



Join us for an afternoon
of delicious food, wine and
activities for the whole
family at the first annual
Ritter Center Paella Picnic!

Pacheco Ranch Winery, Novato
Sunday, September 17th 2017
4:00PM – 7:00PM

For more information: rittercenter.org or (415) 457-8182 ext. 102

Proceeds to benefit Ritter Center programs.



Ritter Center is always in need of volunteers.
Get involved – help make a difference.

Visit us at rittercenter.org



Use the enclosed envelope or make an
online donation at rittercenter.org.

Ritter Center helps prevent homelessness
and improve the health and well-being of
individuals and families living in poverty in
San Rafael and Marin County.

16 Ritter Street, San Rafael, CA 94901
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Why the Affordable Care Act Is Instrumental to Our Work

At Ritter Center, we are both happy and relieved that the Affordable Care Act remains in place, at least for now. The ACA has made it possible for Ritter Center to serve nearly three times as many low or no-income clients annually as before its enactment. The ACA has also greatly improved the health and overall wellness of numerous low-income individuals throughout Marin County, who are served by other community health centers.

Under the Affordable Care Act, the federal government allowed states to expand the eligibility for Medicaid, which is jointly funded by the states and the federal government. After the ACA became law in 2010, anyone in California could sign up for Medicaid, if their annual income was low enough, 138% of the Federal Poverty level (\$16,395 or less for a single person or \$22,108 or less for a couple). As a result, in Marin County, Medi-Cal (California's name for the state's Medicaid program) expanded coverage to over 38,000 new participants.

What the expansion of Medi-Cal meant for Ritter Center is that **we have been able to provide our Health Center services to a larger population of low-income individuals**, including: primary medical care, behavioral health counseling, outpatient substance use treatment, and case management support. Our Health Center is now open 5 days a week, and we have increased the number of patients served to more than 1,800 individuals per year. Our ability to provide these services helps local hospitals by reducing the number of emergency room non-urgent visits.

Access to affordable health care has not only improved our clients' health but also their economic well-being. Having affordable health care allows them to spend their limited incomes on rent, food, and other basic needs.

To date, **50,783 Marin County residents have directly benefited from the ACA**, with 38,843 enrolled in Medi-Cal and 11,940 in Covered California. The ACA prohibition on discrimination for pre-existing conditions has enabled more people to qualify for insurance. The expansion of medical

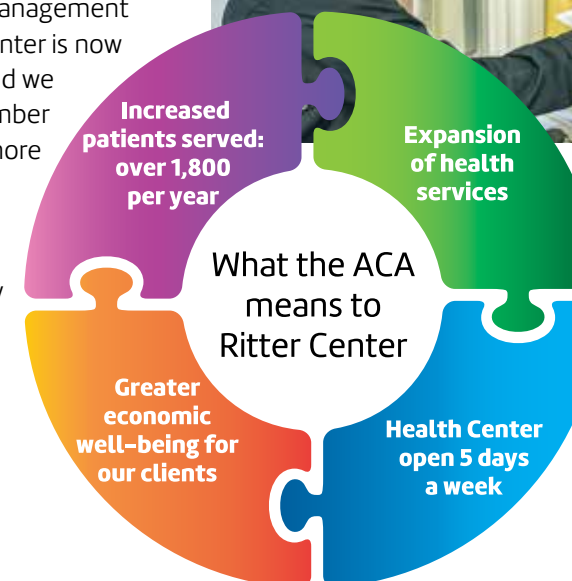
coverage for preventive care, medication, and family planning has greatly improved medical outcomes, since many individuals who previously could not afford insurance can now receive the care they need.

Though the Affordable Care Act is still in place, **Ritter Center needs your continued support.** Through your generosity, we are able to offer many supportive services not covered under the ACA. These services include:

transportation for our clients to and from medical appointments, financial assistance, housing subsidies, and our food pantry, which provides 22,000 bags of groceries per year.

On behalf of the clients and staff of Ritter Center, thank you for your support.

Cia Byrnes, Ritter Center Executive Director





DOGTOWN REDEMPTION

Friendraising & Special Screening of Dogtown Redemption

Dogtown Redemption is a powerful documentary film that chronicles the lives of homeless recyclers in Oakland and the very complicated dynamics that develop around their presence in the community. It's an intimate journey through a landscape of love and loss, devotion and addiction, prejudice and poverty.

Ritter Center hosted a screening of Dogtown Redemption on February 16th at the Rafael Film Center. Many of the themes and struggles presented in the documentary are shared by communities across the country. We wanted to host the film because we felt that screening the movie would provide an opportunity to have an in-depth conversation about homelessness in our own community. The turnout and attendee response to the film were extremely positive.

Dogtown Redemption follows three individuals as they use shopping carts to scavenge for any piece of trash that might bring them a bit of money to get by. The film starts with the impending closure of Alliance Metals, a business in west Oakland that provides a meager source of income for the homeless recyclers. (Ritter Center faced a similar situation last year as the San Rafael City Council considered limiting or revoking our Conditional Use Permit. And, while we managed to find some common working ground with the city, Alliance Metals ultimately had to close its doors). The documentary details the impact of the closure on the lives of the Dogtown recyclers, once their only source of income was lost.

The film's director, Amir Soltani, joined us for Ritter Center's screening. He talked about listening to the homeless recyclers through his window, day after day. They intrigued him, and he

wanted to better understand their motivations and lives. One night, he decided to go outside to talk with them, and that was the beginning of the film.

Amir is a great storyteller. Through the film, he tackles big, systemic issues by portraying the struggles of individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness. He invites us to see these individuals as human beings, with all of their virtues and flaws. Amir asks us not to be afraid of them, or to assign stereotypes that take away their humanity. By creating this powerful film, Amir is hoping to generate more understanding of the plight of homeless individuals throughout our country and create positive change.

Like Amir, Ritter Center wants to encourage community-wide conversations about homelessness. We are hopeful that these conversations will help us to not use fear and stereotypes to guide social policies and will lead to concrete, positive solutions for those in need.

If you missed the film and are interested in a local screening, here's where you can find that information:
dogtownredemption.com/upcoming-screenings/

Meet Staff Member Erika Fuyo

Individuals often have questions about enrolling for health-care under the Affordable Care Act. To help our clients with this process, Ritter Center has Erika Fuyo, a Certified Enrollment Counselor. As a Certified Enrollment Counselor, Erika has been trained to provide in-person counseling and assistance to people applying for Covered California programs. She offers her services in both English and Spanish.

"People are often unsure about their options and need lots of guidance with their insurance application," says Erika. "With my assistance, they feel more confident about the entire process." Most of the people Erika assists qualify for MediCal under the Medicaid expansion.

After she works with a client to complete their insurance application, Erika always follows up with their county eligibility worker. "I want to make sure my clients' application is being processed. I also make sure they get to their interviews with the eligibility worker. If they don't have transportation of their own, I can provide a bus pass."

After someone is approved, Erika meets with them again to explain how the coverage works, the different insurance packages, and when they are required to re-certify.



"Everyone deserves the opportunity to qualify for health coverage, and I am here to help them," says Erika. "That is our approach at Ritter Center. We have a wonderful caring staff, and we are happy to help people access and manage their care and well-being."

During 2016, Erika assisted 1,450 individuals in navigating Covered California, which included actual or potential enrollment or reenrollment in health insurance via the Marketplace or Medicaid expansion. She enrolled about 900 individuals for insurance coverage.

THANK YOU CORNER

Meet Board Member, Margaret Trezevant



Ritter Center is blessed to have many supportive board members. One of them is Margaret Trezevant. A former nurse and now an ordained Episcopal Deacon, Margaret serves at Church of Our Saviour in Mill Valley.

Margaret first became interested in homelessness issues when she worked as Nurse Manager of the Emergency Department at San Francisco General Hospital. She subsequently served as Nurse Manager of the Tom Waddell Clinic, the homeless-focused clinic of the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

What motivated Margaret to join the Ritter Center Board? After she and her husband moved to San Rafael a year and a half ago, Margaret wanted to become acquainted with the homeless services in San Rafael. She found that Ritter Center is very much like the Tom Waddell Clinic. Seeing first-hand the benefits that Tom Waddell provides to the San Francisco community, she joined the Ritter Center Board so that she could advocate for our mission and services.

Margaret would like to do whatever she can to alleviate the suffering of people who find themselves on the street or in danger of losing their housing. She wants to be an ambassador for Ritter Center to the public, who may not understand the issues that homeless people face, or the programs or solutions that are needed.



Are you ready for summer homework?

Support Ritter Center's 2017 Back to School Program

It is never too early to make plans to support school-aged children in our community. Each year, your contributions help make our Back to School program a great success.

Our goal is to send many children in San Rafael back to school with all the tools they need to succeed and thrive academically and we need your help.

How can you help?

There are a few ways for you to support our Back to School program:

- ✓ Drop off supplies Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm, now through August 4th at 16 Ritter street in San Rafael
- ✓ Make an online donation by visiting rittercenter.org