



2025-2026 IMPACT REPORT

**Everyone
deserves a
safe place
to call home.**



LETTER from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

For almost four decades, Building Futures has been more than a service provider. We have also been advocates and champions for those whose voices are too often unheard. **Everyone deserves a safe place to call home!**

As you read this report, I hope you know your support has everything to do with much progress over the last year. Our community responded to the need with gifts of items and services, fundraising drives, monetary support, meals, a bequest, and much more.

Last year, Building Futures also became a founding member of the Nonprofit Alliance of Homelessness and Housing Providers, which successfully advocated for the resources needed to fill funding gaps for Alameda County shelters.

In the news: a decrease in homelessness! Building Futures is proud to play a key role in this trend. The 2026 Point in Time Count results released by Alameda

County Health's Housing and Homelessness Services and the Alameda County Continuum of Care found:

- » Overall, homelessness in our county dropped by 13%. In 2019, only 21 percent of those counted were in shelters. This year, 37 percent were in shelters—the highest proportion seen since 2015.
- » The number of those experiencing homelessness in the City of Alameda dropped by 46.8%. San Leandro saw an 8.3% reduction in homelessness. In Oakland, the count reflected a 20% drop!

With your help, lives are transformed when people get the help they need to move forward. Their challenges continue amidst the rising cost of living, scarce affordable housing in our region, and a tough political climate for service providers like Building Futures.

Building Futures will continue to serve and advocate for the adults and children who count on our services. Your gift today means progress and hope for people of all ages as they build new futures. You are part of the many successes that begin here!

Sincerely,



Liz Varela, Executive Director



Building Futures staff members celebrating Black History Month



A Grateful Farewell to Cristi Ritschel

In June, Cristi Ritschel concluded her remarkable tenure on Building Futures' board of

directors. She served for a total of nine years, most recently as board president.

The affordable housing and social services leader joined Building Futures at a time of tough discussions about the need to strengthen the agency's finance capabilities. Cristi dove in, helping find better ways to fully utilize and comply with government funding contracts and consider new opportunities with an eye to sustainability.

COVID posed especially profound challenges. The need was surging for Building Futures' services; meanwhile, pandemic protocols demanded many new policies and procedures. Cristi and the rest of the board helped us navigate these challenges. In the end, the agency expanded services and helped even more people during a global pandemic.

"Witnessing deep knowledge, passion, and willingness to do the hard work made a huge impression on me," Cristi says.

"How does Building Futures retain its essence? Its mission and heart? How do you build and maintain a values-based culture, such that when a new person comes to the agency, they enter an already strong culture?"

Moving forward, Ellen Dektar and Carrie Lutjens will serve the agency as board co-presidents. "Building Futures has really benefited from Cristi's calm and knowledgeable leadership over the past few years," says Ellen. "We will miss Cristi so much," adds Carrie. "Her focus on building capacity both on the board and within the organization was time well spent. We learned so much from her leadership!"

"Cristi has been a great sounding board, thought partner, and strategic ally. I'm grateful to her for helping us to grow with intention," says Liz Varela, Building Futures' Executive Director.

Cristi's expertise and collaborative spirit helped shape the agency's growth during a turbulent time. We are forever grateful. All of us wish Cristi the very best as she embarks on a new role as Chief Program Officer at Insight Housing. 🏡

2025-26 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cristi Ritschel
PRESIDENT

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VICE PRESIDENT

Carrie Lutjens
SECRETARY

Paul Carney
TREASURER

Ellen Dektar

Kate Blessing-Kawamura

Kim Ish

Tyng Liu

Nicole Stan

Marianne Teleki

Emily Van Loon

Mina Zivkovic

Liz Varela
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Building Futures helps individuals and families. It's a true service agency, providing all kinds of resources and connection to housing. They really understand what people experience along that whole continuum from street outreach to housing. Every step of the way, the needs of the people they serve stay at the forefront of their work."

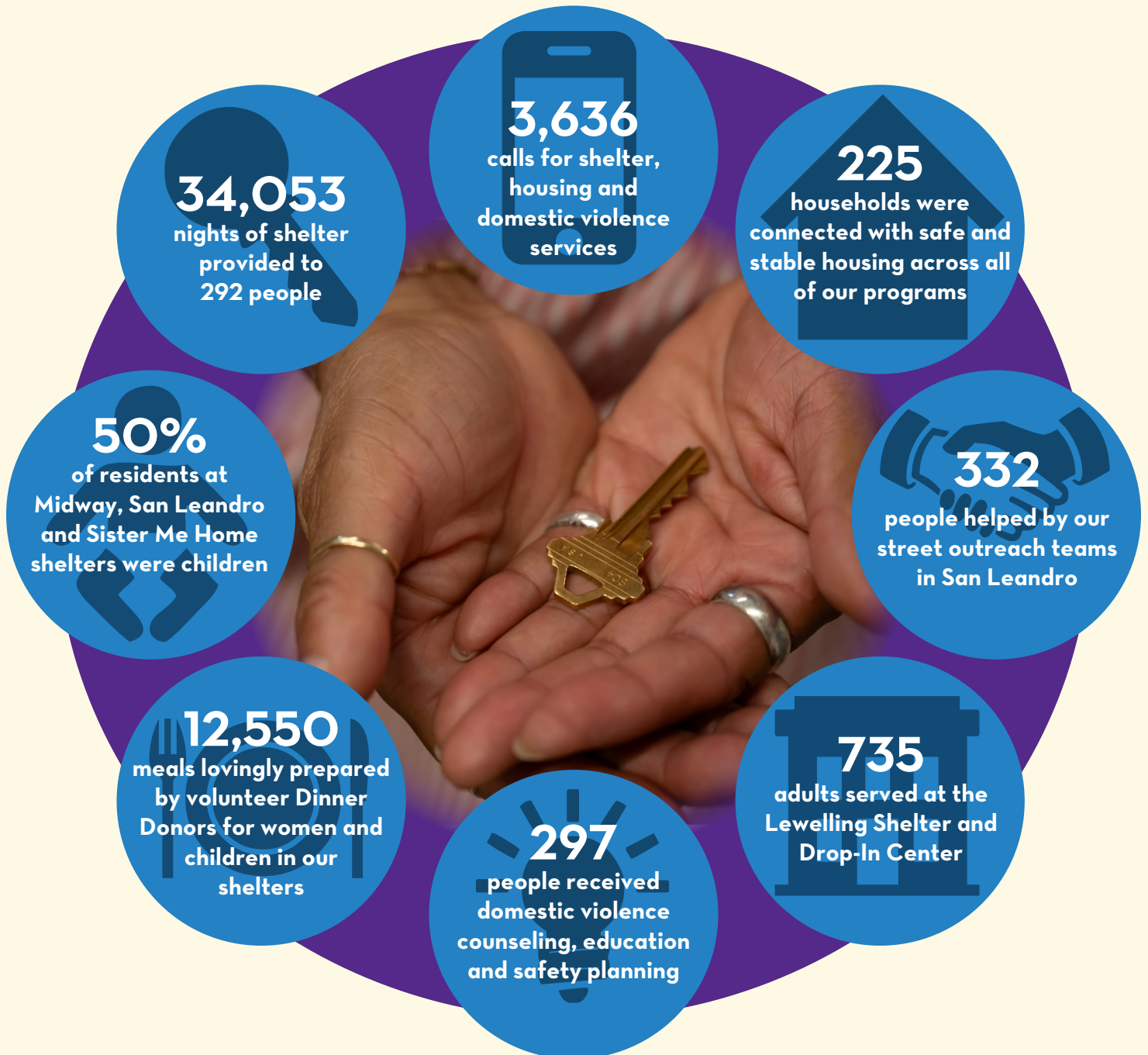
—Cristi Ritschel



Past and present board members at Jazz It Up 2026

IMPACT by the NUMBERS

Building Futures is proud to share the numbers behind the individuals and families we helped between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026.

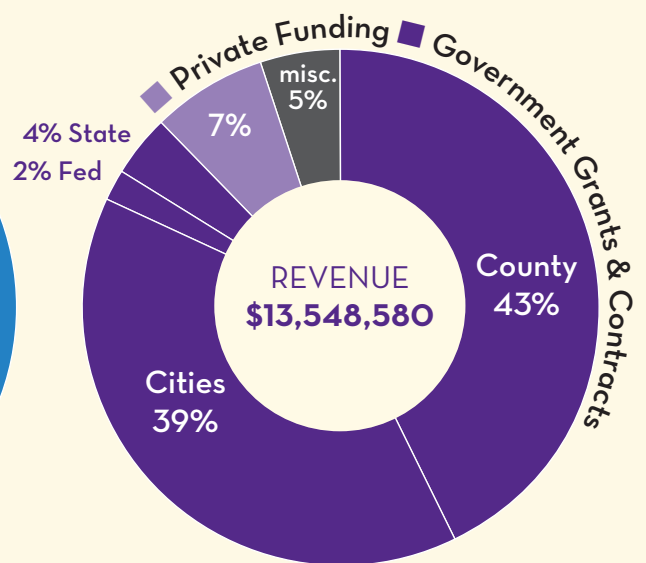
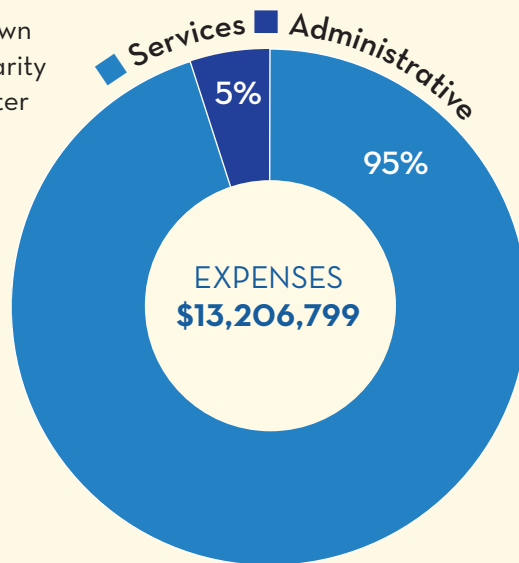


With the help of our community, we continue to help those we serve to build new futures after homelessness and domestic violence.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Building Futures has grown from an all-volunteer charity providing overnight shelter in San Leandro in 1988 to an Alameda County leader with more than 100 employees, operating multiple service sites today.

Every single dollar entrusted to us enables Building Futures to serve as a vital part of the safety net for thousands of all ages every year.



Private Funding includes individuals, foundations, businesses, clubs, faith groups, and bequests.

Learn more at bfwc.org/supporters

SERVICES

Building Futures' mission is to build communities with underserved individuals and families, where they are safely and supportively housed, free from homelessness and domestic violence.

✓ HOMELESS SERVICES

- » The Midway Shelter, San Leandro Shelter, and Lewelling Shelter and Drop-In Center provide shelter and support services in welcoming environments.
- » Housing Resource Centers provide assessments and support for Alameda County residents in need of housing and other resources.
- » Our Rapid Re-housing Programs provide short-term rental assistance and tailored services for families to obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed.
- » Street Outreach in San Leandro engages with and serves individuals and families who live in encampments, in vehicles, or are otherwise unsheltered.

✓ HOUSING SERVICES

- » Our Housing Program provides housing case management, rental subsidies, and tenancy services designed to aid participants to secure a safe place to live, transition from homelessness, and maintain their housing.
- » Bessie Coleman Court is our 52-unit permanent supportive housing site.
- » Wraparound support services are provided to more than 200 tenants throughout Alameda County.

✓ DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

- » Sister Me Home Safe House is a 20-bed confidential shelter with 24-hour staffing and culturally appropriate support services.
- » Community outreach services include safety planning, individual and group counseling, court accompaniment, and more.
- » Domestic Violence Program participants are eligible for the full range of our housing services.
- » Twice each year, Building Futures offers a 40-hour Domestic Violence Counselor Training.

Note on financials: Preliminary, unaudited FY2026 results; audited statements available late 2026.
Misc. income is primarily an Employee Retention Credit for reimbursements which sustained services during the pandemic.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Lewelling Shelter and Drop-In Center

June 2026 marked the first anniversary of the Lewelling Shelter and Drop-In Center in San Leandro, where Building Futures' staff provides shelter and essential services to adults experiencing homelessness. In its first year, Lewelling served 735 adults. Of those, 66 were served in the Shelter, and 669 received services through the Drop-In Center. The majority of people served experienced homelessness for more than two years and needed support for various conditions impacting their health.



The Shelter has 29 rooms that serve as temporary stable housing to help homeless individuals transition to permanent housing. The comprehensive Drop-In Center provides showers, laundry, meals, housing navigation, case management, support services, and serves as one of Building Futures' Housing Resource Centers. We are grateful to the City of San Leandro, which acquired and fully renovated the former Nimitz Motel at 555 Lewelling Boulevard; the property manager, Housing Consortium of the East Bay (HCEB); and our other community partners.

Meet Connie! When Connie's brother became seriously ill, she left behind her job and home to move to San Leandro and care for him in his final days. But after he died, Connie was plunged into homelessness. In her sixties, she lived in her car, frightened and unsure where to turn. Connie endured many difficult moments during this period. The most painful was being attacked and having her jewelry stolen. The experience left her despondent, angry, and deeply shaken. When we met Connie, she was sleeping in her car in the Lewelling neighborhood, moving around for safety. Less than a year after arriving at the shelter, Connie was matched with permanent housing. Today, she and her beloved dog, Tiny, are living in her own home, happy, thriving, and safe.



Eight Housed in One Day!

Building Futures staff is on the job and at work, ending homelessness one key at a time. The last day of March was exceptional: EIGHT individuals served at our Lewelling Shelter and Drop-In Center were connected with housing.

"Everybody deserves the dignity of having a place, of being at peace with themselves, and of having their basic needs met."

—Cecilia Flores, Building Futures' Emergency Services Senior Manager



COMMUNITY SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

♥ FOOD IS LOVE MADE VISIBLE! ♥

Dinner Donor volunteers help provide warm, home-cooked meals for women and children at our shelters. Become a Dinner Donor—gather your family, friends, co-workers, or community group and share some love—one meal at a time.

Learn more at bfwc.org/volunteer



HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE

Read our 2025 Holiday Report thanking the individuals and 51 groups who donated to our annual toy and gift drive. Your gifts brighten the holidays and make a real difference.

bfwc.org/holidayreport2025

DINE & CONNECT SERVING ALAMEDA SINCE 2017

“Dine & Connect is a great community program,” says Randy Amposta, Building Futures’ Outreach Intake Specialist. “Each week we pick up boxed dinners. Then we go into the community where unhoused people congregate, and engage with them around their needs.”

Since 2017, many Alameda community partners have worked together to make Dine & Connect a success. Each week a different Alameda church hosts Dine & Connect. Today, participating congregations include First Congregational Church (pictured), Twin Towers United Methodist Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, and Immanuel Lutheran Church. The Alameda Food Bank provides the food, and church volunteers prepare and box hot, nutritious dinners for people experiencing homelessness, seniors, and families in need. Building Futures distributes the free meals throughout the city of Alameda.

The program also connects individuals to health, housing, and social services. “Building Futures provides referrals and distributes essential items. One important referral we make is to the County’s homeless services system,” Randy says. The Alameda Mobile Health Van also provides health services, while Dignity on Wheels provides mobile showers and laundry support.

Building Futures is proud to be part of this special program. Dine & Connect reflects our commitment to building strong communities with our neighbors, through caring engagement and service! 🏠



Javohn and Randy deliver 750 meals annually in Alameda.

FAMILY FRONT DOOR HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER: Opening Doors for Oakland Families for 10+ Years!

Imagine being a parent raising children while experiencing homelessness. Wondering where to sleep and access food and running water. In fear for the health and safety of your kids. It's almost impossible for a family in survival mode to overcome their barriers to housing.

That's why a Housing Resource Center (HRC) just for families is so important. As one of the County's first organizations founded to support families, Building Futures is uniquely qualified to serve this population. Building Futures has operated Family Front Door specifically serving families in Oakland since 2015, working closely with the City of Oakland, Alameda County, and other service providers.

Family Front Door is one-stop hub where Oakland families with children come to get connected to range of services including shelter, housing, referrals to childcare services, healthcare, social services, and more. Those who qualify also receive housing problem-solving; housing navigation and Coordinated Entry; ongoing housing stability support; case management and service planning; benefits and resource navigation; and employment support and referrals. Building Futures' workforce employment program is also based at Family Front Door. Our specialist helps with locating job fairs and training, resume writing, job interview skills, and clothing to dress for success.

From the moment a family reaches out for help, our priority is to alleviate the immediate crisis. Essentials might include warm clothing, diapers, hygiene supplies, snacks, and grocery support. Sometimes the first order of business is simply giving families "time to breathe," and the reassurance that someone who cares is there to help. 🏠



Family Front Door staff work with each family to address their greatest needs—with the ultimate goal of connecting them with housing.



A job is another building block for a better future!

What Are Housing Resource Centers?

Housing Resource Centers (HRCs) provide comprehensive Coordinated Entry services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Alameda County's Coordinated Entry is the "Front Door" to the Homelessness Response System. HRCs meet people where they are, helping individuals and families prevent homelessness, navigate shelter, housing resources, and build lasting housing stability.

Learn more about Building Futures' HRCs at bfwc.org/get-help

FROM OUR COVER: TONYA'S STORY

Tonya,* an East Bay native and licensed aesthetician, ran her own salon, and business was good. Then she learned she was pregnant—something her doctors had always said was impossible. It was a high-risk pregnancy. Tonya was hospitalized for three full months, until her son arrived in a premature birth.

After that, “I was deeply in debt,” she remembers. Looking for stability, Tonya began attending classes at a local community college. But it was a struggle to manage work, credit woes, and a new baby. Her partner, who had been controlling in the past, became violent. Then she learned she was pregnant again.

When we met Tonya, she had been living with her toddler and newborn in her car for most of a year. Vulnerable children. Sleep. Food. Hygiene. Safety. Every aspect of life was precarious. “It was rough. I was on the alert while they slept,” she says.

At our Family Front Door site, Tonya got help with transportation costs, diapers, food, and community resources like childcare and preschool for her sons. She says working with a therapist helped a lot, too.

Michelle Beacham, Tonya's case manager, remembers, “When she learned she had gotten an apartment through Building Futures' partnership with the City of Oakland and the Oakland Housing Authority, she said, ‘Now I can get back on track and make a difference in my children's lives.’ She is resilient.” After moving into their new apartment, Tonya and her sons received a Building Futures Move-In Kit to help equip their new home with kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom essentials.

Today, Tonya is back in school, working toward her bachelor's degree in nursing. Her sons attend daycare and preschool just a few blocks from home. Michelle Beacham speaks proudly of her. “Her household is set up and her boys are well cared-for. It is an inspiration to witness her hard work to have something better for herself and her kids.”

Building Futures is uniquely equipped to serve those experiencing both homelessness and domestic violence, with a range of programs and partners. “Building Futures changed my life. Changed my children's future,” Tonya says simply. “Because of their help, I can be a better mother and provider.” 🏠

**Name has been changed*



New blankets are a cozy part of Building Futures Move-In Kits, essential items that make new housing feel like a home.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Domestic Violence Awareness Month: October 2025!

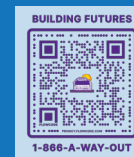
Domestic Violence Awareness Month is a time to broaden awareness and education about domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Building Futures has provided a full range of domestic violence services since 1996. In October, raising awareness about domestic violence and the services available to those in need was shared on our website, social media, and through tabling at Kaiser's Farmer's Market to connect with community members as well as Kaiser staff, employees, and patients. On the third Thursday of the month, our staff observed Purple Thursday, dressing in purple to honor victims and survivors and to show solidarity against domestic violence. Building Futures also accepted a proclamation from the City of San Leandro, and hung a large banner downtown. 🏠

Building Futures' 24-hour, toll-free domestic violence crisis line:
1-866-A-WAY-OUT • 1-866-292-9688



Some things to say when a domestic violence survivor shares their story with you:

- 🗨️ "Thank you for sharing your story with me"
- 🗨️ "You deserve to be treated with respect."
- 🗨️ "I'm glad you shared that with me."
- 🗨️ "How can I support you right now?"
- 🗨️ "I believe you."



Special thanks to NCADV.org

Everyone deserves a safe place to call home



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AT BESSIE COLEMAN COURT

National Night Out is about bringing neighbors together and strengthening community bonds, and this event did exactly that. Bessie Coleman Court—our permanent supportive housing site at Alameda Point—was filled with music, connection, and spirit.



Live entertainment and karaoke infused the event with energy. Many residents we serve face challenges. For some, feeling like they belong to a community, or even participating in one, is difficult. Seeing Bessie Coleman residents laughing, dancing, singing, sharing hugs and smiles, and expressing gratitude was incredibly moving. They left feeling valued and part of something bigger than themselves. A heartfelt thank you to Housing Services Director Blanca Plazola, Abode Services' property management staff, Rebeca Martinez (and her talented daughter and friends who provided the live music and activities!), and ALL who helped make the National Night Out celebration at Bessie Coleman Court both meaningful and fun. 🏠



Located at the Alameda Point, Bessie Coleman Court provides apartment units to formerly homeless survivors of domestic violence with deep needs. All residents receive case management and access to a range of services including support groups, community gatherings, clothing and household items, and life skills training. Property management services at Bessie Coleman Court are provided by our partners at Abode Housing.



LONGTIME DONOR LEAVES A LEGACY OF CARING

Last fall, Building Futures was the grateful recipient of a generous bequest from longtime donor **Mary Veneklasen**. Mary was an East Bay mother, grandmother, and retired educator. Her long history of support

for Building Futures' work and those we serve included monetary gifts and donations of back-to-school supplies and holiday gifts.

Mary's legacy of caring will endure far beyond her lifetime. We are delighted to honor her, to express our gratitude, and hopefully to inspire other donors

to consider making Building Futures' life-changing programs and services part of their legacy, by including us in their estate plans. Thank you, Veneklasen Family Trust!

Want to speak with Building Futures about making a planned gift? Call Ana Maria Mahiri at 510-357-0205, ext. 204 or amahiri@bffc.org. As with any estate planning decision, you should consult your financial, legal, and tax advisors before making a decision or change. To learn more about including Building Futures in your estate plan, visit bffc.org/planned-giving. 🏠

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

A LOVING LEGACY FOR THE CHILDREN

Chris Neumann Memorial Fund

SAN LEANDRO SHELTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Last year, Building Futures received a very special gift, designated by the family of the late Chris Neumann. Neumann was a local business owner, volunteer, friend of Building Futures, and a longtime member of the San Leandro Kiwanis Club, which also contributed and provided support.

This very generous gift to Building Futures made possible a much-needed major upgrade to the children's indoor space at the San Leandro Shelter! Established in 1988, the 30-bed shelter was Building Futures' very first site. The San Leandro Shelter continues to serve as an emergency shelter for women and children who are experiencing homelessness.

The children's area now features a stunning original mural. The mural features flowers and delicate butterflies representing freedom, new beginnings, and the caring way we work with shelter residents. The space also boasts a beautiful homework center, sturdy book and toy shelves stocked with learning supplies, as well as a new colorful rug, chairs, and a crafting table for toddlers! 🏠



Chris and his wife, Terri, delivering food to the shelter in 2019.



Thank you to the friends and family of Chris Neumann and the Kiwanis Club for their extraordinary generosity and partnership. Together, they made this joyful, nurturing space for the children at San Leandro Shelter a reality. We are deeply grateful.



Mural by stevejaviel.com



1,450 MOVE IN KIT ITEMS AT 17 YEARS OLD!

Huge congratulations and thank you to Alameda Eagle Scout Shay Kelley!

Shay Kelley raised nearly \$2,000 from the Alameda community, collected and organized more than 1,450 essential household items, created a detailed inventory, purchased additional needed items from money he raised, tracked donations, and delivered everything to our Oakland office, alongside his fellow Scouts and family.

Seventeen year old Shay identified a need in our community and created a plan to collect essential Move-In Kit items for individuals and families rebuilding their lives after homelessness and domestic violence. Over five months, he led a team, organized collection efforts, created outreach materials, launched a fundraising campaign, and carefully managed the project from start to finish.

The Eagle Scout Service Project is designed to demonstrate leadership, planning, organization, and a commitment to serving the community. Shay's project truly represents that mission. With the guidance of Scoutmaster Rak Bhalla of Troop 2, Shay took the lead in identifying a need, creating a plan, bringing people together, managing resources, and following the project through from start to finish. His dedication and leadership created a lasting impact for families moving into a place to call home.

Thank you, Shay, for your compassion, dedication, and leadership. We are so grateful for your support, and proud to celebrate this incredible achievement! 🏠

Learn more at bfwc.org/moveinkits



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT!

A special thank you to our friends and donors at **Eric F. Anderson Inc. (EFA)** for planning, leading, and providing supplies for a beautification project at our San Leandro Shelter. Frankie Muhaw from EFA brought her amazing skillset to lead seven Prologis volunteers as they assembled children's toys, sanded and repainted our picnic table, and gardened. Together, the team donated more than 30 volunteer hours to make the outdoor space more welcoming for the women and children who call the San Leandro Shelter home.

JAZZ IT UP!

Jazz It Up! was an evening of live music, connection, and inspiration. On a warm evening in May, sponsors and supporters of Building Futures' work gathered at Oakland's BLOC15.

Live jazz performances kept the energy high. After drinks and dinner, attendees heard directly from Building Futures' program leaders and program staff as they shared stories and insight. Their words fueled hope, compassion, and a shared commitment to helping others.

And what an impact! The energy in the room was unforgettable. Jazz it Up! raised over \$140,000 to support life-changing services for families and individuals in our community. We met our matching gift challenge, which alone raised over \$20,000. The evening's raffle was a record breaker! Over and above ticket sales, generous donations helped Building Futures exceed our goals.

Heartfelt thanks to our amazing sponsors! Your partnership and presence made a powerful difference! Lastly, we extend special gratitude to our Board's Event Planning Committee for their many hours of planning and expertise. Thank you, Kim Ish, Tyng Liu, Marianne Teleki, and Mina Zivkovic! 🏠



SEE THE PHOTO
GALLERY & MORE AT
bffc.org/jazz

SAVE THE DATE!
May 2027



BUILDING FUTURES THANKS OUR 2026 SPONSORS

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IMPRESARIOS



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Teri Schlesinger

Nancy &
Michael Pretto

Sandy Schnieder



Sarah Varela

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Matt Thanabalan

Juan & Evelyn
González

MidPen Housing

Emily Van Loon

City of San Leandro

NorthPoint
Development

Visit Walnut Creek

10 WAYS YOU CAN HELP

1 Send a monetary gift! →

Make your online donation now or mail your check made payable to Building Futures to 1840 Fairway Dr., San Leandro, CA 94577. We also accept gifts of appreciated stock.



2 Honor a loved one

Create an online [peer-to-peer campaign](#), or make a donation in honor of a special person for a birthday, anniversary, Mother's Day, or in memoriam. We'll send the recipient an acknowledgement, informing them of your generosity.

3 Follow us and spread the word!

Sign up for our e-newsletter. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Instagram](#). Okay, that's three easy, fun things.

4 Be a dinner donor or volunteer

Provide dinner for 25 women and children and deliver it to the our San Leandro or Midway Shelter. Learn more on our [volunteer](#) page.

5 Host a house party

Host a house party or small event, and for those who can't attend, invite them to a [peer-to-peer online campaign](#).

6 Organize a drive

Donate [wish list](#) items with your company, faith group, community organization or neighborhood.

7 Sponsor Jazz It Up! our annual event

It's a great way to demonstrate your compassion and caring to our community. [Sponsors](#) gain visibility in our social media, website, press releases, and at the event!

8 Double your donation

Many employers will match charitable contributions made by their employees, retirees, and/or employees' spouses. Visit our [gift matching page](#) to find out if your employer has a matching gift program.

9 Join our Circle of Strength as a monthly donor!

You're in control: change or stop your monthly gift at any time. Join online or contact Ana at development@bffc.org

10 Leave a legacy

Include Building Futures in your estate planning. [Leave a legacy](#) and make a significant impact on the future of our community.

★★★★ Charity Navigator has recognized Building Futures with its top Four-Star rating.

Cornerstone Community Development Corporation (dba Building Futures) is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization, Federal tax ID 94-3100741. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



Vivian honored her mother's memory by raising over \$1,700 and also hosting a house party collecting 10+ boxes of essentials



Volunteers rejoice at the Holiday Gift Wrap event



First Presbyterian Church of San Leandro collected two entire Move-In kits, the congregation also cooks monthly dinners as Dinner Donors. Gigi (center) is a dedicated monthly Circle of Strength donor!



free from homelessness and family violence

bffc.org