



# Spring 2011 Update

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Are you on Facebook? We are! With 175 million active Facebook users, chances are your answer is “yes.” Follow us on Facebook to receive brief news and updates. To get started, just “like” our official Facebook page (*Building Futures with Women and Children*). “See” you in cyberspace!

## *Jazz it Up with BFWC!*

Building Futures’ annual gala benefit is set for **Thursday, May 12, 6:00-9:00 p.m. at The Vine Wine and Tapas Bar**. *Jazz it Up!* will feature fine wine, delicious hors d’oeuvres, and live jazz. Enjoy a cool evening out while benefiting a great cause. Tickets are just \$45, 2/\$80 in advance/\$50 at door. The Vine is located at 135 Parrott Street, San Leandro (next to The Englander). **Top raffle prize is a one-week trip (including accommodations and round-trip airfare for two) to New Orleans for New Year’s Eve!** Raffle tickets are \$20 or 3/\$50. **Need not be present to win!**

*For information & raffle or event tickets call 510-357-0205 ext. 114.*



## *Sweet Dreams*

Alta Mira Club President Gayle Hamilton turned her talent for quilting and her leftover



*Alta Mira Club members Carol Newson (left) and Gayle Hamilton (right) present pillows and cases to BFWC Development Director Denise Kaplan.*

extra fabric into one-of-a-kind pillow cases for Sister Me Home and San Leandro Shelter residents.

When the other members of the Alta Mira Club

heard about her project, they decided to jump in too. “You can’t give them empty pillow cases!”

one member told Hamilton. So the remaining club members donated funds to include a new bed pillow with each case. With left-over funds, the group assembled Easter gift bags for the children at our shelters.

BFWC Executive Director Liz Varela says, “This is a great example of how a simple idea can spark a group effort and make a huge difference in the everyday lives of our shelter residents.”

*If you have goods or services to donate, call Building Futures’ donation hotline at 510-357-0205, ext. 107.*

Building futures free from homelessness and family violence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Printing services donated by **Patch**

## We Depend on You



Building Futures' work would not be possible without the generous help of the individuals, faith and community groups, local businesses and private foundations who support us throughout the year. Your monetary gifts, dinners for our shelter residents, wish list drives and volunteer efforts make a huge difference in the lives of women and children fleeing homelessness and family violence.

We are also fortunate to have our Circle of Strength, a very special group of donors who support us on a regular basis. Even a modest gift

can add up to a significant amount by the end of the year. For as little as \$5 a month, you can join other Circle of Strength members who donate monthly gifts in support of our work. You can join the Circle of Strength one of three ways:

- *Visit our website.* Click on the Donate Now button and follow the link to the online donation page. There is an option to set up a recurring gift on a regular basis.
- *Contact Denise Kaplan* at 510-357-0205, ext. 114 or [dkaplan@BFWC.org](mailto:dkaplan@BFWC.org) with your credit or debit card information.
- *Mail or hand-deliver* your gift to BFWC, 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94577. Please note "Circle of Strength" on your check.

## Mid-County Housing Resource Center Delivers

Henry and LaToya Bradford began purchasing real estate with the dream of making it their profession. In the beginning, rental income covered their expenses, but when the housing market started to collapse so did their dream. Their tenants' own economic troubles warped the one-time dream into a nightmare. Henry and LaToya both worked, but they couldn't begin to meet the growing backlog of debt. By 2008, they had gone through foreclosures, bankruptcy, lost their car and appliances, and were receiving food stamps. Then on February 29, 2008, they were evicted from their home.

Supportive housing and aid from service agencies helped the family survive, but they could not whittle down their mountain of debt. Henry took a second job, but the bills just kept coming. Stress-related illnesses resulted in hospitalizations for both LaToya and Henry.

*Funded by federal stimulus monies, the HRC exists specifically to help those the recession made homeless or placed in danger of homelessness. Building Futures is the lead agency in this three-year collaboration that has already helped nearly 600 families in San Leandro, Alameda, Hayward, San Lorenzo and Castro Valley regain a financial foothold and make a new start.*

Then their daughter Jacqueline needed special medical care. That was when they heard about the Mid-County Housing Resource Center (HRC). Working closely with an HRC staff

member, the family received case management and support. Most importantly, they received assistance to pay their utility and rent bills. "Our ability to clear the logjam made the difference between survival and a new start for the Bradfords," says HRC Manager Sabrina Thomas. Now the family has a chance to start over. With help from Henry's veteran's benefits, the Bradfords are preparing to move into a duplex apartment and they are finding their way out of the debt and illness that shook their lives. "We really needed help," LaToya says. "If not for the services we got at the HRC, I don't know what we would have done."

Building Futures, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization formed in 1988, is based in San Leandro. We provide a wide range of services throughout Alameda County focusing on homelessness, domestic violence and housing. Our Federal Tax ID is 94-3100741.