



HOUSEWORK

news from transition house • santa barbara, california • spring 2022

Employment is Key to Housing

By Kellie Topar

When Santa Barbara area families come to Transition House, often they are experiencing struggles with employment such as job instability or work hour reductions. Many of these families are already low-income or on the verge of poverty, and without employment or a stable income, they can no longer afford to meet basic needs or rent. They are at high risk of homelessness.

For this reason, Transition House's Employment Specialist, Dolores Daniel, offers customized, wraparound employment services, giving parents the chance to develop critical life skills whether they are gainfully employed, part-time, disabled, or unemployed.

Parents have experienced some troubling times prior to their arrival at Transition House, and when it comes


to looking for employment, a common barrier they face is low self-confidence, along with a lack of guidance and resources. Parents who find themselves unemployed still express a strong desire to be out in the workforce so they can provide for their family and return to housing, but Dolores says, "Many parents struggle because they don't recognize the skills they already have to offer and how to present that to employers on paper, and in-person."

Dolores works with clients to assess the level of support they need depending on their individual needs and skill level. For some, guidance may be needed in identifying open positions, job search strategies, computer literacy, references, general and community educational resources, interview skills, and resume construction. Others with



Dolores Daniel, Employment Specialist

more work experience may benefit from training in areas such as speaking confidently with upper management, expressing more interest or responsibility in a job role, career advancement opportunities, or networking with individuals in the field or position they are interested in pursuing.

Through Transition House's Employment Program, parents receive the support they need to succeed in the workforce while restoring confidence, self-worth, and financial independence. They are encouraged to look for positions that align with their future employment goals, but most importantly, a job that they are excited about. Nearly 80% of parents successfully gained or kept a job during their time in our program. With career development and skills training, parents can seek better employment opportunities that pay a living wage. A good job is definitely key to lasting housing security. 

"I'm truly loving and enjoying my new job. My employer is very kind and understanding, and I'm excited to work with her and the company—she said she is excited, too! You really made a difference in my life and career, Dolores, in such a short period of time, and I don't think I could have successfully found employment without you. Thank you for helping me regain my confidence and reminding me of my abilities and potential."

— Anna, past shelter resident

Sophina's Story By Benjamin Bird

Sophina graduated from Transition House in February of 2020 after roughly a year and a half in the program. Though her story is ultimately a successful one, it was not without its trials, tragedies, and loss. As we see with so many of our clients, there was no singular cause, but rather a series of unfortunate events that led her family into homelessness. The chaos of the Thomas Fire, combined with the birth of her daughter, Sky, led to her inability to continue working and to ultimately losing her home. In an effort to save money and get back on her feet, Sophina moved the family into an RV that she owned in Lompoc. However, after trying to go back to work, Sophina found the commute to Santa Barbara too much with a newborn and was once again left without reliable income.

In October of 2018, she had to sell the RV, and she moved the family into a hotel room in Carpinteria. Sophina said that in that moment, "I felt like everything I worked for was ripped from

under me and I didn't know how or where to ask for help." In the liminal space between homed and homeless, Sophina put her family on the waiting list for Transition House in a last-ditch attempt to get her life back on track.

However, while waiting in that hotel room, Sophina felt she had reached her limit. Despite her love for her family, the darkness that had engulfed her life made Sophina feel that living was no longer an option. That night, she wrote her goodbyes, and when she thought her family was sleeping, she broke down for, what she thought would be, one last time. Hearing her cries through a deep sleep, Sophina's son woke up, propelled by a need to protect his mother, and comforted her. He told her everything was going to work out, that they would be alright. He tucked her back into bed.

It was that small instance of positivity and affirmation that allowed Sophina to carry on. Soon, she was contacted by Transition House. Her family had been accepted into the program, and a new chapter of her life began.

One of her messages to those met with similar emotional and financial chaos: "Put your pride to the side, not just for your sake, but for your children. Don't give up, there is hope."

Sophina remembers feeling trapped



Sophina and her daughters

when she and her family first arrived at Transition House. She was overwhelmed and felt like all her accomplishments had been washed away when she lost her housing, but she knew this was an opportunity to improve life for her kids, and was determined to see things through.

It was in her interactions with staff that Sophina finally started to feel hopeful. She recalls everyone being extremely friendly and always willing to listen, in turn allowing her to be more vulnerable and learn to ask for help when needed. This is another message she emphasizes: "It's okay to not have everything together, you're not alone."

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A Beautiful Partnership—Meet Sandra and Lidia

The following is an interview with longtime T-House supporter Sandra Enos and longtime staff member Lidia Garcia. Over years of working together, they have developed an extraordinary friendship built upon their desire to serve Transition House families. They inspire us all!

How did you get involved with Transition House?

Sandra—My first involvement with Transition House began over 15 years ago when I was working as a Home Hospital teacher for the Santa Barbara School District. One of my students was a little seven-year-old girl who was living at Transition House’s second stage transitional housing, “Firehouse.” I was so impressed with the staff, the facility, and the hope offered to everyone who resided there. From then on, a dear neighbor and I tried to return each year at Christmas to take names off the tree to purchase gifts.

Lidia—I got involved with Transition House back in 2009, working as a daycare teacher in our Infant Care Center, “Mom’s.” I loved every minute of it! As I started to learn more about the organization and what it does for families experiencing homelessness, I knew I wanted to get more involved and help in any way I could. In 2010, I started my current position at Transition House’s main office as the Wait List & Services Coordinator/Receptionist. It’s been a rewarding learning experience ever since.

What inspired/inspires you to be a part of Transition House?

Sandra—My inspiration for getting more involved with Transition House came from many of the students I met



Sandra Enos and Lidia Garcia

“What can I say about Sandra that she doesn’t already know—she is awesome! I’ve had many experiences with her, and they’ve all been great. From the goodies she brings to share with staff, seasonal decorations for the office, new clothes for the children, to pillows, sheets and blankets for the shelter, she has done it all. I truly admire her passion for helping families in need as much as I do. I’m thankful to have met her.”

-Lidia, Transition House staff member

during my teaching career. When I retired, I found I missed shopping for supplies for my classroom and students. Even though I wasn’t teaching anymore, I realized that there were still children who needed those supplies to succeed, so I started purchasing school items for the shelter children. To this day, I still love going to Transition House’s office and dropping off donations and treats for the families and staff. The best feeling is when Lidia says, “Oh my gosh, we just had a family come in who desperately

needs these items!”

Lidia—The families, and community supporters. I’m the first person families meet with when they come to Transition House. Over time, I develop relationships with these parents and children, and they inspire me to continue my role and service within the organization. It’s quite rewarding to witness success stories and see the children reach milestones they never thought they could reach,

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Thank You to Our Holiday Helpers! By Claire Frandsen, Volunteer Coordinator

We are so grateful to have such wonderful supporters like you! Whether you were preparing delicious meals on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day for the resident families, decorating the shelter for the holidays, or donating your time and resources to our Secret Santa program, you all played a role in making this past holiday season memorable and merry. Our Secret Santa participants helped 44 families and 92 children living in Transition House's emergency shelter and housing programs receive Christmas gifts and joy. You are all truly making a difference in the lives of homeless children and families in our community, and we can't say **Thank You** enough! ⬆

Dear Santa,
I want to say thank you
for every thing you
brought me and my
baby sister she doesn't
know how to write
my baby sister and me
loved our gifts.

Santa Claus
Muchas Gracias
por los regalos que
me regalaste Este
año fue muy bien
me gusto mucho
el hombre arahna
que me regalaste
y el Mathias le
gusto El Cocomelo
n y los carros el
estaba muy feliz
Muchas gracias por
todo Love: J

We can't wait to see you!

Transition House Annual Volunteer Family Picnic

Sunday, June 5th, Noon to 2:00pm, Tucker's Grove Park

805 San Antonio Creek Rd.
Kiwanis Meadows Group Area

Santa Maria Style Barbecue
prepared by pit masters
Mike Zaragoza and Sal Sixto!

Fun Raffle Prizes!

Popular Counting Game!



RSVP to Claire at (805) 966-9668, ext. 129

Sophina's Story, continued from page 2

It's okay to ask for help.”

Working with her case manager, Anna, Sophina learned just how much can be gained when one is open to receiving assistance from others. A weekly to-do list, learning how to efficiently job search, encouraging her to apply for public assistance, and helping with housing/apartment applications kept Sophina sane while she worked towards the goal of escaping homelessness. However, these services only scratch the surface of what Anna offered to Sophina. Anna was a mentor for Sophina and established a relationship founded on trust and caring that left Sophina feeling as though she was being looked after. She recalls: “She [Anna] was my guardian angel.”

After graduating from the Transition House program, life has not been without its obstacles, but Sophina is proud to announce that she is on a productive and stable path. She is now renting a two-bedroom condo with her family, working 33 hours a week, and has a vehicle she enjoys driving.

Her life is without worries: “My older kids are in college

or working, I have a stable home and job with a dependable boss, and we are even attending family counseling. All my needs are met. I feel like when I entered Transition House, I was a sponge and after going through the program, I was wrung out as an entirely different person. They gave me hope when I felt hopeless.”

Sophina should serve as an inspiration to us all. Whenever life brings an inevitable tragedy, it is up to us to find resolve, whether it be through the voice of a loved one or reaching out to grasp a helping hand.

Sophina's final message to those in a similar position as her family is: “Go in with an open mind—there is no room for shame, embarrassment, or pride. It is a demanding program mentally, but you can find a way to make it work for you. Find an outlet—music was mine. Do not give up. Use the tools they're teaching you. Share everything with your case manager, they are only there to help. Use the program as a stepping stone, and don't forget to celebrate the milestones. Good luck!” 🏠



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For tickets, please visit www.transitionhouse.com

2021 Emergency Shelter Statistics

Number of clients served	275
Children	171
Adults	104
Total families	83
Two-parent families	21
Single-parent families	62

Ethnicity

African American	8%
Anglo	19%
Latino	68%
Native American	4%
Other	1%

Adults

One or more disabling conditions	23%
Victim of past domestic violence	47%
Substance abuse, present/past	47%
Mental illness	54%

Employment

Percentage of families maintaining or increasing employment	80%
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Education – Adults

High School	72%
Attended some college	16%
Average grade completed	11 th

Residence before Transition House

Santa Barbara City	55%
Goleta	18%
Carpinteria	10%
Lompoc	5%
Ventura	6%
Santa Maria	5%
Other	1%

Disposition Upon Exit From Shelter

Market rate rental housing	13%
Transitional housing	7%
Subsidized housing	25%
Shared housing	32%
Moved in with relative or friend	3%
Temporary	13%
Other	7%

HELP WANTED!

Join Transition House for Dinner

We are in need of new Dinner Provider volunteer groups to cook dinner and make sack lunches for the families living in our shelter. Dinner Providers can be a faith group, a business, a service organization, or a family or friend group—anyone who enjoys sharing food and serving their community! Can you help?

One night per month, your group would be responsible for purchasing groceries, cooking dinner, and plating meals for approximately 50-65 adults, teens, and children. A typical dinner shift lasts from 4:30 pm-7:00 pm.

All in-person volunteers must be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination to be on-site. Members must be over 18 to maintain the confidentiality of our child residents who may be in the same schools or peer group as teen volunteers.

Please contact Volunteer Coordinator, Claire Frandsen, for more information at cfrandsen@transitionhouse.com or 966-9668 x129. Thank you! ↑

Please note, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, families are receiving dinner on trays and eating in their rooms rather than gathering in the Shelter dining room. We hope to open the dining room soon as caseloads decrease.



Sandra and Lidia, continued from page 3

like graduating high school. Our donors and volunteers also play a large role in my involvement. It's amazing to see how passionate and generous our supporters are! They inspire me to continue to push forward and help local families in need.

How do you support Transition House?

Sandra—I enjoy supporting not just Transition House's families, but also the staff with whom I've gotten to know well. I like to bring Lidia holiday decorations for the office, candy, and a variety of treats for staff to share, but I especially like donating items for the older children at Transition House like movie tickets, gift cards for meals, and ice cream. During the height of COVID-19, everything changed though, and I was no longer able to drop off these types of gifts. That's when I decided to join the "Home Maintenance Crew" and began making a monthly financial contribution.

Lidia—The best support I provide Transition House families' is an open ear. I always want to make sure families feel

safe, respected, and heard so being an active listener is very important to me. I've been committed to Transition House for almost 13 years now, and I hope to continue giving my support for years to come.

Does anyone in your life play a role in supporting your involvement?

Sandra—My parents were wonderful people and volunteering was very much part of our life growing up. Neither of my parents had very much growing up and it was important for them both to help others. I think my involvement with Transition House and other charities is a natural extension of my parents.

Lidia—My partner, Mike, experienced homelessness as a child and teen. After returning from the military, he began working at Transition House as the Shelter Director. He wanted to help those experiencing homelessness as he did, especially at such a young age. Even though he is no longer an employee, he inspires me everyday to continue to help as many families as I can. 🏠

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 take items on Monday through Saturday from 9:30am to 3:00pm at 609 E. Haley Street. Please call them at (805) 966-9659 before you drop off to be sure they are able to accept your donation.

THANK YOU!



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.





THE WAY HOME
Transition House

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

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You can, with a legacy gift to
The Leni Fe Bland Transition House
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The truth about planned giving:

- ✔ Most planned gifts are simple and affordable.
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- ✔ 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.