make the holidays special for families living in our emergency shelter. We have heavily relied on the generosity of both volunteers and donors to make the holidays meaningful!

Last year, because of the pandemic, we had to do things a little differently. To remain safe and socially distant, we asked our Secret Santa's for donations so that we could purchase the gifts for families. This seemed like the safest solu-

tion for both our Secret Santa's and our elves on staff.

This year we would like to leave the decision up to you! If you like the idea of providing a monetary donation or gift card so that we can purchase gifts off the wish list of families, we will be happy to do so. Or, if you prefer, we can match you with the wish list of a child or family and you can purchase the gifts and deliver them to Transition House yourself.

Your participation as a Secret Santa will make wishes come true! 



By Jasmine

Three Ways to be a Secret Santa this Year

#1

Safe Distance Secret Santa

- Children will fill out wish lists and staff will order the gifts
- Safe Distance Secret Santa's can provide a donation designated for children's gifts
- Transition House elves will purchase items and fulfill the wish list for each child
- Transition House elves will wrap gifts and make sure they are delivered to each child

#2

Old Skool Secret Santa

- Children will fill out wish lists and you can request the wish list to shop on your own
- Secret Santa's can purchase the items and drop them off unwrapped at Transition House before December 17th
- Transition House elves will wrap gifts and make sure they are delivered to each child

#3

A Secret Santa Helper

- Go online to purchase a gift from a child's wish list and have it sent to Transition House
- By purchasing items on Transition House's Amazon holiday wish list, you can have items delivered right to our door
- Transition House elves will wrap gifts and make sure they are delivered to each child

For more information on how you can help this holiday season, please contact Claire Frandsen, Volunteer Coordinator

Email: cfrandsen@transitionhouse.com

Phone: (805) 966-9668 ext. 129



Thanks to everyone who donated Halloween costumes for shelter children this year—we greatly appreciate your support!



THE WAY HOME
Transition House

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www.transitionhouse.com



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 Kellie Topar, Marketing and Communications Associate, at (805) 966-9668, ext.128.

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We are grateful to the local, regional and national businesses that support our efforts to fight poverty and increase affordable housing opportunities for our most vulnerable neighbors. Please support these businesses if you can. Thank you to all!

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