

RESOLVE

Real People. Real Impact.



AS THIS SECOND EDITION of Resolve arrives in your mailbox, I want to take a moment to reflect with renewed gratitude about the recent months. Despite the global challenges of the Delta variant and vaccination rates, Ritter Center continues to scale its work to new heights in our community, as well as in our work with you to end homelessness here in Marin County. These past few months brought several amazing new achievements: a new mobile medicine van hit the streets to deliver direct care to our most vulnerable neighbors and we held our first annual Under The Stars: A Sleepout To End Homelessness event on July 31st raising over \$145,000 for our programs that prevent and resolve homelessness. All of this happened while we also continued to make a direct impact by serving our community in coordination with our partner agencies and Marin County: 350 families received food from our pantry every single week;

over half a million in rental assistance helped to prevent homelessness, and we continued to support our clients by providing a wide range of culturally sensitive, easily accessible, high-quality medical care and social services.

I hope you'll enjoy reading about this work in our newsletter because without you, none of this would be possible.

Thank you for being a partner in preventing and resolving homelessness.

Mark Shotwell
Executive Director



Give the Gift of Hope

It's a time of year many of us love: lighted trees and festive decorations, family gatherings, holiday meals, gift giving, and peaceful gratitude for the abundance we have in our lives. There's a flip side to this beautiful season: many do not view it as a time of plenty, togetherness, or even love. It is an isolating and lonely string of months for individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty.

The **Hope for the Holidays campaign** is our largest fundraiser of the year, raising critical funds for healthcare, housing support services like rental assistance, our food pantry, and our seasonal programs: **Thanksgiving Meal Kits, Family-to-Family gift giving, and the Holiday Meal for the Homeless.** These programs warm the soul and encompass the spirit of

community; seeing kind faces, having conversations, enjoying a hot meal, and receiving a small gift helps seniors, veterans, families, and individuals experiencing homelessness feel less alone at the holidays.

We hope that when you receive our invitation to donate to Hope for the Holidays, you'll make your donation with a great sense of pride, knowing that you are changing lives for the better.



Hope for the Holidays



Simply complete and mail the enclosed envelope or donate online <https://bit.ly/RCHolidayHope>

Our Mobile Medicine Van is Here!

WE LAUNCHED our Medical Outreach Team to provide street medicine via our first-ever mobile medical van! On board, Ritter Center's Nurse Practitioner and Care Coordinator provide preventative and urgent primary medical care services, including COVID vaccines and testing, to individuals in our community who are often hardest to reach, including those who are unsheltered, underserved, and do not have access to health insurance or a medical provider. Our team can also connect patients with behavioral health support, shelter and housing resources, access to food, benefits management, and more.



Ritter Center's street medicine program is possible due to seed funding from **Marin County Health and Human Services, Kaiser Permanente**, and the **Health Resources and Services Administration**.

"Mobile medical services simultaneously address issues of health education, access and impact to make significant inroads into the community and bring benefits to the entire population."

—Mark Shotwell, Executive Director

Homelessness can Happen to Anyone

"PEOPLE don't become homeless when they run out of money. People become homeless when they run out of relationships," emphasizes Marin County's Homelessness Policy Analyst Ashley Hart McIntyre.

Homelessness can happen to anyone. It is often the result of social and economic forces like job loss, divorce, and behavioral health issues –struggles many of us will experience– and when combined, they can create the perfect storm for homelessness to become a reality.

Marin County's Whole Person Care (WPC) program is a collaboration between 30 partner agencies and nonprofits including Ritter Center. We work hand-in-hand with Ashley's team to coordinate care, share data and track deliverables across housing, medical, mental health, and social services for Medi-Cal adults with a focus on people experiencing homelessness. This shared platform allows all WPC partners to access nearly 1,900 client profiles, enabling teams to create complete care solutions for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Ashley described Whole Person Care as "an approach that enables Ritter Center's team to use a holistic case management approach with a multidisciplinary team of rotating case managers for each person." **This is a large part of why Marin is on track with our goals to end chronic homelessness by 2022.**"

Ritter Center, Marin HHS, and our partners reduced chronic homelessness by 28% since 2017. Outcomes as of August 31, 2021:

Chronic Homelessness

389

People Housed

94%

Remain Housed

Veteran Homelessness

48

Veterans Housed

60%

Reduction in Veteran Homelessness

Family Homelessness

66

Families Housed

36

Sheltered Homeless Families Remain in Marin

In addition

100

New Permanent Supportive Housing units were created in Marin by pairing Marin Housing Authority's Housing Choice Vouchers with Whole Person Care (WPC) case management teams.

17%

Reduction in ER visits among WPC clients after being enrolled in the program.

20%

Reduction in incarcerations among WPC clients after being enrolled in the program.



Sleepout Success!

ON JULY 31ST, people across the Bay Area left the comfort of their warm beds and slept in their yards, cars, and gardens to take part in Ritter Center's inaugural, **Under the Stars: A Sleepout to End Homelessness in Marin.** More than 375 donors, sponsors, and local businesses helped us raise \$145,000 with over 500 donations and silent auction purchases.

The live, 2-hour, virtual kick-off event was hosted by Ritter Center's Executive Director Mark Shotwell and Board Member Lucia Martel-Dow. Thanks to all of our speakers and special guests: San Rafael Mayor Kate Colin, U.S. Congressman Jared Huffman, Marin County Director of the Department of Health and Human Services Benita McLarin, California Senator Mike McGuire, Marin County District 1 Supervisor Damon Connolly, CEO of Community Action Marin Chandra Alexandre, Ritter Center Board President Margaret Trezevant, and Don Hardy of KTF Films, the director of the incredible docu-series, "The Way Home." Participants enjoyed a performance by SF Ballet musicians Craig Reiss, Heidi Wilcox, Liz Prior, Farley Pearce, and Kristin Clayton, and a bedtime story with Mari Allen from Book Passage.

Thank you to our sponsors and in-kind donors including: Praytell, Marin Homeless Aid, SFGate and SF Chronicle, Redwood Credit Union, Marin Living Magazine, Vilda, United Markets, Jessica Hansen Consulting, Wipfli LLP, and Marin Independent Journal. See a full list of our incredible sponsors at: <https://bit.ly/RitterSponsors>. We are so grateful to all who made this event a success. We can't wait to see you again for our 2022 Sleepout!



A Safe Space

"WATCHING PEOPLE come in, begin to heal, and blossom into even more beautiful versions of themselves once they get the help they need through Ritter Center is part of what makes this place feel so magical to me," says **Rachelle Valenzuela, Ritter Center Clinic Manager.** "When I first began working at Ritter Center, a client came in and said 'I hate all of you.' I replied that he couldn't include me because I had only started a week ago. I told him, I was determined to win him over. Every time I saw him, I'd check in with him. He started noticing. Soon, I was able to convince him to get vaccinated, but only on the contingency that I administered the vaccine. He told me that he 'would trust his life in my hands' and that meant the world to me. It's beautiful that we're able to give clients the trust they never had in their lives."



"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou's quote is my favorite.
"If I can create a safe space for someone –even just for 5 minutes– I can change their life. I can save their life."

—Rachelle manages Ritter Center's Federally Qualified Health Center clinic team which provides over 2,500 patients every year with healthcare services.

Thank You, 2020 Donors

RITTER CENTER is deeply honored by new and continued support from community members, businesses, faith-based and community organizations, and foundations. We faced new challenges related to the COVID pandemic in 2020 and increased our efforts to engage, renew and attract new donors to our mission. We received 2,117 gifts from the 1,165 donors listed below. Collectively, they contributed \$1,338,635. When the community comes together, great things happen.

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Please contact Christen Brunner to bring corrections to our attention: cbrunner@rittercenter.org.

A Changed Perspective

AUGUSTUS MUSE, a 19-year-old Dominican University Civic Action Fellow, volunteers 20 hours a week at our Food Pantry as part of his fellowship program. He grew up hearing the typical misconceptions about people experiencing homelessness.

"People think becoming homeless is a choice -- that there is a link between how hard you work and how your life turns out. But that isn't true. Now, with my experience volunteering at Ritter Center I can see that they didn't have any other option. Who we become is the result of the circumstances we are born into and the opportunities given to us," says Augustus.

"I recognize now the impact one event can have. We had a few very windy days. Some people were living on houseboats until they lost their boats to the wind. One day of poor weather can wipe out everything," says Augustus. "I provided them with blankets and sleeping bags, but at the end of the day, they no longer had a place to sleep and cook."



"A windy day isn't going to make my house go away, but that single event changed their lives forever."



Address Panel
PO Box 3517
San Rafael, CA 94912



We Need Volunteers!

As a Food Pantry volunteer you'll help people in need access everyday essentials. Call Jorge Garcia, our Client Services Manager at 415-457-8182 x109 or complete our contact form at www.rittercenter.org/contact-us and a team member will reach out to you.

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