

RESOLVE

Real People. Real Impact.



"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive." —Dalai Lama

We are often the first entry point for people dealing with a housing crisis, hunger, or need for healthcare. We know that compassionate support enables an individual to recover and move forward with dignity.

This note we received in our food pantry is a perfect example. These powerful words come directly from one of our clients, a young woman living in her car while holding down a job:

"Just a quick note to say thanks and to be sure you know that I wasn't bragging yesterday... Ritter Center is helping me to stay clean/groomed so [I can] achieve job success and

self-sufficiency that, I do hope, will help with my getting out of living in my car."

As always, we couldn't do it without you. In this issue of Resolve, I invite you to read about our Under The Stars fundraising event and inspiring stories from Board Member, Margaret Trezevant whose dedication is taking Ritter Center to its next chapter, and Reverend Dr. Jane Adams Spahr who has devoted her life to fighting for LGBTQ+ rights. Please enjoy.



Mark Shotwell
Chief Executive Officer



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Shining the Spotlight on Rev. Dr. Jane Spahr, a Pioneer of LGBTQ+ Rights



The Reverend Dr. Jane Adams Spahr—or “Janie” as she prefers to be called—describes herself as a lesbian, feminist Presbyterian minister committed to justice issues for the LGBTQ+ community, pursuing connections for wholeness with other oppressed communities claiming their freedom. Her amazing life story is one worth telling, as she has contributed so greatly to the human rights movement.

Janie’s connection to Ritter Center goes back decades to when she was working at a nursing home and sending us extra deliveries. Today that partnership has grown by leaps and bounds. One shining example is a multi-year collaborative grant awarded by Marin Health & Human Services to Ritter Center, Community Action Marin, and The Spahr Center to provide expanded street medicine services, including medical care, harm reduction tools, and overdose prevention.

We interviewed Janie for Pride Month. The following is an excerpt:

Ritter Center: Tell me about some key moments in your own story of coming out and also being out throughout the course of your lifetime.

Janie: Being gay saved my life. It made me much more conscious of asking different questions. By this, I mean, I am constantly asking Who is at the table? Equally important, if not more important, Who isn’t allowed to be at the table?

RC: You were a major part of the healing community when HIV hit. How did this affect you?

Janie: When you sit with young people as they pass to the other side, your soul is etched forever from the experience. I remember sitting and praying with my friend Gary who was dying. He always thought about others first. When we were done praying for him, he put his finger to his lips and said ‘Now it’s my turn to pray for you.’ In that most humble, vulnerable moment of his own death, he’s praying for me while he’s dying. That is the ultimate act of selflessness. It was beyond moving.

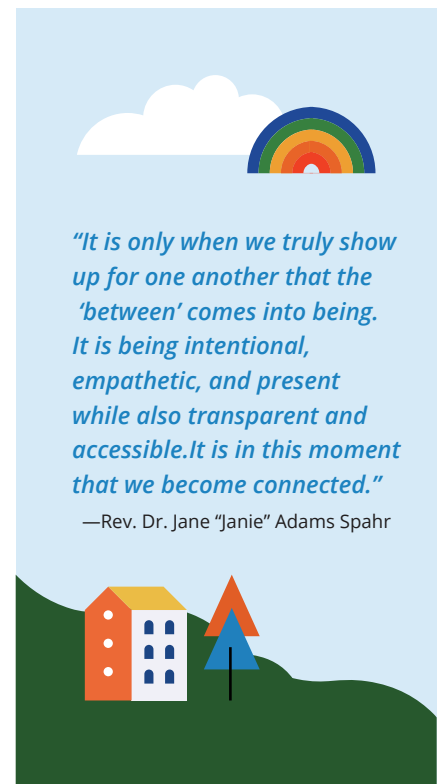
RC: You are someone who has a uniquely powerful way of interacting with other human beings. Can you speak to your approach to life, love, compassion, and kindness?

Janie: We love people and help them become who they are and we do it again and again. It doesn’t work every time. Sometimes it takes multiple attempts. People can self-sabotage and we have to keep working at it together.

RC: How do you maintain hope in what can feel like a very dark time?

Janie: There is a tremendous amount of racism, sexism, and heterosexism continually bearing down on us. These are domination systems that systematize and institutionalize making another ‘the other.’ We must continue to ask about how we treat each other!

Thank you, Janie, for the light you continue to bring to this world!



 [Read Rev. Dr. Spahr's Story](#)





ritter center

• UNDER THE STARS



3rd Annual Under the Stars Raises Over \$110,000

On Saturday, May 20, we hosted our **Under the Stars** BBQ and annual Sleepout, raising more than \$110,000 for our programs that help prevent and resolve homelessness!

Over 130 guests attended our first in-person fundraiser since 2017, enjoying a beautiful evening of food, lawn games, and fundraising on the Maple Lawn at the San Rafael Elks Club Lodge.

Invisible People CEO **Mark Horvath**, Marin County Director of Homeless Services and Whole Person Care **Gary Naja-Riese**, and Senator Mark McGuire's Marin County Representative **Summer Cassel** joined our CEO, Mark Shotwell, in sharing their insights, experience, and vision for ending homelessness. We were also pleased to host Councilmembers **Rachel Kertz** and **Eli Hill**, as well as MHHS Director **Benita McLarin**.



We send grateful shoutouts to Elks member **Brigette Waterbury** for hosting us, auctioneer **Sean Braniff** for an energetic Fund-a-Need, and Chef **Jim Modesitt** for the delicious BBQ and surprise auction item—a donated private BBQ lesson for six with a private dinner! A huge thanks to our dedicated volunteers and all who celebrated with us and gave generously.

Later that evening, those participating in our **3rd Annual Under the Stars Sleepout**, left the comfort of their warm beds and slept in their yards, gardens, and cars, and on living room floors, helping us raise awareness and funds.

Congratulations to Ritter Center's **Norma Brewer and the Accounting Team** who won the team fundraising prize and **Tim Biddle** for his individual fundraising success!



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Humanity, Dignity and Respect are What We Strive For



In the words of Ritter Center Board Member Margaret Trezevant:

I spent my career working in programs that supported the homeless community, primarily in San Francisco.

When we moved to San Rafael, I wanted to keep my connection to the city and to this very important work, and joined the board of Ritter Center. I quickly saw what a well-run program Ritter Center had with best practices and state of the art ideas.

What started 40+ years ago as a mostly volunteer effort to provide food and clothing to the homeless is now a Federally Qualified Health Center. What was once 'Ritter House' is now a program providing multidisciplinary care for medical, behavioral health, drug treatment, case management, outreach and housing, that can no longer be contained in the little yellow Victorian home on Ritter Street.

 [Read Margaret's Story](#)



"This new space will provide an even greater sense of dignity and respect for Ritter Center clients. There will be no more waiting outside in the rain and wind."

—Margaret Trezevant

Share the Care: Healthy Women = Healthy Communities



On Wednesday, October 18, Ritter Center is hosting **Women's Health Day** at the 16 Ritter Street campus in San Rafael. Women seeking healthcare and wellness opportunities will have access to free mammograms, behavioral health experts, self-care services such as mini-massages, yoga, and hair care, and personal grooming items. There will be free drinks, food, and lots of fun!

"Before COVID, Ritter Center held dedicated Women's Health events like this to provide our clients and neighbors in need with ways to learn about and experience our healthcare services, while enjoying some coffee and treats in a supportive community," says **Sehrish Khan, Director of Clinical Compliance**. "We are excited to bring this day back and 'share the care!'"

This event is FREE and aimed at women who are low income and/or unsheltered who are uninsured or have Medi-cal and/or Medicare.

Appointments need to be reserved in advance for mammograms. Special thanks to Marin Community Foundation for their support of this event.

Can you help?

Are you passionate about helping women in our community? Consider providing products or services at the event, free-of-charge! Ideas: mini-mani/pedis, chair-massages, yoga, professional and casual clothing, and grooming and hygiene products. **Contact Chief Development Officer Jessica Hansen at jhansen@rittercenter.org or (415) 730-4268** to get involved.