

RESOLVE

Real People. Real Impact.



ritter center

Ritter Center PO Box 3517
San Rafael, CA 94912



Address Panel

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Welcome!

IN YOUR HANDS is the first edition of our printed **Ritter Center newsletter "Resolve."** Written for you and our community of friends, Resolve shares how your support enables Ritter Center to improve the health and well-being of our vulnerable neighbors in Marin and prevent and resolve homelessness.

The pandemic has challenged and changed us all, often in unimaginable ways. With lives and livelihoods lost and lingering health and economic issues affecting our most disadvantaged neighbors, recovery will be hard for many - we have seen this struggle first-hand. But we are grateful for the shift we are now feeling with community health and homelessness getting a positive focus, the deployment of vaccines - a highlight being Ritter Center's partnership with Marin HHS to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to underserved populations - and a slow

but steady return to as close to a new normal that we can find.

Inside each newsletter, you will find stories about our amazing patients, clients, team, partners, board members, and donors, coupled with news that provides insights and exciting ways to get involved.

Thanks to you, we continue to find points of light, hope and inspiration in 2021.

Happy reading.

Mark Shotwell,
Executive Director



Board Spotlight

RITTER Center is excited to welcome Canal Alliance Director of Immigration and Social Services Lucia Martel-Dow to our board. Personally and professionally, Lucia is driven by her passion for immigration law and goal to provide immigrants with the same access to opportunities as everybody else.

"This is what draws me to Ritter Center. We must help people to overcome poverty. We must work to provide access to healthcare and substance abuse services, and homeless prevention for the immigrant community that is already disproportionately affected by many things, especially COVID." - Lucia Martel-Dow

Board of Directors

Margaret Trezevant, President | David Neagle, Vice President | Tim Biddle, Treasurer | Carol Farrer, Secretary | Carol Angel | Bettye Kray | Dan Masterson | Robert McCaskill | Sean McConnell | Lucia Martel-Dow | Executive Director Mark Shotwell

UNDER THE STARS

A Sleepout to End Homelessness in Marin

Join your family and friends on Saturday, July 31, for a sleepout to help raise \$150,000 for Ritter Center's housing support and healthcare services that prevent and resolve homelessness.

Register today: Sleepout.RitterCenter.org

Where will you sleep? Maybe your living room, a sofa, your deck, garden, or backyard? During this special event, we are asking you to give up your comfy bed for just one night. While choosing to sleep in an area other than your bedroom cannot recreate what it feels like to be chronically, sporadically, or transitionally homeless, it allows us to immerse ourselves and reflect on how and why passing by someone living and sleeping on the streets has become normalized in our society.

Housing is a right. Homelessness is solvable.

We believe everyone deserves a safe place to call home, regardless of income. Ritter Center's first-ever sleepout will create conversation, build advocacy and understanding, and raise vital funds. Together, we can end homelessness.

Making a difference is simple and fun:

- 1) Register online! Sign up solo or start a team.
- 2) Set a fundraising goal, edit your fundraising page, and ask your friends and family to sponsor you with a donation!
- 3) Sleep out on July 31st — you'll enjoy live activities and entertainment, 6–8pm PST, ending with an awards ceremony and bedtime story!

Using our online activity hub, you can learn about homelessness and plan your sleepout. Plus, we have a virtual goody bag, fundraising incentives, and prizes for the highest fundraisers. First 100 paid registrants get a free event t-shirt. Scan the QR code below or visit Sleepout.RitterCenter.org and start your team today!



Our Sponsors

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HERITAGE BANK OF COMMERCE

Sports Basement

A Lived Experience Offers a Unique Lens

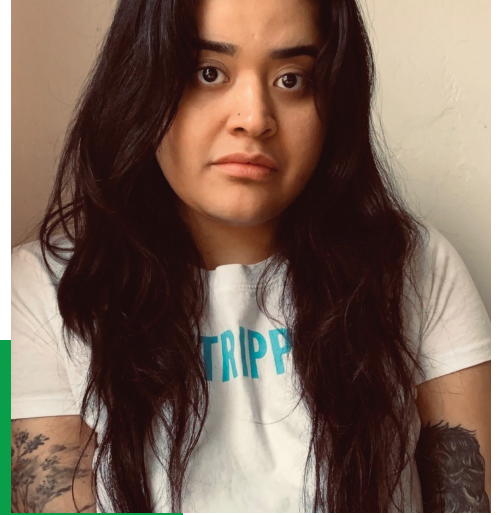
JENNIFER Escobar is a Ritter Center Whole Person Care Case Manager.

She shares how social workers have played a critical role in the pandemic and how she brings her experiences as a child, and now as a woman of color who is also indigenous, to help people in need.

"Although I grew up in Marin, I lived in unsafe conditions. These experiences gave me a unique lens to support Ritter Center clients. I know all too well from personal experience the profound link between housing and quality of life," notes Jennifer.

Jennifer used to think of herself solely as a Latina woman, but a DNA test confirmed she is 58% Native American. She says, "I view Marin differently and how I network with people as well." Now Jennifer is ensuring that in her everyday practice she brings an indigenous framework, making sure oppressed voices are heard and listened to in new and important ways.

Jennifer revealed how the team worked around the clock to connect with clients throughout the pandemic. "At Ritter Center, our team went out every day to serve people experiencing homelessness."



"I know all too well from personal experience the profound link between housing and quality of life."

— Ritter Center WPC Case Manager
Jennifer Escobar

"The roles of social workers are more powerful than people realize. Nurses and doctors are now seen differently because of COVID, but social workers have also played a critical role in the pandemic. Their ability to understand and navigate systems and to try to dismantle and change policies within systems is critical, all while maintaining a therapeutic relationship with clients."

When asked how she feels now and what drives her, she responded, "We are tired, but we still wake up every day and serve our communities straight from the heart."

Become a monthly donor

Your recurring online donation is a simple way to provide ongoing, increased support for our clients and patients throughout the year.

Learn more and become a monthly donor:
bit.ly/ritter-monthly-giving



Housing is Medicine

SUE (name changed for privacy) used to work as a telemarketer in San Francisco.

A sudden job loss exhausted her savings and she soon found herself homeless. Sue slept in chairs for years at a shelter. She developed chronic swelling in her ankles. She couldn't take diuretics because she didn't have consistent access to a bathroom. Her skin tore and she developed an infection.

"When you are homeless, you feel invisible," said Sue. "Going from place to place, you start to lose your personal items. I lost pictures and other things I really cared about, which was hard. There have been a few times where I just wanted to give up."

When Sue first came to Ritter Center, she didn't trust us. She called 911 from our waiting room. She said she dialed 911 frequently and went to the ER at least once a week.

Former Ritter Center Family Nurse Practitioner Tess Barbach built up a trusting relationship with Sue over time through listening, acknowledgement, and patience.

"It's simple. We keep showing up. We follow through with our promises. They respond. They will keep coming back to the clinic and over time, their health conditions will improve," explains Tess.

Sue is grateful she found Ritter Center. She has been temporarily housed in a motel during COVID-19 and we're happy to report that thanks to her dedicated Ritter Center care team, she will be moving to permanent housing soon.

Sue is grateful she found Ritter Center "because they have compassion for people."



"Sleeping on the streets was a nightmare. It's scary for a woman."

— Ritter Center Patient "Sue"

From Homelessness to Happiness

A SAN Rafael grandfather, Ritter Center client and Food Pantry volunteer, Pops, lived in his car for 8 years following a job loss. Ritter Center became his community hub and a lifeline for everyday essentials, including food. In 2012, Ritter Center Director of Case Management Colin McDonnell found Pops a permanent home, where he still lives today.

Pops is filled with appreciation for the place he inhabits now, both literally and figuratively. "I am grateful that Ritter Center exists and I hope that people become more open-minded. We still need more outreach and support as there are more people out there still needing help."

Pops helps out at Ritter Center's Food Pantry and has noticed an increase in people coming to collect food. "The Ritter food bank is also important. There is a lot more demand during the pandemic. Ritter fulfills a need because many families aren't working, and they need a little extra help to get by."



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for e-news**

Get the most inspiring patient stories, exciting events, and latest healthcare news straight to your inbox.

bit.ly/ritter-email-signup



"We need volunteers, food and socks!"

We always need essential food items to stock our food pantry. Plus, this month we need socks! Drop off new/unused items on Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 am - 3 pm at Ritter Center, 16 Ritter Street in San Rafael.

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.