

HOUSEWORK

news from transition house • santa barbara, california • summer 2011

Landing that Job! By Dolores Daniel, Transition House Case Manager and Employment Specialist

THE KEYTHAT OPENSTHE DOORTO GETTING HOUSING AND KEEPING IT

f you've ever been behind in rent, or had to stay with family or friends while transitioning from one place to another, you might remember what it felt like when you got close to running out of options. Many of the families that come to Transition House are in exactly that place. They never imagined that one day they would walk through our doors with their husband or wife, and children.

Unfortunately, more and more families are finding out what a great place Transition House is, because they have no choice. The majority of our clients have lost the bulk of their income, either because one or both breadwinners have become unemployed, or their work hours have been reduced enough to put them in the red. As their bills and debts pile up, it gets harder and harder for them to see a way out of their predicament. That's where we come in.

When clients first come to the shelter we inform them that obtaining (and maintaining) full-time employment is a requirement. Our program is intended to help them by providing time for them to raise their income, lower their expenses, and save, save, save!

Having enough money to pay rent and bills is what it really takes to become self-sufficient. Because they can only stay at the shelter for a limited pe-

riod of time, we stress the fact that they must do their best to meet these goals as soon as possible. To say that time is of the essence is an understatement. The clock starts ticking the moment they walk through the door, and some people are more equipped for success than others.

Marisa is a single mother with two

....even with all of the services Transition House provides, there is no service available that can take the place of the job they will need in order to sustain housing.

children. A period of unemployment caused her to burn through her small savings and get behind in rent, but she has a strong employment history and solid clerical skills. She entered Transition House and soon found a full-time job. She already had a vehicle and stable childcare. If she stays for a month she'll have enough money to move into her own apartment; in two months she'll have saved enough money to see her through future fluctuations in her income. Marisa has many advantages over the typical family entering the shelter. Even with all of the services



Dolores Daniel

we provide, there is no service available that can take the place of the job they will need in order to sustain housing. It is disheartening to witness families spend their whole time with us struggling to find employment.

Sarah exemplifies such a case. She came to the shelter after having just lost a job due to lack of childcare. She spent her first few weeks at Transition House filling out applications for subsidized childcare, taking her children to doctors' appointments, and applying for cash aid, so that she would have some

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Meet Della! By Jim Buckley

ransition House board members travel many paths before they find themselves sitting around the conference table at the Cota Street offices. For Della Rosales, that path led from Santa Barbara City Hall to a tour of the shelter, through a life that gave her understanding of TH client needs. And she found that she liked Transition House so much, she's on her second stint as a member of the board of directors.

Della first joined the board in 1994 when she was working as the secretary to the mayor of Santa Barbara and the City Council. In that position, Della saw how then-TH executive director Jill Cordover worked with city staff, and she saw firsthand the reputation that TH was building in the community. While serving on a United Way panel, Della got an invitation to tour the shelter.

"I was impressed with Jill's attention to detail and how the shelter looked and how she insisted on having a program that would end homelessness and keep

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Kathryn Dinkin Steve Epstein Neil Dipaola Jay Rawlins Della Rosales Robert A. Toledo Laurie Tumbler the families' dignity," says Della. Though she helped numerous agencies in the area while working with the city, Della fondly remembers being able to refer residents to Transition House when appropriate. After hearing more good things about TH from her City Hall colleagues, Della accepted the invitation to join the board.

The mid-1990s were a time of real change for T-House, and Della was right in the middle of it.

"There were two big highlights during my first tenure on the board," she recalled. "The first was moving from just having the shelter to purchasing the Salinas Street apartments. That was a major leap forward for the organization. It was great to be a part of that important moment."

Della had become vice president of the board when another milestone in Transition House's history took place.

Della expressed that she was pleased when Kathleen Baushke was hired to take over as executive director when Jill Cordover retired.

"I knew Kathleen as a fellow board member, and saw her working with clients. I saw her in the city council offices working with people at that level."

Della moved to Ventura in 2002, buying a home and getting, as she says, "the feeling that our clients get when they can move into their own home." She left the board at that time, but it was just a temporary break.

In 2010, Kathleen asked Della to come back, bringing an important historical perspective to the new work of expanding and continuing the TH programs. Della's expertise in government has been a big aid to the board, as has her focus on the real-life struggles of families.

"I was a single parent with only my

income, and I can understand what it's like to have to live on a shoestring," she says. "Whenever I'm at board meetings and look at our budget, I look to



Della Rosales

see if there's waste and to see that we're directing the money in the best way."

Della also sees as part of her role the task of helping the Santa Barbara and TH communities understand the needs of Latino families and to deal with misperceptions in the public about that population.

A big fan of reading and her book club, Della, though now officially "retired," seems to keep pretty busy. She volunteers at Dos Pueblos High School and McKinley School (where she's trying to start a chess club), enjoys the occasional sail, and is also very involved as a caretaker for members of her family.

She encourages anyone, especially her fellow CalPERS members, to "volunteer their wealth of knowledge to better the community and continue their civic service. It's good for the soul.

"It's all about helping folks at the shelter get over the feelings of failure, to make them comfortable that they're on a good track and that they should not give up. That beginning process is very important."

Beginning . . . and beginning again: Sounds like Della all over. **1**

Jim Buckley is vice president of Transition House's board of directors. He serves as an evening manager in the shelter every month.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Reverend Paul Vit Shares the Value of Volunteering

he Reverend Paul Vit knows what poverty is like. When he immigrated to the U.S. from Italy he had little more than a few dollars in his pocket. That is where his passion for serving finds its roots.

"Little clothing, shoes with holes in them. But, from within we had the dreams to overcome those turbulent times and later help others in the same boat," he said.

Reverend Vit is a local minister who performs weddings, baptisms, and funerals. He also works closely with Hospice of Santa Barbara. "I help people one-on-one on their journey of life. I cook soups and foods for the people I see and, at times, I cook for the organizations that do hospice work. I help indirectly with the clients and the employees who need encouragement," said Rev. Vit.

Reverend Vit became involved with Transition House through his relationship with All Saints by the Sea Episcopal Church. "I helped to serve and prepare the dinner (for the shelter residents). I also cooked a couple of side dishes to compliment the wonderful barbeque dinners," he said.

After volunteering with All Saints for a few years, Rev. Vit was offered the opportunity to have his own night to serve dinner at the shelter. Now, on the 30th of each month, the guests at Transition House are treated to a dinner complete with table cloths, beautiful centerpieces, music, and decorations. When asked why he enjoys volunteering, Rev. Vit replied, "I enjoy giving my time to prep and serve the food. It gives me great pleasure to serve and follow the teachings of the Almighty, and help serve



Reverend Paul Vit with Transition House staff, Lidia Garcia and Irma Landeros

other beings." Reverend Vit creates an extremely homey and welcoming environment for the T-House residents. "I treat them with respect and honor no differently than if they were my very own house guests."

Reverend Vit is also a huge support to Transition House staff. Paul brings flowers to brighten the lunch room, makes soup for staff on cold winter days, and promotes the T-House cause through newspaper submissions. "Giving volunteer time is of much greater value to the spirit than giving money or a check. Although that, too, keeps the ship afloat," commented Paul.

In addition to being a full time philanthropist, Reverend Vit is an eloquent writer. To sum up his passion for volunteering, he said: "it is like pouring water onto dry soil and seeing the plants rejoice and return to healthy life, and become strong with positive energy once again." $\hat{\mathbf{n}}$

THE GREATNESS OF A TREE

Ivano Paolo Vit

From the earth a tree will grow Its roots will hold the earth aflow The branches stretch for birds to rest A spread that will hold a perfect nest The leaves will cover and create a shade Giving a harbor for what must not fade There are those trees that fruit will bear A crop that trees are willing to share They give their life so we can build a home Giving us the comfort of a king upon the throne.

Continued from page I

income to pay for bus fare, diapers, and personal items. She applies for any and every open position she can possibly find, but in reality she is severely limited as to what schedules she can accept. The only childcare she has is during regular business hours, her children go to three separate locations for school and daycare, and it takes her hours on the bus to drop them off and pick them up every day. Added to these challenges is the fact that her only work experience is in the housekeeping industry, where there is currently heavy competition. At the end of her time with us she may have little or no savings.

Without employment or savings, sometimes a shelter outside of Santa Barbara is the only place a family can go from here. The staff at Transition House is dedicated to trying to make sure that doesn't happen, and we work with clients every step of the way to create a plan and implement it.

As an Employment Specialist, I meet with clients to review their employment history, identify their skills, fill out applications, and create a resume. We go over the components of a successful job search: find open positions, prepare for interviews, follow-up on leads, and so on. However, often we spend a large amount of time problem-solving in order to get past the hurdles to employment that stand in each client's way. The issues they face go well beyond childcare and transportation, as in Sarah's case. For instance, does the client have enough computer skills to access the Internet, reply to listings, fill out online applications, or send a resume? Without these skills many clients are limited.

In a one-hour session with a client I might be able to help them complete two online applications at best, but I cannot possibly help them complete the 15 per week that they should average

in order to raise their chance of being invited to an interview. What about the interview? Many clients do not have the English skills to express what they are very capable of doing. Even ads on Craigslist for housekeepers stress that the applicant must speak English. We often wonder how much English they need to speak to get the job. Men and women with limited English skills know that they are at a disadvantage, and going to interviews is often the most stressful part of their job search.

There are clients who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and

Most of the men living in the shelter are more than willing to work two jobs if that's what it takes to support their families, and when they can't even get one part-time job, they tend to suffer from anxiety and depression.

others who are simply worn down from having been rejected for employment for months on end. A lot of clients are in need of a cheerleader, and we happily supply them with positive affirmations and reminders of how much they have to offer potential employers.

While I've mentioned a couple of women in this article, I have noticed that the psychological impact that unemployment has on men is quite intense. Most of the men living in the shelter are more than willing to work two jobs if that's what it takes to support their families, and when they can't even get one part-time job, they tend to suffer from anxiety and depression.

I meet with clients weekly to review their progress. It is so wonderful when one of them comes into the office glowing – positively radiant – because they finally got a job! They try so hard, and every week we work on budgets, but it can be so discouraging for them when their income is so low, that they can hardly save money. Everything changes when they get a steady paycheck. Their savings goal goes up. They can afford transportation. They start gaining some momentum, and we know that even if they need more time, they may qualify for our second or third stage housing (where rent is lower than market rate).

Last week I received a call that caused me to put everything else on hold. A woman called the office to say that she had a part-time position open, and she wanted to know if we had any clients who needed work. Do we?! Two other case managers and I rallied to begin the excruciating task of choosing the one person we would send to this amazing, thoughtful business owner. There were quite a few people that came to mind, and in the end the only way to choose between two women who needed work the most, was to flip a coin. Sometimes there is just no other way to choose between two deserving people.

A week earlier we had received a similar call. Maybe the word is getting out. We sure want it to. There are so many people in this community who keep Transition House in mind - one of my favorite things about this job is being in the position to witness so many small miracles on a daily basis. People make donations of time, money and material items, and without these things we wouldn't be able to help so many families. If employers would take our clients' applications into consideration, if they would interview, or even offer trial employment to our clients, we would see a significant impact on families coming through the shelter.

Our goal is for families to become self-sufficient. You know what they say, give a man a fish and he will eat for a day, but if you can get him a job at a seafood restaurant, he can pay his rent each month!

Programs, NOT Parties



t's that time of year again. Transition House's 7th annual 'Help-A-Kid No-Ball' will be held again on September 30, 2011. Put away your party dress and stay home for the evening and help us to raise money for our Children's Programs.

The No-Ball's concept is based on the premise that donors would rather see every dollar of their donation support our Children's Programs than attend another fundraising event. Our Children's Programs include Infant Care, Evening Arts Enrichment, Technology and Literacy for Children and more!

Entering its 7th year, the No-Ball continues to be a major success and raises crucial funding for our children's programs. Underwritten by Transition House's Board of Directors, the No-Ball has become a fun NON-event. Last year, the No-Ball raised over \$80,000 (the most we have ever raised) and we hope to do even better this year, with your help!

There are many ways to participate in the No-Ball: from buying a Non-Ticket to Sponsoring a Transition House Child for the duration of their shelter stay, or by purchasing raffle tickets for exciting prizes, including a trip, dinner for a year, and much more. There are ways for everyone to participate. Check out our website, www.transitionhouse.com, for more information and to participate in the 2011 No-Ball.

Thank you for supporting our children's program. We look forward to you NOT seeing you this year! 🏚















Transition House 2011 Family Picnic









Shelter Dinner Providers

St. Raphael Catholic Church First Congregational Church

Mt. Carmel

St. Anthony's

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805 Deli

Living Faith Center

B'nai B'rith

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Santa Barbara Community Church

Carpinteria Community Church

Calvery Chapel

Trinity Lutheran

Organic Soup Kitchen

Old Mission Santa Barbara

Live Oak Unitarian

St. Mark United Methodist Church

Knights of Columbus

Trinity Episcopal

Kathy Bailey and Friends

Christian Science

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Montecito Covenant

Ocean Hills

El Montecito Presbyterian Church

Unity Church of Santa Barbara

Reverend Paul Vit

Mother's Kitchen (MA Center)

Transition House Auxiliary

PROGRAM SERVICES **AND EXPENSES**

Program \$1,913,346 Management and General 144,688 **Fundraising** 170,800

Total:

\$2,228,834

INCOME AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Individuals	\$267,199
Foundations	443,360
Corporations	76,268
Federal	412,954
State/Local	169,752
Churches	24,195
Rental Income	351,683
Fundraising	134,204
In-kind	349,219
Total	\$2,228,834

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Because of the generosity of the hundreds of individuals and organizations listed below, Transition House was able to help more than 600 family members through its shelter, housing, and homelessness prevention programs. Thank you, friends!!

\$100,000+

Santa Barbara Foundation

\$40,000 - \$99,999

Wood-Claeyssens Foundation

\$20,000 - \$39,999

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Back to School

New teachers, new friends, new books, and a whole new set of things to learn. Going back to school can be tough for all children. However, the children staying at Transition House have a different set of worries they struggle with: "Will I have pencils and paper? Is my old backpack going to break? Where will I get the rest of the supplies I need?"

Children staying in our family shelter should have the same chance to be successful in school as their housed peers. This is where you can help.

We need new school supplies for all the kids in the shelter, including:

- New backpacks
- Binders
- Pencil pouches
- Graph paper
- College ruled paper
- Subject dividers
- Graphing calculators

For your convenience, you may find a list of needed items in the "General Needs" section of our web site. Items are also available on our Amazon Wishlist. Go to Amazon.com and search 'Transition House' under 'Wishlists'. Your purchased items will be shipped directly to Transition House! Thank you for helping our kids to start the school year right! \mathbf{n}



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