



free from homelessness and family violence

2020-2021 Annual Report

THRIVING AFTER ADVERSITY WITH BUILDING FUTURES' HELP

Every service Building Futures provides is designed to help our clients build new lives after homelessness and domestic violence. Soyini Taylor Walton and Chamisa Crockett are wonderful examples of thriving after adversity.



Soyini Taylor Walton, author

SOYINI'S STORY

After Soyini Taylor Walton broke up with her boyfriend, he stalked her for months. Then came a terrible night: in 2009 when her ex hid in the bushes and ambushed her, shooting her in the face and causing her to lose an eye. In the event's aftermath, Soyini resolved to find help. "Building Futures' domestic violence support group at the Alameda County Family Justice Center saved my life," Soyini says. "I learned about the cycle of violence, shared my experience with other survivors, and received tools for healing." Two years after that terrible night, Soyini had met a man, married, and had a son. She wrote a book entitled, *Going Through Hell to Get to Heaven*. She even achieved her dream of earning an MBA. Today, Soyini is a frequent presenter on the topic of triumph over trauma. "Building Futures helped me understand not only violent relationships, but what a good one looks like," she says.

"Building Futures' domestic violence support group saved my life."



Chamisa at home with her daughter, Sienna and son, Preston

CHAMISA'S STORY

For years, Chamisa Crockett was employed as a kitchen worker. But a few months after her workplace closed, she and her children became homeless. Fortunately, Building Futures had space for them at Midway. "My first month at the shelter, my guard was way up," Chamisa remembers. "I didn't want to interact with anyone. My plan was to get any job as fast as I could and get out. But the staff at Midway asked me about my goals. They encouraged me to work toward them." Chamisa's case manager connected her with Kitchen of Champions. The 12-week program is an intensive culinary training course. Soon, Chamisa was winning competitions and learning the vocabulary and skills of high-end kitchens. She got a good job and earned regular promotions. In 2015, Building Futures connected her and her children with housing. Sienna recently graduated from high school. Chamisa has retained her housing for six years—an achievement in itself! Her aim now is to work part-time as she launches her own business, Chef Chamisa's Flavor Kitchen. Chamisa also looks forward to volunteering as a dinner donor for Building Futures. "At Midway, I was supported in a way I'd never experienced in my life," she says. "I'll never forget that."

"I was supported in a way I'd never experienced in my life. I'll never forget that."



GREETINGS FROM BUILDING FUTURES!

I love sharing good news in our annual report. This is because members of the Building Futures family make progress possible, even in tough periods like 2020-21. The COVID-19 pandemic spotlighted inequity and the need for our help, with rising numbers of Alameda County residents in high-risk service jobs ... experiencing layoffs and cuts in hours leading to eviction ... and facing increased risk of domestic violence.

As Building Futures wraps up our fiscal year, I'm pleased to say we're connecting our clients with housing at higher rates than ever. Instead of doing less, we are doing more. You read about former Midway resident-turned-chef Chamisa Crockett on our front-page story. You also met Soyini Taylor Walton, whose life took a positive turn during the year after she was violently ambushed by her ex-boyfriend and turned to Building Futures' domestic violence support group for help.

There is something so special about connecting our community with our clients. Donors helped Building Futures manage pandemic protocols with warmth and skill. Your monetary gifts and donations of items made all the difference. To meet the rising need, Building Futures became stronger during the past year: adding highly qualified directors of Domestic Violence and Housing.

I hope you enjoy reading about the many successes you helped make possible in 2020-21. Right now, Building Futures is engaged in an exciting agency-wide effort to house 150 households by July. Please consider making a special gift today to support our work. We really do need you. Many thanks! *—Liz Varela*

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MOVE-IN KITS HELP LAY A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Building Futures is housing more families than ever before—our current goal is 150 households by July 2022! Most will be moving to their new homes with only a few personal items. To help welcome these adults and children, we've launched a Move-In Kit Campaign! It's a great opportunity for you to touch the lives of families and individuals building better futures after homelessness and domestic violence.

There are a few ways you can help welcome newly housed people to their new homes:

- 1. Give a monetary gift** to help Building Futures purchase commonly needed items. Visit givedirect.org/buildingfutures/move-in-kit/ today and "shop" for a newly housed family with our housewarming gift registry.
- 2. Collect and donate gift cards** in \$25 increments, so households can purchase the items they need most.
- 3. Gather a team to donate a move-in kit!** Do you have friends, family, a church or community group, or a school that can help? Put together a complete kit for a household!
Collect items to build a full kit, donate online via the online



Hover your phone's camera here.

shopping list, or mail-in a gift/gift cards. A donation of \$750 will provide a robust move-in kit to meet household and children's needs. \$450 will provide a basic move-in kit with essential items to meet a household's needs. A gift in any amount is welcome and appreciated!

Thank you for considering this new way to help. You'll find more information at www.bfwc.org/inkind. For questions, contact Emma at inkind@bfwc.org.

**FOOD IS LOVE
MADE VISIBLE**

Another great way to help is to volunteer and serve as a dinner donor.

Building Futures counts on the caring community members who donate meals to feed the women and children at our San Leandro and Midway shelters. Donated meals ease Building Futures' budget and show shelter residents the community cares about them. Contact Emma at volunteer@bfwc.org.



BUILDING FUTURES' FIRST VIRTUAL JAZZ IT UP! WAS A SUCCESS!

We are grateful to all our sponsors, attendees, and donors! With your donations on May 15, 2021, we were able to meet the matching \$10,000 anonymous gift! All together, we raised \$104,000 for programs and services helping adults and children build new futures. In this year like no other, community support means the world! Need some uplift and inspiration? Want to share our stories? Access the [Jazz it Up! video](#) at any time, just go to [youtube.com](#) and search: **BFWC Virtual Jazz it Up**. The video includes our [three-part "docu-series"](#) that gives beautiful insight into our programs, clients, staff, and the overall heart of Building Futures.

virtual
Jazz it Up!



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YOUR LEGACY: COMPASSION AND HOPE

Are you a Building Futures donor or volunteer? If so, you have already begun your legacy of hope and compassion. One of the most powerful next steps you can take to help end homelessness and domestic violence is a planned gift. There are many planned giving vehicles, from a simple bequest to gifts that can yield money during your lifetime.

More are choosing to help via a Qualified Charitable Distribution. The term simply refers to a gift made directly from the donor's

traditional IRA account. It's particularly good for donors aged 70.5 and over to lower their taxable income. As always, consult an estate planning professional to discuss the best option for you.

Visit www.bfwc.org/give-support/planned-giving/ for more on ways you can make this powerful statement about your values. Want to speak with Building Futures about making a planned gift? Contact Ana Mahiri, Director of Development and Communications, at development@bfwc.org or 510-357-0205, ext. 204.

IMPACT by the NUMBERS

During a year of great tumult and extra safety-related protocols mandated by the CDC, Building Futures expanded and increased services for our clients. Building Futures is proud to share the numbers behind the individuals and families we helped between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Every single person served is a story of resilience and courage.

4,153 calls received requesting shelter, housing, and domestic violence assistance, including individual counseling.



4,153
calls
received

55,395 temperature checks twice daily, to screen women and children for COVID-19 at the Midway and San Leandro shelters and Sister Me Home safe house.



55,395
temperature
checks

109,244 meals served at three shelters for women and children, and at COVID-safe hotels where Building Futures sheltered individuals and families at high risk.



109,244
meals



343
housed

343 homeless adults and children housed—nearly one a day!—including Marina Village Inn guests at high risk for COVID-19. Overall, 6 of every 10 people housed were children.



50%
children

50% of shelter residents are children at Midway, San Leandro, and Sister Me Home domestic violence safe house. During 2020-21, 70% of them participated in distance learning, and 30% were toddlers or infants.

• FINANCIALS •

HOMELESS SERVICES Emergency help for unhoused Alameda County residents. At our shelters, women and children receive shelter, meals and support in securing housing. Our coordinated entry offices in Oakland, Alameda, and San Leandro provide assessments and other services for unsheltered people, including those reached through street outreach. Rapid re-housing connects families experiencing homelessness with housing, rental assistance, and support.

HOUSING SERVICES Permanent supportive housing—which combines housing with case management and supportive services—is a proven solution to homelessness for the most vulnerable chronically homeless people. Building Futures provides these services at two housing sites, and in scattered site housing.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES Building Futures provides shelter and support services to families and individuals fleeing an abuser, at Sister Me Home safe house. Our domestic violence services include a 24-hour help line, community outreach/education, individual/group counseling, and referrals for legal and other services, for survivors of all gender identities.

