

## FROM SHELTER TO STABILITY:

# Derrick's Story



**Derrick was an electrician and has three grown children.** After his beloved mother passed away, he suffered a nervous breakdown. He had been homeless on and off since 1989 and was on the verge of "giving up" when he reached out to his brother for help. By telling him about HomeFirst, his brother probably saved his life.

Derrick began staying at our Sunnyvale Cold Weather Shelter and received help from our outreach team. He was then assigned to HomeFirst Case Manager David Wallsom, who worked hard to get him into housing while he was at the shelter.

David said, *"We set the goal of getting Derrick into Parkside Studios in Sunnyvale, which has apartments set aside for homeless individuals receiving services for mental illness. It's a fairly lengthy process and we were disappointed that his application was denied."*

*We really felt Derrick deserved a place, so we reached out to everyone who had helped him in his recovery and they really came through. He received several glowing*

*letters of support, which we submitted in an appeal. Finally we were successful and they offered him an apartment."*

Developed by Charities Housing Corporation with funds from the City of Sunnyvale, County of Santa Clara, State of California, and the federal government, Parkside Studios is a new 58-unit complex of studio apartments with beautiful interior design. It also happens to be built on the site of the former National Guard Armory where HomeFirst operated the Sunnyvale Cold Weather Shelter for many years. As Derrick said, *"I used to stay there, now I live here."*

Derrick now has a job and is in contact with his children again. He hopes to be able to guide others to "solid ground." He wants those that are still out there sick or suffering to know that with a little perseverance they, too, can have what he has.

► **For more information, hear Derrick's story in his own words on our HomeFirst YouTube channel. Select the video "HomeFirst: A Different Life."**

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## UPCOMING EVENT

### Home Sweet Home

**April 24, 2016**

Triton Museum, Santa Clara

Wine, sweets, and savories tasting plus a live auction, musical entertainment, and more—all benefiting our work to end homelessness.

**Order your tickets today at:**

[HomeFirstSCC.org/Home-Sweet-Home](http://HomeFirstSCC.org/Home-Sweet-Home)



## Join the Conversation :

-  HomeFirst Services
-  HomeFirst Services of Santa Clara County
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[www.HomeFirstSCC.org](http://www.HomeFirstSCC.org)

# CEO Message

As I write this letter, we're wrapping up another season of cold weather shelter. What strikes me the most about this year's experience is that this community is very resilient and dedicated to bringing people in from the cold.

After a new site for the Sunnyvale shelter was finally identified in the fall, HomeFirst and the County of Santa Clara had to work very hard to set up the new facility. Staff also did extensive outreach to the homeless community, to other agencies who refer clients, and to our supporters who would provide meals and supplies. Communication was key—and so was persistence!

I am very grateful to everyone who rolled with the changes. And I'm so happy for the new supporters we gained, especially the technology companies surrounding the new location in Sunnyvale. You were compassionate neighbors to the homeless right in your front yard.

I'm proud of a program launched in December, the Overnight Warming Locations for the City of San Jose. Our staff operated "pop-up shelters" in libraries and community centers across the city, opening them on short notice during episodes of bad weather.

Going forward this year, we'll work on projects with partners to explore how we can shelter and house people in innovative ways. We're very excited about the possibilities and we'll share more news as these projects take shape.

Thank you so much for supporting HomeFirst as we rise to new challenges and explore new ideas to end homelessness.

In Gratitude,



**Andrea K. Urton**  
Chief Executive Officer



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Community Volunteer

**Supervisor Mike Wasserman**  
Santa Clara County

# Amazing Shelter Supporters

Each year, our community supporters provide supplies and food for the people staying at our cold weather shelters. Here are just a few highlights of the season. Thank you to everyone who contributed!



Local Wells Fargo employees came to the Boccardo Reception Center to assemble plastic meal ware kits for our dining room and then served lunch. Jeff Rademann also presented a \$25,000 grant check for HomeFirst's veteran services at the BRC.



Juniper Networks, which is located across the street from the Sunnyvale Cold Weather Shelter, made a point of being a good neighbor by coordinating a donation drive and assembling hundreds of personal hygiene kits and lunch bags for our clients.



Long-time supporter of HomeFirst, Xilinx, organized a group of San Jose employees to assemble mugs with hot chocolate, hand warmers, and other helpful items for homeless veterans this winter.



Members of the The Muslim Community Association and One Ummah Foundation distributed 100 new jackets to clients in Sunnyvale. The group also committed to serve a special comfort meal at the shelter on a regular basis.



For the past three years, Sikh Gurdwara – San Jose has held a 5K Walk fundraiser to purchase blankets for our shelters. This December they donated 1,000 warm blankets. They have also provided hot meals monthly at the BRC.



Every week, our dedicated Annex volunteers sort all of our donations. They're especially busy during the cold weather season helping to keep our shelters supplied.

# Cold Weather Shelter



HomeFirst is the largest provider of Cold Weather Shelter in Santa Clara County. These seasonal nightly shelters serve as a refuge from harsh weather conditions for homeless men, women, and families from the Monday after Thanksgiving through the end of March.

#### In addition to a bed for the night, clients receive:

- Dinner and breakfast plus donated lunches and snacks as available
- Personal toiletries and towels to use for showers on-site
- Morning transportation to public agencies and nonprofit sites
- Items donated from the community including clothing, shoes, and books

#### This year, we operated shelters in three cities:

- HomeFirst's Boccardo Reception Center in San Jose served adults, generally up to 100 nightly in addition to our regular program clients
- At the Gilroy Armory, we served up to 130 adults and families each night
- The new Sunnyvale Onizuka Air Force Station site, we served up to 100 adults and families nightly

In Inclement Weather conditions, our nightly capacity could expand to 660 people at these shelters. In addition, we provided up to 145 beds at five overnight warming locations.

#### This program is a community effort. We want to thank:

- Everyone who donated blankets and other supplies, food, money, and time to help keep this program running
- The County of Santa Clara's Office of Supportive Housing for primary funding and program support
- The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and the City and citizens of Sunnyvale for their work in finding a new location for the shelter
- Our partners at the National Guard Armory in Gilroy and their state office in Sacramento
- The City of San Jose for funding four overnight warming locations
- Our nonprofit partners including Sunnyvale Community Services, Downtown Streets Team, West Valley Community Services, and many others

This year's Cold Weather Shelter Program produced some great results.\* Thank you to our staff and our volunteers for your hard work and generosity.

Shelter nights provided:

36,827

Meals served:

73,654

People served:

1,678

Families served:

22

Veterans served:

139

\* Data as of March 22. Please check our blog at [www.HomeFirstSCC.org](http://www.HomeFirstSCC.org) for final numbers when they become available.

# Donor Spotlight

*"People without homes are individuals just like you and me, and they need our help." – Sheila Watt*



Sheila Watt (on right) with Board member Kirk Heinrichs and his wife, Kimberly.

Sheila Watt's family has been involved with homelessness since they lived in Japan and her mother made rice cakes for their church's homeless ministry. *"My parents opened my eyes to a world I might otherwise not have paid attention to. Then as an adult in Silicon Valley, my eyes were opened even more. If we look around, we can find homelessness all over San Jose and surrounding cities."*

When choosing a charity for her monthly donations, Sheila said it seemed natural to give to an organization that was involved in homelessness. For years she simply donated until she read on the HomeFirst Facebook page that we needed laundry soap for our client washers at the BRC.

Sheila organized a "Soap and Suds Happy Hour" and asked each person to bring a box of soap.

Then while at a HomeFirst Donor Appreciation event, Sheila heard they needed tutors for the children at the Sobrato Family Living Center.

*"I've been tutoring for just over a year now. I am truly enjoying my time with the children and working with people who are also passionate about the issue of homelessness."*

*"I've discovered that there are many ways to get involved—you just need to find what works for you."*

## Home SWEET Home

A Benefit to End Homelessness



Sunday,  
April 24  
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Triton Museum  
Santa Clara



Silicon Valley's premiere tasting event, **Rivers of Chocolate, is now Home SWEET Home.** All proceeds will help end homelessness in our area.

Spend a sweet afternoon tasting fine wines, craft beer, amazing appetizers, and luscious desserts. You'll also enjoy live entertainment and fun auctions for great vacations, sports packages, and more.

**Buy your tickets now at:**  
[www.HomeFirstSCC.org](http://www.HomeFirstSCC.org)

# Welcome our New Board Member Paul Fong

After terming out of the California State Assembly, where he spent eight years, Paul is now a professor of Political Science at Evergreen Valley College. He has spent more than 35 years in business and public service, serving as an educator at De Anza and Evergreen Valley Colleges, the former Assistant Varsity Football Coach at Lynbrook High School, an owner of two businesses, Trustee on the Foothill/De Anza Community College Board, and as a California Assembly member.

*"When I served in the State Assembly, I became interested in the issue of homelessness and introduced a bill to create an Interagency Council for the Homeless. I see my work with HomeFirst, the leading local provider of services to the homeless, as a continuation of my efforts in the Assembly."*

A complete list of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council is available at <http://www.homefirstsc.org/about-us/board>



Paul Fong

## Join our Board

We're seeking additional members for our Board who can help increase our resources and connections in the community to build stronger support for ending homelessness in Silicon Valley. Contact HomeFirst Board member Kirk Heinrichs, [kheinrichs@att.net](mailto:kheinrichs@att.net).

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