



THE WAY HOME
Transition House

HOUSEWORK

news from transition house • santa barbara, california • winter 2018

Family Homelessness Is Different

By Kathleen Baushke

Transition House joins with other family shelter programs across the country committed to providing comprehensive anti-poverty services to families to help them prepare to return to housing

In our last newsletter, we let you know about a loss of federal funding to our shelter program due to changing priorities at HUD. Transition House is not the only family program to suffer funding losses due to HUD's narrowed focus on chronically homeless individuals.

In January, executive director Kathleen Baushke and program director Debbie Michael attended the Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness' biannual conference in New York. Over 700 attendees representing homeless services for families from across the nation spent two days participating in educational forums.

One thing we learned is that HUD requirements for service delivery do not sit well with most family programs. HUD wants programs to get families back into housing quickly, regardless of their income, active substance abuse or willingness to participate in program services. Of course, there are some homeless families

that do not require extensive program services to return to housing—they are employed, they have decent credit and a rental history—but most families have more barriers to housing stability and they need time and assistance to overcome those barriers.

Throughout the

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Intake Coordinator Luis Beltran reviews an intake interview form for a new family.

Transition House Intake: What Happens When a Family Comes in for Help

When Santa Barbara area families become homeless, they find their way to Transition House. They are referred by their pastor, the school system, a social service agency, or even a friend or neighbor who knows about Transition House. Because we've been around since 1984, people in the community know that when a family is facing eviction, send them to Transition House.

Sometimes they are a few days away from losing their housing; sometimes they are already homeless, but when families first contact us, they meet with our Intake Coordinator, Luis Beltran. He speaks with families, meets them to learn their story, and adds them to our waitlist. When possible, Luis makes an effort to divert them from shelter if he can. If not, he

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follows them until they enter our shelter, standing by them while they go through the process. As you might imagine, the family is scared of what is happening to them and where they might end up. Luis' primary role is to build trust and to be there for them with resources.

The length of stay on our waitlist is different for each family, from a few days to several weeks. Sometimes it depends on available space. It also depends on acuteness of need. A family on the street with no place to go, or no car to shelter in, rises to the top of our list. If families do not enter quickly due to various factors, they check in with Luis once a week so he can get a jump on providing them resources and make sure they are removed from the list if they find housing in the meantime.

When the night comes for them to move in, Luis meets with them at the

shelter to get them settled in and to make sure they feel welcome.

"They need to build trust with the first person they meet—that is my role as the Intake Coordinator. They have fear about what the shelter will be like and what their children will experience during their stay. My job is to do everything I can to make them feel secure during this very stressful time."

After Luis is sure that they are settled in their new family room at the shelter, they will eventually begin working with their new case manager. Still, Luis is at the shelter each weeknight so the family continues to know that the person they met is still there looking out for them, ready to help.

"My background is working as a case-worker and an employment specialist at the Department of Social Services, where I was employed for six years," says Luis. "At Transition House I feel I can do more because I can actually observe the

family dynamic. While I was proud of my work at DSS, I have so much more information about the family seeing them at the shelter—this helps me, and I think the entire T-House program, have more success helping families."

"I like the fact that our families are given the chance to learn the skills they need to succeed in the long run—our job is to make sure that the environment provides them with the compassion and the structure they need to change their circumstances."

While only one third of families that join the waitlist actually enter the shelter, our process allows some to find solutions to their situation before they become homeless. Thanks to the relationship they develop with Luis and the referrals he provides, some families can avoid homelessness all together. For others, when they enter the shelter their first night, they see the face of a friend who already knows their difficult story. ⬆

New Picnic Venue!

As much as we loved the tranquility of Skofield Park, the venue for our last two picnics, we decided that the remote location and the uneven ground required us to make a change. This year, we will move to Tucker's Grove. It might not be quite as peaceful, but it is centrally located and you won't have to hike up a hill after lunch to get back to your car!

Join Us!

Transition House **Annual Volunteer Family Picnic**

Sunday, May 20th, Noon to 2:00 pm

Tucker's Grove Park, 805 San Antonio Creek Rd.

Kiwanis Meadows Group Area

Santa Maria Style Barbecue by pit master Mike Zaragoza!

Fun Raffle Prizes! • Popular Counting Game!

RSVP to Diana at (805) 966-9668, ext. 115



The Thomas Fire Impacts Current Clients' Income; May Increase Homelessness for Low Wage Workers

The tragic destruction caused in December and January in our area from the Thomas Fire and subsequent mudslides led to homelessness for hundreds of people in Santa Barbara and Ventura. It is heartbreaking to think of so many people losing all they have. Even with protection in place such as insurance, it will not remove the trauma they are experiencing now, nor the possessions they have lost forever.

Our hearts go out to the families that lost loved ones; to have to grieve the loss of a family member without the comfort and security of one's home is beyond comprehension. We pray that they will find peace and some comfort in the outpouring of love and support from the community during the difficult time ahead.

Our community has been torn apart by natural disasters that have left so many people homeless in its wake. Many agencies, churches and private individuals stepped up immediately to provide shelter, food and care for those who were directly impacted.

Those efforts continue, with officials at the county and state level, along with local players including emergency response, the philanthropic community, area non-profits, schools and new groups of community volunteers that have sprung up since the disasters began.

Officials are now focusing on how to prepare for future emergencies, along with secondary impacts, or the "ripple effect," on the business community and its workers as the result of the halt to

much of area commerce during December and January. In the coming months, Transition House expects to see families who have lost their housing due to the impact the Thomas Fire had on their employment.

To try to understand what happened to workers, we looked at our current shelter and housing residents to see how they were impacted.

Many of Transition House's families were unable to work for stretches at a time during December and January, which resulted in lost income. Some parents were unable to get to their job sites because of the 101 closure, some businesses were closed or had reduced hours of business, and others worked for families whose homes were completely lost in the fire or mudslide.

Families impacted by the disasters work in industries like catering, house cleaning, grocery stores, restaurants, construction, hotels, and other retail establishments. Quite a few families could not work because their children's school or daycare centers were closed during the worst of the smoke.

These circumstances required Transition House to provide additional rental assistance to seven families through our Rapid Rehousing Program. We anticipate that many families will need to stay longer in our shelter than they would have otherwise while they continue to save money for a security deposit on their own home.

Some examples of how families were impacted include:

- A mom who is in our third stage program cleans houses for a living, and had no reportable income for the month of January because five of the homes she cleaned were lost

in the mudslide. Another third-stage mom lost two of the houses she cleaned.

- A dad in our shelter works full-time for a construction company based in Ojai. The majority of his job sites are between Carpinteria and Santa Barbara, so he was unable to work for much of December and January.
- A mom in the shelter did not have childcare for her infant when the smoke was at its worst because the daycare center was closed. She had to use almost all her vacation time to stay home with her child.
- A third-stage mom lost half of her income when her workplace was closed for six days due to the mudslide. She brought in only \$450 for the whole month of January.
- One dad in the shelter lost 100 percent of income he earns as a fitness instructor, as all of his clients canceled lessons during the fire.

We all did our best to help during this tragedy. We might have donated to organizations like the Red Cross or United Way. We might have volunteered to help with clean up. We may have supported family or friends who were displaced.

We can and must continue to help by supporting local businesses, especially those sorely impacted by the lack of local income. The future of those businesses need us, and the stability of their workforce needs us as well. 🏠





Virginia, David and Patty



Lisa, Mary Pat, Cynthia, Sherry, Cheryl and Tim

Dinner Provider Spotlight

St. Barbara's Parish at the Old Mission

Since 1985, members of the St. Barbara's Parish community have been putting hot food on the table for families at Transition House. Every third Wednesday of the month, they serve up their specialty—baked chicken and Spanish rice—to hungry parents and children.

Meal coordinator Mary Pat Surmeier says St. Barbara's Parish has been serving at Transition House for as long as she can remember. For many years, Mary Ryan led the team from St. Barbara's. Mary Pat help cook until Mary Ryan passed away six years ago. Then, Mary Pat took over.

On a recent third Wednesday, we visited with some of the St. Barbara's crew—Sherry, Carole, Cynthia, Tim and Cheryl, Patty and David, and Lisa and Virginia. They are just some of the approximately 30 people that volunteer on a rotating basis with St. Barbara's.

Some help by doing the shopping; others cook food at home and deliver it piping hot and ready to eat. Others work in the shelter that evening, making lunches and serving dinner.

Mary Pat told us that she prefers organizing the dinner rather than doing the cooking. She is happy doing whatever

she can to help the families.

Sherry is a shopper every other month. She believes she's probably been helping for at least 20 years, has volunteered with cooking in the past and likes that Transition House focuses on families.

Cynthia is a newer volunteer with about two years of experience. She arrived with a big pot of fragrant Spanish rice. Cynthia told us that she helps because it is important to her to give back to the community.

Longtime cooks David and Patty are also interested in giving back to the community. They made their contribution by cooking the evening's entree, baked chicken. They have been serving since the old days when Transition House was located in the quonset hut.

Lisa gets involved by serving meals and helping with lunches. She has also helped for 20 years. Lisa really enjoys the experience. Part of the fun for Lisa

is meeting other members of her congregation. Because such a large group from St. Barbara's helps on a rotating basis, she never knows if she might meet someone new.

Tim and Cheryl have been helping for two years. They want to give families the gift of family time—they love seeing families sitting together enjoying a meal. They get a lot back from the experience—especially seeing the children, and they want the families to know how much they respect them.

Virginia is another long time volunteer who remembers helping in the quonset hut. She feels strongly that food is a basic need that should be provided for everyone. She wants to be sure that families are served a hot, nutritious meal.

One thing that all of the volunteers we spoke to from St. Barbara's have in common is that they admire Transition House's program because it lifts families up, but also requires families to work to improve their own situations. They appreciate that Transition House helps people find jobs and learn to manage their money. They are glad to be part of a program that helps people help themselves.

Thank you, St. Barbara's Parish, for the food and the support you offer to Transition House families! 🏠


“My Plate” Child and Adult Care Food Program

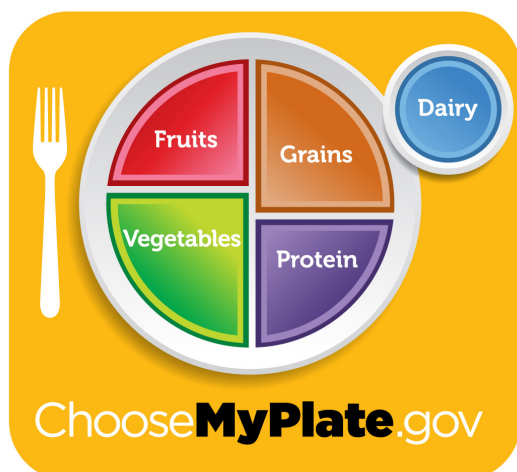
By Diana Garcia, Volunteer Coordinator

Transition House now participates in a food program called “My Plate” as part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The program supports child and adult care institutions, and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons.

We would like to utilize this additional support offered by “My Plate” as a tool and resource for nutrition education for parents, children, and meal providers. The program provides fun and creative ideas for interactive activities that will interest children in learning more about their own nutrition at home and at school. Our dinner providers do an amazing job of providing delicious and nutritious meals for our families. We wanted to share this information so that our volunteer meal providers know how the meals they prepare help support the goals of the program. By interlacing the efforts of both meal providers and the CACFP program they will together help children establish good eating habits and learn about the foods that help them grow into healthy adults.

Our staff is currently working on putting together a nutrition handbook that will include recipe ideas and nutrition facts that families will be able to take with them when they exit the program. We would love to hear your ideas! If you also have a recipe you would like to share to include in the nutrition handbook please let us know.

You will soon see informational posters about the program throughout the shelter. If you would like to learn more, please visit the “My Plate” - CACFP website at <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. You can call me at 966-9668, ext. 115 or email me at dgarcia@transitionhouse.com. 



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conference, we met agencies that either lost HUD funding or chose to give it up because HUD’s requirements went against their mission statements. Time and again, these agencies’ stories of client success confirmed our commitment to Transition House’s mission.

We have already lost \$63,000 in HUD funding. We receive other funding from HUD as well that is now in jeopardy. In order to keep receiving HUD funding, Transition House could not mandate services, sobriety, or income stability for those in our program. HUD instead wants us to rapidly rehouse families in a methodology called “Housing First.”

To us, hastily returning families to housing that are not ready to make rent and utility payments is a recipe for failure, and it perpetuates the poverty that resulted in homelessness in the first place.

According to Barbara Duffield, Executive Director of SchoolHouse Connection, and a nationally recognized expert on policy and the impacts of homelessness on children, states:

“The deprivation of deep poverty, coupled with the mobility and trauma that accompany homelessness (and for many, abuse, violence, and neglect), are a recipe for troubled lives. Putting children and youth last in line for homeless assistance today ensures that there will be more chronically homeless adults tomorrow.”

Our program works. The majority of families who stay at Transition House leave for permanent housing solutions with the skills they need to remain successfully housed. We will continue to serve families the same way we have for many years because it is the best solution for family homelessness. 

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Transition House Corporate Sponsor Highlight

The Towbes Group—Give Where You Live

Every time The Towbes Group, a developer of apartment style residences in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, rents out a unit, they make a gift to a local non-profit.

The Towbes Group has been very generous to Transition House over the years. Through their Give Where You Live program, they have donated over \$70,000 since 2010! Each time a tenant moves in to a Towbes Group residential property, \$25 is set aside to give to three designated nonprofits.

One of the members of their residential property management group came up with the idea, inspired by Michael Towbes' giving philosophy. Michael believed that as his company became more successful, it should support the community in bigger and more meaningful ways. They chose Transition House to be a beneficiary organization because they are impressed with the impact we have, and because our mission fits into

their housing interest area.

Craig Zimmerman, President of The Towbes Group, told us, "The Towbes Group believes that Give Where You Live could serve as a model for other businesses to follow. For example, a tire store could give away one dollar for every tire sold, or a furniture store could donate \$10 every time they sell a couch. We think that this type of giving helps employees feel more connected to the community—and to their own success!"

For 2018 the Give Where You Live program is focusing on nonprofits that support education. We thank The Towbes Group for its tremendous support of Transition House and the families we serve! 🏡



Craig Zimmerman, President of The Towbes Group, and staff present a check representing their 2017 donations to Executive Director Kathleen Baushke and staff from Transition House.

Foundation Spotlight

Grace Housing

Transition House has a lot to thank Grace Housing for! This non-profit was established by the membership of the former Grace Lutheran Church of Santa Barbara when they closed in 2015. Over the last two years, they have generously donated nearly \$53,000 to our programs.

Grace Lutheran—founded in the early 1900s—was one of a handful of churches that helped to establish Transition House in 1986, and they continued to support us financially with nearly \$20,000 over the 29 years that followed.

Transition House is one of five “legacy agencies” that Grace Housing has committed to supporting in perpetuity. The other four agencies are Habitat for Humanity, Missions of Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Grace Village Services, and Grace Food Pantry. They also donate to other agencies as funding allows. The donated funds come from rent paid by Vons and AC4 Fitness, which lease Grace Housing-owned property in La Cumbre Plaza.

A portion of Grace Housing’s income

is earmarked for the creation of low-income housing, which is desperately needed in our area. Their first project—Grace Village—was made possible when they donated the land upon which the church sat to the Santa Barbara Housing Authority, which is building a 58-unit complex for low-income seniors. Grace Village will offer supportive services to their residents through a collaboration with the Center for Successful Aging and the Grace Food Pantry, which will operate weekly out of the community room. The ribbon cutting is scheduled for March 12, 2018!

We are very appreciative of Grace Housing’s support of Transition House and the families we serve! 🏠



Holidays at Transition House – A Thank You to Our Secret Santas

All of us at Transition House are incredibly appreciative of the support we receive from our community. The past holiday season had its share of heartache as so many were dealing with the devastating effects of the Thomas fire. In spite the fact that many of our supporters were displaced from their homes, the generosity came through loud and clear with the community volunteering time, making monetary donations, and participating in our Secret Santa program to help make this holiday extra special for those families residing at Transition House.

This Christmas, the kindness of our supporters allowed 76 families with 171 children living in Transition House’s shelter and housing programs to receive Christmas gifts! Your contribution not only helped the children in our programs, but also a number of low-income families who otherwise would not have been able to afford presents for their children this holiday season. All these families enjoyed a memorable and merry Christmas because of your thoughtfulness, time, and willingness to make a difference.

Thank you for your support and for spreading the joy! 🏠

When Grace Lutheran was being demolished, they found a time capsule in the cornerstone that had been placed there by congregants in the 1950s. In it were things like a hymnal, a membership directory, news articles about the original purchase of the land, and a bible. They decided to update the capsule with information about the closing of Grace Lutheran and put it back in the cornerstone, which is now part of the Grace Village building.





THE WAY HOME
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425 E Cota Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 966-9668
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 Gina Whitefoot, Development Coordinator, at 805.966.9668 ext.120.



SAVE THE DATE!

The 21st Annual Mad Hatter Luncheon will take place on Wednesday, April 25, 2018, at 11:00 AM at The Fess Parker Resort.

"Viva L'Italia" will feature regional cuisine, silent auction items, and fun entertainment by Dean Martin impersonator Matt Helm.

Tickets cost \$125 per person. Invitations will be mailed in March. Hope to see you there!

If you wish to be added to the Auxiliary mailing list, or you are interested in underwriting, advertising, or donating auction items, contact Diane White at 805-964-9742.

Transition House Auxiliary
P. O. Box 2325, Santa Barbara, CA 93120