

# RESOLVE

Real People. Real Impact.



## Columbia Coat Drive

Ritter Center is partnering with Columbia Sportswear Company's Employee Store in Richmond, Calif., for a coat drive. Bring a new or gently used coat to the store between March 1–March 31 to gain store access and receive \$20 off a purchase of \$150 or more. For the unfamiliar, the Employee Store is not open to the public as the pricing includes an employee discount of up to 50 percent off retail pricing. Stock up on current products from Columbia, Mountain Hardwear, SOREL and prAna. All donated items will benefit our Ritter Center community.

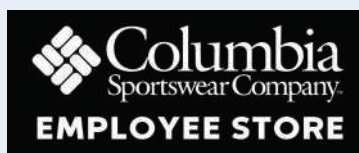
**Location:** 1414 Harbour Way South, Suite 1010, Richmond, CA 94804

**Store Hours:** Monday–Friday: 11 a.m.–8 p.m.; Saturday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

**Valid:** March 1–31, 2023

**To Access:** You must provide a coat to donate for store access

**Questions:** [RichmondEmployeeStore@columbia.com](mailto:RichmondEmployeeStore@columbia.com)



**THE START of a new year is always a good time to reflect.** With a historic rise in inflation, 2022 was not easy, but it revealed an opportunity to spread cheer and hope in our community. Thanks to you, that's just what we did.

We held a series of heartwarming events, from a successful back-to-school drive last fall to a series of Thanksgiving and December holiday events. We launched our street medicine program that provides healthcare and support services via our street medicine van. Our building permit was approved, and we are moving ahead with exciting plans for a new campus that will give our patients and clients the dignity they deserve when receiving care.

The significant rainfall at the start of 2023 devastated our homeless community, but you stepped up again, providing funds for the necessary wet weather supplies for our clients. Thank you.

Looking ahead, we are busy preparing for our third annual Under The Stars: A Sleepout to End Homelessness. This year, we plan to host a brand-new special event in-person in San Rafael before we all head home to "sleep out"—you can read more about it in this issue of *Resolve*.

Thank you for stepping up to help our neighbors in need and making this past holiday season, and every day of the year, a bit brighter.



Mark Shotwell  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ritter Center



## You Gave Hope For the Holidays

Thanks to 856+ donors, we raised over \$440,137 for our programs and services. Your support funded three seasonal programs and events that provided much-needed financial relief and social connection during one of the most challenging times of the year.

### November Meal Kit Program



170 families picked up a November Meal Kit with ingredients for a turkey meal, sides, and dessert.

### Family-to-Family Holiday Gift Card Program



620 people—including 300 children, 69 seniors, and 35 people experiencing homelessness—received gift cards to help buy gifts and essentials during the holiday season.

### Holiday Dinner for Clients Experiencing Homelessness



Clients experiencing homelessness enjoyed a seated holiday dinner and received care packages with a coat, hat, scarf, backpack, sleeping bag, and hygiene kit.

**Thank you to all of our donors, volunteers, staff, Board of Directors, and generous sponsors and partners for giving Hope for the Holidays.**



[View photo gallery.](#)



## Shattering the Stigma of Mental Health

**"THERE IS a culture in the social services field that encourages and embraces professionals who share their stories of recovery around addiction,"** says Michael Beyer, Ritter Center's Lead Whole Person Care Housing Case Manager, "but rarely do people share how they struggled and learned to successfully manage their mental health challenges."

Michael provides mental health support to people who have suffered chronic homelessness and who often come from broken families and profound trauma and loss.

"I was a silly, playful, and outgoing child. Around age 7, my life drastically changed. I became profoundly unhappy, withdrawn, and disinterested in things I previously enjoyed," Michael continued. "Bullying was a large contributor. I was non-binary even then, and that played a role in being ostracized by peers. Around age 8, I was having thoughts of suicide. A school counselor advocated to my parents that I go to the hospital, as she feared for my safety."

Michael concluded, "I am so fortunate and grateful my parents could get me into treatment. They were always there to go to bat for me. That is not the case for many people, particularly if they are low-income."



*"These struggles have made me stronger and a more resilient person as a result. I hope that today I can help shatter the stigma by telling my story to the world."*

Michael Beyer, Ritter Center's Lead Whole Person Care Housing Case Manager



## Speaking from the Heart

**IT'S NO surprise that living on the streets is extremely stressful.** But did you know that there is a link to cardiovascular disease and homelessness?

**Cardiovascular disease is a major cause of death among people experiencing homelessness,** at rates that exceed those in individuals who are housed, and it's a major reason why chronically homeless people live an average of **28 years** less than housed members of the same community.

A complex set of risk factors contributes to this disparity, including a high prevalence of cigarette smoking as well as chronic stress, depression, and heavy alcohol or drug use.

In addition, poor access to healthcare and logistical challenges to cardiac testing can delay diagnosis. Barriers to communication, medication access, and timely follow-ups further challenge the management of cardiovascular disease. Many patients in our care embody these and other significant challenges.

Thanks to donors like you, Ritter Center's medical clinic provides high-quality medical care regardless of someone's ability to pay, helping to improve health outcomes and save lives.



### Share Your Heart

Make a gift in honor of a loved one or become a monthly donor and make a heartfelt impact year-round! Donate online [RitterCenter.org/Donate](https://RitterCenter.org/Donate) or scan this QR code.



### Board of Directors

David Neagle, President | Tim Biddle, Treasurer | Carol Angel, Secretary | Margaret Trezevant, President Emeritus | Mike Ralston, Chair of Governance Committee | Rosalinda Camacho | Toni Doyle | Bettye Kray, In Memoriam | Dan Masterson | Bob McCaskill | Stephanie Plexico

# Forging a Path to Transform the Future



**FEBRUARY IS Rare Disease Month and we are delighted to highlight our growing partnership with Novato-based company Ultragenyx.** The company was founded in 2010 to create a steady pipeline of new and effective therapies for people living with rare and ultra-rare diseases.

Founded by CEO and President Emil D. Kakkis, MD, Ph.D., Ultragenyx is a major supporter of Ritter Center. Both organizations have a lot in common, beginning with serving the needs of vulnerable communities.

“Being of service to the rare disease community also extends to the communities where we live and work,” said Jeff Blake, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ultragenyx. “Our team members volunteer at Ritter Center throughout the year for back-to-school and holiday events, and they participate in the annual sleep out.”

Invisibility is a thread that ties Ultragenyx and Ritter Center together. People living with rare diseases can feel like they are not worth the time to find a treatment. People experiencing homelessness can also feel forgotten.

Ultragenyx and Ritter Center are patient-centered organizations focused on changing the future as Ultragenyx works to uncover first-of-their-kind treatments. At the same time, Ritter Center provides healthcare and social support services that help the poorest and marginalized people in our communities regain their health and build stability to improve their lives.

*“Ritter Center’s commitment to access to food and equity in health care fits right in with our community impact goals and aligns with our mission. We are excited about what’s to come as we lead the future together.”*

Jeff Blake, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ultragenyx



★  
**UNDER  
THE STARS**  
★

Save the Date!

**BBQ + Sleepout to End Homelessness**

Saturday, May 20, 2023



Join us for our 3rd Annual Under the Stars fundraiser! Before you settle down for an uncomfortable night sleeping outside, you’re invited to join us for a pre-Sleepout BBQ celebration at the **San Rafael Elks Club on Saturday, May 20, from 5-7 p.m.**

Chef Jim Modesitt (seen on BBQ Pitmasters), is serving up his award-winning dishes while guests enjoy lawn games, auctions, music, special guests, and awards on the Maple Lawn Terrace. After the picnic, Sleepout participants will return home to prepare for a night of “sleeping out.” **Stay tuned for more details about the event.**

All funds raised support Ritter Center’s health, housing, food, and safety net programs for people experiencing homelessness and economic insecurity.

**BBQ tickets go on sale at the end of March.**



Sleepout registration opens early March! All sleepout participants get a free T-shirt! [Sleepout.RitterCenter.org](https://Sleepout.RitterCenter.org)

For questions, contact Jessica Hansen, Chief Development Officer, at (415) 730-4268.

## Calling All Sponsors!

Are you a business owner, or know of any companies that might want to get involved this year? Sponsors receive marketing and experience benefits, including logos on collateral and advertising, corporate volunteer days, and tickets to our BBQ Picnic before the sleepout. Packages start at \$500.

Contact Jessica Hansen, Chief Development Officer, at [jhansen@rittercenter.org](mailto:jhansen@rittercenter.org) to get involved!



# *In Memoriam* Bettye Kray



## Warming Our Hearts Every Minute, Every Day



**BETTYE KRAY, a beloved Board member, left our lives in January.** With everyone she met, Bettye shared her passion for helping people who are marginalized, living in poverty, victims of human trafficking, and or just needed someone to love them. She spread joy and inspiration with her big smile and wise words. Bettye was the epitome of a good human and led an adventurous, faith-based life filled with stories, kindness, and thousands upon thousands of hugs. There are not enough words to describe how amazing Bettye was, and so we will share her light through an email she sent following our December Holiday Meal for People Experiencing Homelessness.

Although you will forever be missed, your legacy lives on and we know you are resting in peace, Bettye.



*Hi, All of My Ritter Sisters and Brothers,*

*I hope I am not stepping out of the protocols here. I just have to say this.*

*We are doing what He asked us to do.*

*And, let me tell you . . . IT FEELS SO GOOD!!!!*

*Whatever your faith tradition, party affiliation, let us all be here, thinking, resonating, truly hearing each other and lovingly, respectfully responding, praying for us to come together with Love.*

*To come to a place where no one has only the hardship of living alone on the street, feels no hope, that no one cares about them. We MUST show and offer our love, care, and hope, a positive future for those affected by some really hard times.*

*We must also work with our local governmental institutions to find the way so that our Sisters and Brothers don't have to suffer so.*

*OK . . . . My Sermon is over. I am not clergy! 😊*

*Peace and Blessings,  
Bettye*



 Read our tribute page to Bettye Kray: [bit.ly/bettye-kray](https://bit.ly/bettye-kray)