

A Veteran's Journey Home



When Peter joined the Navy in 1995, he was 18, full of ambition, and dreaming of starting a new life. Things hadn't been easy for him growing up in Boston. His parents were not always there and he moved around a lot, never living in a stable home. He saw the military as an opportunity to escape his surroundings and find adventure.

After seeing the world and spending two years on the USS Ingraham, he returned home to find his parents in and out of institutions. He couldn't hold a stable job due to addiction. He lived on the street and slept on friends' couches. He moved through many cities, living inside of cars and even in a junkyard for some time. Peter became a statistic, one of nearly 50,000 homeless veterans living in the U.S.

Peter didn't seek help from the VA, although he was dealing with serious trauma from his service. Following his father's suicide and the death of his mother in 2013, he took a trip to the Golden Gate Bridge with plans of ending his own life. He was prevented and was immediately connected with the VA Health Care System in the Bay Area. There he received much needed treatment and assistance.

While living at a Cityteam shelter in San Jose, he found HomeFirst's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program and Kelly Sumner became his case manager. *"She helped me believe in myself and provided me with tools and affirmations that enabled me to stay motivated,"* he says. Through SSVF he was assisted with everything from clothing to vocational training, but most of all, an opportunity for housing.

Peter has lived in his own apartment for over a year now and is pursuing a college degree. He is part of the VA's Compensated Work Therapy program, providing recreational therapy to disabled veterans. It's a way of giving back while not dwelling on his past. In his words, *"I had people believing in me and I can pass that on to others."* When asked about his future he says, *"It all starts with how much work I can get done in the day... to keep reaching."*

► SSVF is part of HomeFirst's comprehensive set of services for homeless veterans in Santa Clara County.

Learn more at www.HomeFirstSCC.org.

What's Inside

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UPCOMING EVENTS

In From The Cold November 10, 2016

Our annual fundraiser to support programs which provide respite from harsh weather for thousands of homeless men, women, and families.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities available at: www.HomeFirstSCC.org.

For information, contact:
events@homefirstsc.org or
(408) 539-2112.



Join the Conversation :

-  HomeFirst Services
-  HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County
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www.HomeFirstSCC.org

CEO Message

This summer, HomeFirst had the opportunity to be part of the 2016 National Conference on Ending Homelessness in D.C. Some of our veterans program staff and I were thrilled to learn that we are one of the most innovative and forward thinking veterans service providers in the nation.

Being there helped me better understand the critical work we do. We are not alone in this endeavor as part of a larger network of partners, including All the Way Home, Destination: Home, Santa Clara County, and the City of San José. Working together we can end veteran homelessness. We are indebted to our veterans, owing dignity and stability to those who have given us so much.



Ending veteran homelessness is an enormous task, but we know how to do it. We know that housing ends homelessness. It's a fact-based method that relies on experience and expertise. Knowing this might lead one to assume the obvious strategy is to simply house all homeless veterans expediently. Yet, actually housing all of our homeless veterans is a tremendously complex task requiring a case-by-case approach.

In this issue of OFF the STREET, we introduced you to one veteran and the in-depth support we provided along with our partners. Peter is a veteran, having served our country courageously, and he is a client.

Our case managers work with clients like Peter to help them find and maintain housing. They build relationships with landlords who are willing to rent to our clients. This is especially critical in a market with 2.5% to 3.5% vacancy and the average one-bedroom apartment renting for \$2,350. We continue to face these challenges, while trying to keep up with the steep demand, and identify landlords willing to work with us to house our veterans and their families.

I was delighted to be present when the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to put on the ballot for the upcoming election a Housing Bond that would create \$950 million dollars worth of affordable housing in our community. It was truly a great day for our County and now it needs your support in November. **Please vote and help our neighbors understand the urgency of this ballot measure.** You will be helping HomeFirst bring our most vulnerable clients and their families all the way home!

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea K. Urton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Andrea K. Urton
Chief Executive Officer

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Volunteer Spotlight: Board of Directors

Over the past nine months, HomeFirst has worked diligently to recruit a new group of motivated leaders for our Board of Directors. In upcoming issues of OFF the STREET, we will be introducing you to these amazing community champions who are working to end homelessness.



Jeffrey B. Hare

Jeffrey is a San Jose attorney focusing on real estate law and transactions, both residential and commercial. He provides legal services in areas such as land use law, zoning, and municipal law, as well as entity formation, lease agreements, and loan documents. Jeffrey is also a licensed Real Estate Broker, a Mediator, and a Lecturer at Santa Clara University School of Law. He is an active member of the Rotary Club of San Jose, and a volunteer leader with the Boy Scouts of America.



Prajesh Parekh

Prajesh is a Head of Marketing for Google, where he helps businesses discover and benefit from Google Apps for Work. Prior to joining Google in 2011, he built new sales and marketing programs for various teams while at Microsoft and Procter & Gamble. His past volunteer experiences include helping at homeless shelters and as a Big Brother with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Originally from Seattle, WA, Prajesh graduated from the Wharton School at University of Pennsylvania, with a B.S. in Economics.



Saying Farewell

As we transition to new leadership, we'd also like to welcome Kirk Heinrichs as our new Chair and acknowledge the dedication and talents of our long time leaders terming off the Board. To our former Chair, Mike Pope, former Secretary and Audit Chair, Leslie Daniels, and former Development Committee Member, Mike Rogers, your time and talents have been invaluable over the years. Thank you!

Join our Board

Interested in increasing our resources and building stronger support for ending homelessness in Silicon Valley? Contact HomeFirst Board Member Tom Waldrop at: waldroptom02@gmail.com.

To view a full list of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council visit: www.homefirstscc.org/about-us/board-of-directors

HomeFirst to Provide Cold Weather Shelter for 5 More Years

In June 2016, HomeFirst was awarded a five-year contract through the Office of Supportive Housing of Santa Clara County to run the Cold Weather Shelter Program (CWSP) for North and South Santa Clara County. Shelter services will operate from November 28, 2016 through March 30, 2017. In addition, the County Office is also continuing support of the BRC at its full capacity of 250 beds throughout the year.

Shelter services offered to South County homeless individuals and families will be provided at the National Guard Armory in Gilroy. This year, we will initiate a referral system to guarantee guests a bed in the shelter throughout the cold season. Guests will be identified and referred by local service providers serving Gilroy, San Martin, and Morgan Hill, including nonprofit agencies like the Gilroy Compassion Center, St. Joseph's Family Center, Community Solutions, Gilroy and Morgan Hill Police Departments, and others. The CWSP in Gilroy will shelter 130 individuals nightly.

North County homeless individuals and families will be offered shelter in Sunnyvale. With the National Guard Armory in Sunnyvale torn down two years ago, the Office of Supportive Housing has been working with the City of Sunnyvale to identify a permanent shelter location in the area. Following last year's temporary structure, we are confident that the County and City of Sunnyvale will identify a space to accommodate the 125 people we intend to serve this year. We will once again operate the referral-based system, guaranteeing guests a bed throughout the season. HomeFirst will work with partner agencies such as Sunnyvale Community Services, Downtown Streets Team, LifeMoves, and Project WeHOPE to identify and place guests in shelter.

You can help make this program a success!

Our cold weather shelters have always relied on volunteer help, donations of blankets and other supplies, and financial contributions. Please consider getting involved this winter.

- ▶ For more information, www.homefirstscc.org/cwsp. You can make a financial donation from any page of our website or by calling (408) 539-2112.



In From the Cold Campaign

Coinciding with the opening of our cold weather shelters, In From the Cold is a way for you to give back to a community in need this winter. In exchange, we will provide shelter, meals, safety, and hope to the thousands of homeless people on the street in Santa Clara County this year. Our campaign kicks off the cold weather shelter season and is an opportunity to do more than just provide financial support, we'll host a number of signature events, drives, and celebrations throughout the season.



IN FROM THE COLD

November 10, 2016

Our flagship event, now in its seventh year, kicks off our cold weather shelter season. This exclusive event is a tremendous way to support programs that provide respite from harsh weather for homeless men, women, and families. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available at www.homefirstsccc.org/iftc.



COLD WEATHER SHELTER OPENS

November 28, 2016

Launch of Santa Clara County's cold weather shelter program run by HomeFirst. Nightly shelter locations include Gilroy, Sunnyvale and the Boccardo Reception Center in San Jose. For more information, please visit: www.homefirstsccc.org/cwsp.



HOMELESS MEMORIAL

December 14, 2016

Santa Clara County's annual homeless memorial service to honor those who died while homeless in the previous year, hosted by HomeFirst at the Boccardo Reception Center. All community members are invited. Join our mailing list on our website for news.



CIRQUE DU SOLEIL, LUZIA™

February 23, 2017

Cirque du Soleil is coming to San Jose and HomeFirst has been chosen as a beneficiary. 100% of proceeds from your purchase of this showing will support HomeFirst's programs and services for homeless youth. Tickets at: www.tinyurl.com/HFCirque

Help us
meet our match!
SOBRATO
Family Foundation
Challenge Grant

Make your contribution to In From the Cold count twice as much this year thanks to the generosity of the Sobrato Family Foundation. As a recipient of a generous 2:1 matching grant from the Sobrato Family Foundation this year, HomeFirst has the opportunity to double your impact. For every new or increased cash gift you make this season, the Foundation will match it dollar-for-dollar. The Foundation will also match qualifying gifts from corporations or foundations, so please consider contacting your employer or other charitable organizations you know to support us.



CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S
 new show, **LUZIA™**,
 is coming to San Jose
 and HomeFirst has been
 chosen to benefit from
 a performance on:

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 23
 at 8 PM
 Under the Grand Chapiteau
 in San Jose
Category 1 at \$125

**PURCHASE
 YOUR TICKETS TODAY!**

Help us make a difference
 in the lives of youth and their
 families in our community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
 visit www.HomefirstSCC.org

Cirque du Soleil donates tickets to organizations
 providing assistance to youth at risk, with 100%
 of the proceeds from tickets sales supporting
 their work with young people.



web: www.HomefirstSCC.org
email: info@homefirstsc.org
 507 Valley Way
 Milpitas, CA 95035
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