



## Cold Weather Shelter Returns

You—our donors and volunteers—will again have an important role in keeping people warm and safe during the cold weather season

**Last winter** was the first season in decades that HomeFirst was unable to operate a cold weather shelter program at the National Guard Armory in Sunnyvale. The Guard no longer needed the aging facility, and it was torn down to make way for affordable housing.

County officials and nonprofits implemented a plan to replace the 125 Armory beds at scattered sites throughout the County. They also increased capacity at our Boccardo Reception Center and our cold weather shelter at the Gilroy Armory. Our staff continued to do outreach in North County, providing beds and support at the BRC. We were also able to permanently house some of these clients.

With the first announcement of the Armory closure, a determined group of citizens, local leaders, and County staff began an exhaustive search for alternate locations in North County. Our staff also played a key

role. As a result, the County staff has sent a proposal to the Board of Supervisors to open a new shelter that HomeFirst will operate during the 2015-2016 winter season.

The shelter will be a temporary structure with toilet and shower facilities. HomeFirst will manage the shelter and provide outreach, transportation, and services along with other local agencies. The program will serve 100 adults and families who will be referred from a network of agencies. Each person will have a bed and two meals, access to restrooms and showers, and a chance to receive health and social services.

**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.



## Upcoming Events

### STAND

October 22-24, 2015

Benefit performances of a new play about homelessness

### Donor Appreciation

October 23, 2015

Dinner and a showing of STAND for our generous supporters

### In From the Cold Dinner

November 18, 2015

Featuring Liz Murray, bestselling author of *Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*

### Homeless Memorial

December 10, 2015

Santa Clara County's annual homeless memorial service at the BRC

### For information, contact:

[events@homefirstsc.org](mailto:events@homefirstsc.org)

### Join the Conversation :



[www.HomeFirstSCC.org](http://www.HomeFirstSCC.org)

► **For more information**, go to [www.homefirstsc.org/cold-weather-help](http://www.homefirstsc.org/cold-weather-help). You can make a financial donation from any page of our website or by calling (408) 539-2141.

# CEO Message

One of the hardest things I've dealt with in my job is hearing about people who have died as a result of the elements. The average lifespan of someone who is homeless is just 47 years. Once a year, we acknowledge this tragedy in a public memorial at the Boccardo Reception Center for those who died while living on the streets. You're welcome to join us December 10 for this event; we'll send details next month.



One of the key things we do to prevent deaths is operate the Cold Weather Shelter Program for the County of Santa Clara. Simply put, shelters keep people alive. They also give us a critical opportunity to engage with clients. For many people experiencing homelessness, a shelter stay is the first step on the path to a permanent home.

That's why I'll never agree with the argument that we have to fund housing OR shelters. This community must have both, especially with the affordable housing crisis we're experiencing. Giving temporary shelter to people is the humane and fiscally responsible action to take to prevent further illness, degradation, and death.

This year we'll be using a temporary structure in North County. It's a new way of doing business for us, but our staff has been preparing for months. They're resilient and flexible, and I'm proud to see them once again doing whatever it takes to make sure that people have a safe place to sleep at night.

We're very grateful to the County, the City of Sunnyvale, and all of you who advocated for a replacement for the Sunnyvale Armory. Your voices were heard! Now we hope you'll support the shelters by volunteering, donating blankets and other supplies, and making a financial contribution. With your help, we can have a successful winter season!

**In gratitude,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea K. Urton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**Andrea K. Urton**  
Chief Executive Officer

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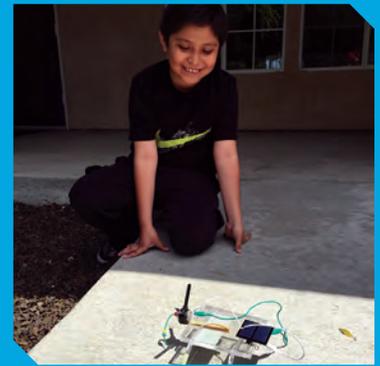
**Supervisor Mike Wasserman**

*Santa Clara County*

# Volunteer Spotlight

HomeFirst volunteer Nassim Nouri helped expand our tutoring program this year with a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) summer camp. Thirty kids attended a one-week camp at HomeFirst's Sobrato Family Living Center or Boccardo Family Living Center.

All of these kids were homeless at one time and have experienced disruption and challenges in their education. In addition to receiving a better foundation in science and math, campers participated in a special nutrition program. Thank you to volunteers Nassim Nouri, Robyn Hayr, and students of Bellarmine College Preparatory!



## A Unique Theater Experience



HomeFirst is partnering with The Tabard Theatre Company to bring to San Jose the highly acclaimed national tour of STAND. STAND tells the true story of playwright Jim Reyland's relationship with Johnny "JJ" Ellis, a man who spent three decades on the streets of Nashville battling addiction and homelessness.

STAND is playing in cities throughout the country, spurring local awareness and discussion of homelessness. San Jose performances take place October 22-24 and will benefit HomeFirst.

**Tickets are on sale now at**

<http://www.tabardtheatre.org/tickets>



Photo Credit: The Nashville Scene

# Serving Our Veterans



**The 2015 Homeless Census and Survey showed a drop in veteran homelessness over the past two years of approximately 5%**, compared to a drop in overall homelessness of approximately 14%. The far majority of homeless veterans are still “unsheltered,” which means they’re living in places not meant for human habitation.

Although veterans who served in the late Vietnam and post-Vietnam era are at greatest risk of homelessness, veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq often have disabilities that are correlated with homelessness.

Despite increased efforts to help them in our County, there are still significant barriers to reaching homeless veterans. Over the past year, HomeFirst has stepped up its services and outreach, most significantly with our Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program.

SSVF helps veteran families as well as single veterans who are struggling with housing. We offer temporary financial assistance, housing searches, job coaching, help obtaining VA or other benefits, and much more. Once their housing is stabilized, our case managers work closely with participants to help ensure that they remain housed. All services are free and confidential.

In addition to SSVF, we also offer emergency shelter, transitional housing, and a host of services for single veterans at our Boccardo Reception Center.

With your support and the partnership of the Veteran’s Administration, HomeFirst is working to end veteran homelessness in Silicon Valley. Thank you for helping us serve those who have served our country.

**You can help!** If you know a veteran or veteran family anywhere in the Bay Area who is struggling, please give them this number, (408) 539-2171, or call and give their contact information to one of our outreach workers.

# Donor Spotlight

HomeFirst donor Barbara Lea has been making monthly contributions for well over a decade.

Referred by another donor, Barbara says supporting the homeless initially appealed to her sense of compassion, but she also appreciated that all of our work was done in the local community.

*"With HomeFirst, you can just walk out your front door and see the work that's being done. Also, as a former teacher and current classroom volunteer, I've worked with homeless students in our area. I've seen the need first-hand."*

Barbara sees automatic monthly giving as a way to encourage herself to stay engaged with us. She also attends donor events and has toured several of our facilities, including the Boccardo Reception Center.

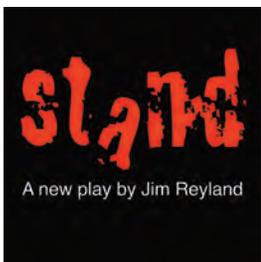
This month we're launching a new program, the Welcome Home Club, to recognize donors like Barbara who sustain our work year-round. Their regular contributions help us budget for supplies and services not funded by grants.

All current recurring donors will receive their membership packet in the mail soon. If you're interested in becoming a member, you can make a monthly or quarterly contribution by clicking DONATE on any page of our website and selecting "Yes" for the recurring donation option, or contact our Donor Services Manager, Deborah Bingham, (408) 539-2141 or [dbingham@homefirstscc.org](mailto:dbingham@homefirstscc.org).



# In From the Cold Campaign

Shelter, safety, relief, and hope — that's what we can offer through your support of our In From the Cold campaign this winter. In addition to volunteer projects and donation drives, we'll host a number of important events to mark the season and acknowledge your generosity. For more information, go to <http://www.homefirstscc.org/special-events/> or contact [events@homefirstscc.org](mailto:events@homefirstscc.org).



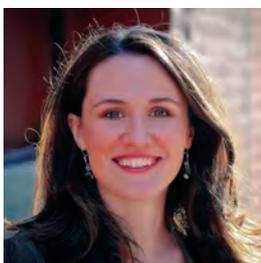
## STAND October 22-24, 2015

Benefit performances of STAND, a new play about homelessness currently touring the U.S., at the Theatre on San Pedro Square in San Jose.



## Cold Weather Shelter Opening November 30, 2015

Launch of Santa Clara County's cold weather shelter program run by HomeFirst at three locations including including Gilroy, the Boccardo Reception Center in San Jose, and North County.



## In From the Cold Dinner November 18, 2015

An invitation-only dinner featuring Liz Murray, author of the international bestseller *Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*.



## Homeless Memorial December 10, 2015

A public event to remember those who died while homeless in the previous year, hosted by HomeFirst at the Boccardo Reception Center.

# Welcome our New Board Member

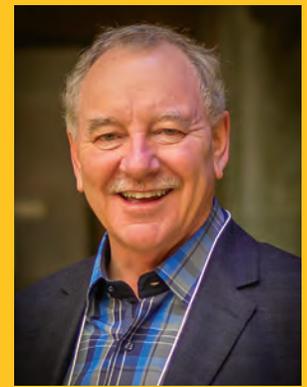
We're pleased to welcome Scott Lefaver, an owner of Cabouchon Properties, developer and buyer of affordable tax credit housing. For Scott and his wife, a dedicated HomeFirst volunteer, serving our homeless neighbors and finding solutions to homelessness is a family affair.

*"I look forward to working with others who want to make a difference in our community by assisting families and individuals who need housing."*

Scott is currently Chair of the County of Santa Clara Planning Commission and serves as a Research Associate with the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University. He is a former faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at SJSU and has also taught at Stanford. He received a Master of Urban Planning from SJSU and a Master and Doctor of Public Administration from the University of Southern California.

Scott is also a former Colonel in the California State Military Reserve, a combat veteran, and a retired member of the U.S. Army Reserve. He and his family live in San Jose.

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



**Scott Lefaver**

## 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).

*Celebrating 35 years of serving the community*

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