

## **Ritter Center Asks the Public to Give Up Their Beds for One Night for *Under The Stars: A Sleepout to End Homelessness in Marin***

SAN RAFAEL– Ritter Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center, launched a community event to end homelessness in Marin County today. On the night of July 31, 2021, Ritter Center is asking individuals, families and community teams to gather in living rooms, floors, sofas, decks, porches, driveways and backyards with the intention to spend the night in any place other than a bed.

***Live-streamed activities from 6–8 pm PST, hosted by Executive Director, Mark Shotwell, will include remarks by Marin County Supervisor Damon Connolly and a special video message by U.S. Congressman Jared Huffman.***

“Under the Stars: A Sleepout to End Homelessness in Marin” is designed to raise public awareness of the complex issues around homelessness, and shatter common myths while building compassion as a community, and igniting a movement of social change. Under the Stars will include speakers and stories from the community including staff, board members, partners, clients and donors who are working to end homelessness in Marin County.

“The idea is to create a greater understanding of the challenges people experiencing homelessness endure, and to call for an end to homelessness in Marin County. We recognize that choosing to sleep in an area other than your bed is not going to remotely recreate what it is like to sleep on the streets. But it can allow for a pause in our busy lives to reflect on the fact that it has become normalized in our society to walk by a human living on the streets and continue on with our day. Normalizing people experiencing homelessness is not acceptable and we shouldn’t tolerate this condition for our fellow human beings,” said Mark Shotwell, Ritter Center Executive Director.

“Under the Stars: A Sleepout to End Homelessness in Marin” is an event designed to ask the public to give up their warm beds for just one night this summer to help raise \$150,000 for Ritter Center’s housing support and healthcare services that prevent and resolve homelessness.

Participants can register as individuals or form teams with friends and family. Once registered, participants get access to their own fundraising page with tips and templates to help them gather support from their networks, spread the word, and manage their fundraising journey.

There are awards for highest fundraising individuals and teams, a virtual goody bag from local retailers for registered participants, and a silent auction. Registration is \$25 per person for adults and youth ages 13 and up and FREE for kids 12 and under. The first 100 paid registered participants receive a FREE event t-shirt from Ritter Center’s new merchandise store.

Sponsors include Equator Coffee, Book Passage, Praytell, Elsa L, Redwood Credit Union, Marin Living magazine, Marin IJ, Wipfli, SFGate, Alice Radio, Jessica Hansen Consulting, iconoclast Custom Surfboards, Kathleen Lipinski, Gary T. Ragghianti, Colette's Skincare, IJ Financial, Spirit Airlines, United Markets, Nugget Markets, Good Earth Natural Foods, Bank of Marin, Marin Sanitary, Sports Basement, Heritage Bank of Commerce, Filice Insurance, Book Passage and Camelbak.

## Ritter Center

Learn more and register at: [sleepout.rittercenter.org](https://sleepout.rittercenter.org)

Ritter Center's mission is to prevent and resolve homelessness and improve the health and well-being of people living in poverty in Marin by providing culturally sensitive, easily accessible, high-quality medical care and social services.

People in need can visit our Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and receive high-quality medical and mental health care regardless of their ability to pay. Ritter Center's highly trained team combines national clinical best practices with a whole-person care approach to solving each person's health, food, and housing needs. With over 40 years of experience, we have built industry-leading knowledge and collaborative partnerships with county agencies, health partners, and like-minded organizations to help people overcome barriers to aid and create complete support solutions that sustainably improve people's lives.