



**Building Futures**  
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November 15, 2021

Dear friend,

Imagine putting your child to bed at the end of a long day. Making sure the covers are on, above and below the little one. Drawing drapes or blinds.

But what if your child's pallet was atop the family's belongings in the back seat of your car? And you have spent the day locating food, running water, a place to change clothes, and other essentials? Each night you would cover car windows. Try to rest, even though your body and mind are on high alert. Without help, tomorrow will bring the same struggles.

With your gifts to Building Futures, you have helped ensure help for mothers and others who turn to us for help. Thank you for being a member of our family. Your gifts make a real difference in the lives of our neighbors in need.

**As the nights grow colder and longer, I hope you'll help again, with a special year-end gift. You'll be helping individuals and families build better futures after homelessness and domestic violence.**

One of them is Charlene. Charlene arrived at Building Futures' Family Front Door office, struggling to push a double stroller.

Charlene told us that her fiancé had decided to start a family with another woman. Charlene's name hadn't been on the rental agreement. She'd never before made a household budget. Unable to pay for childcare, she was forced to leave her part-time job at a dental office. Just like that, Charlene and her two toddlers were homeless.

**When we met her, Charlene and her two precious little ones had been sleeping in the car for three months.**

"The toughest part of this work is seeing a child whose needs have not been met," says Program Manager Lakeshia Livingston. Right away, Charlene was given food, hygiene supplies, and clothing to meet the family's immediate needs. Building Futures also provided a hotel voucher.

Since the pandemic began, Building Futures' staff members have gone beyond their duties to ensure our homeless, housing, and domestic violence services meet each client's needs. Sometimes this means setting a mother's mind at ease with a tour of one of our shelters. Sometimes it's access to a computer. Often, it is first meeting the need for food, clothing, diapers, and toiletries.

**In Building Futures' shelters, domestic violence safe house and across our housing programs, half of those we serve are children.** You can only imagine how hard homelessness is on a young spirit. During the height of the pandemic, school-aged kids were distance learning. Childcare was tough to secure. Teens were separated from cherished friends.

All so much harder without a place to call home.

Building Futures connected Charlene with a rental assistance program that provides housing and ongoing assistance and support to some of Oakland's most vulnerable households. We continue to work closely with Charlene on her plan to secure work and obtain childcare.

I'm proud to tell you that Building Futures is housing more families than ever before. Last year, we connected 343 adults and children with a place to call home. Our goal for the coming year is even higher. But we can only do this work with the help of caring community members like you.

**I hope you'll use the enclosed envelope to make your special, tax-deductible gift today.**

"The best part of this work?" says Lakeshia Livingston. "Standing with a parent who has just signed a rental agreement while their excited child calls out, 'This is my room!' The look on that parent's face when they know their hard work has paid off."

As for Charlene, she was crying for joy as she signed her lease. It does my heart good to know that this little family will celebrate Thanksgiving in a place of their own. I hope you feel the same!

Please send your special gift today, so Building Futures can help even more people in the year to come. My best wishes to you in this season of thanksgiving and goodwill.

Sincerely,



Liz Varela  
Executive Director

P.S. You make progress like Charlene's possible, even in this time of surging need and crisis for so many of our neighbors here in Alameda County. Please let me hear from you soon. Prefer to give online? Visit [www.bfwc.org/donate](http://www.bfwc.org/donate). **Thank you for caring!**