



free from homelessness and family violence

NEWSLETTER

WE'RE NUMBER ONE!

Midway Shelter Honored For Highest Outcomes

At Alameda County's recent Achieving Outcomes Community Celebration on June 12, our Midway Shelter was lauded by Alameda County as its highest achieving shelter program for 2013!

The award reflects Midway's outcomes in terms of shelter residents linked to permanent housing. All of the County's 15 homeless shelters are ranked.

Why is this rate important? Because it means Midway residents end their homelessness while they are with us. Life skills groups, mental health and medical services, linkage to job training and public benefits, and school advocacy also help our residents build safe and stable futures.



Building Futures' staff at EveryOne Home's Achieving Outcomes Community Celebration

Midway's co-founder Virginia Krutilek (pictured at center) was on hand to accept the award. Our San Leandro Shelter, Bessie Coleman Court, and Rapid Rehousing program were also recognized for outstanding outcomes.

In the last 12 months, Midway, San Leandro Shelter, and Sister Me Home sheltered and provided life-changing services to 461 women and children. We are proud of our dedicated staff and our residents for their many, many successes!

BUILDING FUTURES' PROGRAM RECOGNITION at June 12th's Achieving Outcomes Community Celebration

Highest Achieving Program

WINNER

Midway Shelter

SEMI-FINALISTS

San Leandro Shelter and
San Leandro and Alameda Rapid
Re-Housing programs

*Meeting or exceeding the exit to
permanent housing benchmarks
for 2013, 2012, 2011, and 2010*

Bessie Coleman Court
Midway Shelter
San Leandro Shelter



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every call to Building Futures' crisis line represents a leap of faith. Each homeless woman, every survivor of domestic violence who reaches out, is placing great trust in us. They know us as experts who will walk beside them on the path to a better future.

I am so proud that our programs and services are being celebrated for stellar outcomes. But Building Futures does not achieve our expert status alone. It *truly* takes a village to help hundreds each year to build new lives. Our new logo was developed to illustrate the importance of our village: all of the members of our communities whose support is needed to make improved lives possible.

Unfortunately, the news is not all good. Today, the Federal government's shift in strategy for the best service models to end homelessness means that agencies such as Building Futures are faced with filling budget gaps for emergency shelters—while also providing aid to those in need under the new strategy (see article on bottom of page three).

Like our clients, Building Futures took a leap of faith and trust and asked for help. Our village is responding with compassion and generosity. Our deepest thanks go out to the Cities of San Leandro and Alameda, Alameda County Office of Social Services, the Alameda Homeless Network, County Supervisor Wilma Chan and her staff, and all the local businesses and faith groups that support our work.

I am just as thankful for the individuals who continue to give. You are sending checks. You are donating backpacks and school supplies for the children we serve. Volunteers for our revitalized Dinner Cook and Children's programs do much to keep our services whole.

Please consider sending a donation in the enclosed envelope. By helping Building Futures, every member of our village is **helping end homelessness and domestic violence** in the lives of our neighbors in need. The result is a safer and more stable community for all of us!

Sincerely,



Liz Varela

Building Futures does not achieve our expert status alone. It truly takes a village to help hundreds each year to build new lives.



“You know how they say, ‘It takes a village?’ Well, this is my way of being a village member. It isn't about doing for just me and mine. It's about helping my village.”

—Ebani Pontiflet CHILDREN'S PROGRAM VOLUNTEER

OUR MISSION

To build communities with underserved women and children where they are safely and supportively housed, free from homelessness and family violence.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kinkini Banerjee
Nancy Heastings
Jean Hom
Aisha Knowles
Philip Ladew
Colleen Lopez
Deborah Raucher
Adnan Siddiqui
Arlette Walls

SEEKING LEADERS!

The Building Futures Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the nominations for Board Directors has opened. We are especially interested in passionate community advocates, individuals with experience in finance and fund development, planning and organizing events, and those representing area businesses. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Kinkini Banerjee at kinkini.banerjee@gmail.com.



1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro, CA 94577

510-357-0205

CRISIS LINE: 1-866-292-9688

www.bfwc.org

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

Torris and Yolanda Ridgeway are determined to help spread the word: Building Futures can help veterans overcome financial setbacks that threaten their housing.

Since 2011, Building Futures has served as a partner in the VA-funded Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. Along with helping vets avert homelessness or become quickly housed after homelessness,



the program also connects them with healthcare services, job training and budget planning, and helps pay for rent and transportation. Our partners in this effort are Abode Services, Operation Dignity, and Lifelong Medical Care.

The Ridgeways are both veterans (Torris of the Air Force; Yolanda served in the Army). The two dated briefly in high school. Both Torris and Yolanda served actively for ten years. Later, on a whim, Yolanda called Torris's parents to ask about him. Soon, the two were married.

After being discharged, Torris worked steadily as a mechanic and driver. "He's known as the neighborhood expert," Yolanda reports with pride. The two have raised two children together, Carena and William. Torris refers to the two as "golden." "Never so much as a call or letter from their schools," Yolanda adds. The teens are both looking ahead to attending college.

Torris, who served during Operation Desert Storm, says he was "embarrassed" to seek help after

traveling to Baltimore to close out family affairs after his father's death caused him to lose his job. "I always worked, so I never needed anything from the VA," Torris says.

Today, both Yolanda and Torris are disabled. Yolanda relies on a walker for mobility. Torris walks with great difficulty. "The Ridgeways needed back rent and help with PG&E bills," says Building Futures' Case Manager, Yolanda Duran. Duran worked with the couple to fast track obtaining discharge papers, then to obtain the funds the family needed to keep their housing. "Because of this important program, the Ridgeways avoided homelessness," says Duran.

Torris and Yolanda say they hope other veterans will hear their story and be encouraged to call the program for help. "Anyone who enlists is willing to put their lives on the line," says Torris. "I feel like this assistance is a 'thank you' for being there."

Veterans seeking help should call Yolanda Duran at 510-992-9607.

HOUSING FIRST ENDS HOMELESSNESS

The Federal government recently made official a shift in its strategy to end homelessness. The new strategy focuses on housing assistance (mainly monetary aid to secure and maintain housing), rather than shelter. In most cases, ensuring that individuals and families are housed is the "best practice" and most efficient way to serve homeless people.

Building Futures adopted the Housing First model in 2007. This service model prioritizes housing for individuals and families who need it. Most who fall into homelessness do so after a personal crisis. Quick assistance to these folks—who only need a little help—requires little from the system and taxpayers. Others require resources beyond housing. These individuals and families need housing first—and then resources to meet their other challenges.

- ◆ **Rapid Re-housing.** Soon after they have become homeless, the client is connected with assistance to become quickly re-housed.
- ◆ **Homelessness Prevention** assistance keeps individuals and families in danger of becoming homeless to keep their housing. (The Ridgeway family

in the story above benefited from this type of help.) Building Futures provides Rapid-Re-housing and Homelessness Prevention services; Clients receive security deposits, back rent and utilities, landlord advocacy and housing locator services to retain or secure housing.

- ◆ **Permanent Supportive Housing** combines housing and services to help people with very complex challenges live more stable, productive lives. Building Futures provides 30 units of permanent supportive housing at Bessie Coleman Court.

No one can live safely and stably without a place to call home. Building Futures meets the unique needs of all we serve, with a priority placed on ensuring they are housed. We are proud to incorporate best practices for helping these individuals and families. With the necessary funding, we can end homelessness in their lives and in our communities!



SAVE THE DATE! Domestic Violence Speakout

ALAMEDA CITY HALL • THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16 • 4:30 PM



Last year, Building Futures' Domestic Violence Awareness Month activities included our Talk it Out Domestic Violence Awareness breakfast and a special video created for us by the Alameda County Fire Department. We also created outreach postcards, mounted a bathroom campaign, and even launched our first billboard.

This fall, Building Futures will lead the Alameda Domestic Violence Task Force in a Speakout Against Domestic Violence on the steps of Alameda's City Hall! Speakers will include Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley and Mayor Marie Gilmore. Mark your calendar for this special event calling attention to intimate partner violence and how to help. The event is co-presented by our partners in the Alameda Domestic Violence Task Force: The City of Alameda, Alameda Family Services, Girls Inc. of the Island City, Alameda Hospital, Alameda Boys and Girls Club, Family Violence Law Center, the Alameda Police Department, and Alameda Point Collaborative.



A staff member at La Penca Azul holds an outreach postcard in three languages. Last year we held a volunteer day to place these in bars, schools, restaurants, and other public places

If you would like postcards for your workplace, faith group, school, or club, please contact Joyce at 510-357-0205 ext. 205, or jvanscoy@bfwc.org.



IT'S OUR VILLAGE. LET'S MAKE IT BETTER.

Here Are Some of the Ways You Can Make a Difference ...

- Make a **gift** by mail, online at www.bfwc.org or through your United Way payroll deduction.
 - Provide a **monthly dinner** for our San Leandro shelter residents.
 - Organize a **drive for Wish List Items** with your company, faith group, community organization or neighborhood.
 - Join our **Circle of Strength** as a monthly donor.
 - Host a **gathering** for your friends or co-workers to learn about Building Futures and our services.
 - Include Building Futures in your **estate planning**.
 - **Volunteer** with the children's program or for on-call shelter projects.
 - Like us on **Facebook!**
- WANT TO HELP?**
Contact Lorie Curtis at 510-357-0205 ext. 206, or lcurtis@bfwc.org.

ESTATE PLANNING:

How Would You Like to Be Remembered?

As a member of the Building Futures family, you have already begun your legacy of help and hope for those regaining their lives after homelessness and family violence. You can continue this legacy with a planned gift that will extend your values after you are gone. **A simple bequest is a powerful statement of your belief that your neighbors in need deserve a second chance.** After your family is cared for, please consider including Building Futures in your estate plan. Suggested language is as follows:

"I give and bequeath to Cornerstone Community Development Corporation, dba Building Futures with Women and Children, of 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94577, the sum of \$ _____ (or a specific item of property such as real estate, stocks or bonds, automobile, etc.) to be used as its Board of Directors determines."

It's simple to do—and means so much.

This message not intended to serve as legal or financial planning advice. Please consult your attorney or financial advisor. Our nonprofit tax ID number is 94-3100741.