



REAL
PEOPLE.
REAL
IMPACT.



From Our CEO, Mark Shotwell

Dear Friends,

At Ritter Center, we believe that everyone deserves dignity, compassion, and access to care—no matter their circumstances. For more than 40 years, we've been a trusted lifeline in Marin County, providing essential healthcare and supportive services to those experiencing poverty, housing instability, and homelessness.

These are challenging and uncertain times for so many. But through it all, Ritter Center remains a place of hope and stability—meeting people where they are and walking alongside them as they move toward better health and greater self-sufficiency.

Our commitment to ending homelessness in Marin is central to our mission. Since 2017, Ritter Center and Marin County partners have helped more than 850 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness access and remain in stable housing. This work is not only about ensuring that all our neighbors have a place to call home—it's about restoring dignity, rebuilding lives, and strengthening the fabric of our community.

Our Client Choice Food Pantry is often the first step. It provides more than groceries—it offers autonomy, respect, and a critical connection point to a broader network of care. From primary and behavioral healthcare to housing support and case management, every service we provide is rooted in compassion and designed to preserve dignity.

If not for Ritter Center, many of our neighbors would face the impossible choice between caring for their health and feeding their families. Instead, they find compassion, connection, and the support they need to thrive.

We never turn anyone away. Every person who walks through our doors is met with kindness, without judgment, and with a commitment to meet their most urgent needs.

Thank you for partnering with us. Your support makes all of this possible—and brings hope to those who need it most.



Mark Shotwell
CEO, Ritter Center



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Bringing Care to the Community: Ritter's Mobile Behavioral Health Van Expands Impact with Anthem's Support

Thanks to a **transformative four-year, \$750,000 grant** from Anthem Blue Cross Foundation, Ritter Center's mobile behavioral health van is changing lives across Marin County—bringing vital services directly to individuals experiencing homelessness, substance use disorders (SUD), and mental health challenges.

Since launching, the van has expanded its outreach to five days a week and now delivers a full range of services including telehealth, harm reduction supplies (fentanyl test strips and Narcan), care coordination, and rapid HIV, HCV, and STI testing on the go. In the past quarter alone, 57 new individuals received coordinated care. The van has also fueled a notable rise in enrollment for both traditional SUD treatment and Ritter's contingency management program.

But the van's impact extends beyond immediate care. **By helping individuals manage their behavioral health needs, Ritter is addressing one of the most significant barriers to housing stability. Our Behavioral Health Care Coordinator supports clients with complex needs—connecting them to emergency rooms, community partners, and long-term care that lays the foundation for maintaining stable housing.**

"Our most vulnerable clients often carry deep distrust of institutions due to past trauma and systemic barriers," said Dr. Rory Rieger, Ritter Center's Clinical Director. "Anthem's support has been critical in getting help where it's needed most—on the street, in encampments, at the margins. This van is not only delivering care—it's building trust, fostering relationships, and paving the way to stability."

One recent client with severe anxiety needed help scheduling a mammogram. After weeks of stress, her appointment was canceled at the last minute. With consistent support, she made it to a rescheduled appointment—and received a clean bill of health. "This is trauma-informed care in action," said her coordinator. "It's walking with someone, at their pace, until they're ready."

With Anthem's support, Ritter's mobile van is delivering more than healthcare—it's creating a bridge to hope, health, and housing.



Thanks to You, Our Back-to-School Celebration Was a Huge Success

On August 7, something truly special happened—and it's all because of you. Your generous support helped transform our Back-to-School Giveaway into a joyful, hope-filled day for over 200 children in our community.

The courtyard was filled with laughter as kids picked out colorful backpacks and the supplies they need to start strong. Every lunchbox, folder, and pencil reflected your generosity. For many, it was their very first time selecting brand-new school supplies, and the excitement was written all over their faces as they proudly slung backpacks over their shoulders, already imagining the first day of school.

Thanks to you, they're stepping into the classroom with confidence, pride, and a sense of belonging.

We're deeply grateful to our generous sponsors—Book Exchange of Marin, Marin Community Foundation, Nugget Markets, and Pasha Group—for making this day possible. Your compassion makes all the difference. Thank you for helping children feel seen, supported, and ready to succeed.



Behind the Pantry Doors: Heart, Dignity, and New Leadership at Ritter Center

At Ritter Center, our mission to serve people experiencing homelessness and economic insecurity is rooted in dignity and choice. That mission comes to life in our Client Choice Food Pantry, where compassion and innovation work hand in hand.

The pantry is more than a place to get food—it's often the first point of entry for clients, where they discover the full range of Ritter Center's wraparound services, including primary and behavioral healthcare, case management, housing support, and more.

Since joining as Pantry & Facilities Manager, Matt Kizer, along with Stephanie Nunez as Assistant Pantry Manager, has helped transform the pantry into a more efficient, welcoming, and empowering space.

"We wanted to create a space that felt like more than a food line," says Matt, pictured here with Stephanie, board member Rudy Collins, and Rebecca Poon, representative from Heritage Bank.

Now serving over 500 individuals and families each week, our pantry offers fresh produce, shelf-stable goods, and culturally preferred items—selected by clients themselves. This model restores agency and dignity.

Stephanie's behind-the-scenes leadership keeps everything running smoothly. "She's a quiet powerhouse," says colleague, Noelle Colome.

Matt and Stephanie have redesigned the layout to improve privacy and flow, allowing us to serve more people with care and respect.

Matt and Stephanie have been fortunate to build on the strong community partnerships already established by Ritter Center. One standout example is 'The Lunch Makers'—a heartwarming initiative started by 12-year-old Landon that has grown to include schools across Marin County, including Bel Aire Elementary in Tiburon, which now prepares lunches monthly. It's a beautiful display of local compassion in action.

Behind every bag of food is a story—and behind the scenes, Matt and Stephanie are fostering trust, connection, and lasting change.

Under the Stars: More Than Just an Event — A Celebration of Hope and Community

On May 14, nearly 200 passionate community members came together at The Clubhouse at Peacock Gap in San Rafael for Ritter Center's 4th annual Under the Stars—an unforgettable evening of compassion, connection, and a shared commitment to the 1,000+ neighbors in Marin who are experiencing homelessness and poverty.

One of the evening's most powerful moments came from our Shining Star Honoree, Rhea Suh, President and CEO of the Marin Community Foundation. Her keynote reminded us:

"The bonds we create are the bonds we require. Ritter does the hardest of the hard work and does so with compassion, generosity, and without judgment."

We also recognized the San Domenico Upper School Interact Club (Rotary Club of Ross Valley) for their outstanding service and leadership, as well as Jalyne Allen, a Ritter Center client and advocate, whose courage continues to light the way for others.

Thanks to your generosity, Under the Stars raised over \$200,000—surpassing our \$30,000 match challenge—and directly supporting healthcare, housing, and hunger relief programs.

But beyond the dollars, the evening was a collective call to action:

- *If not for Ritter, how many more people would suffer—often in isolation?*
- *If not for Ritter, how many would go hungry, day after day?*
- *If not for Ritter, who would see those who are so often overlooked?*
- *If not for Ritter, would fear speak louder than compassion?*

Because of you, compassion wins. Thank you for standing with us. Together, we're building a Marin where everyone is seen, fed, cared for—and never forgotten.



Lend a Hand Where It Matters Most



Want to make a meaningful difference right here in Marin? Join Ritter Center as a volunteer and help nourish your community—starting with our Food Pantry. Whether you're stocking shelves, organizing fresh produce, or helping neighbors choose groceries with dignity, your time directly supports families facing food insecurity.

Food Pantry volunteers are the heart of our hunger relief work, and the impact is immediate. Your time and energy help ensure that no one in our community has to face hunger alone.

Additional seasonal opportunities—like preparing Thanksgiving Baskets or helping with our annual holiday dinner—are also on the horizon.

Giving your time uplifts others, and you just might find it uplifts you too.

Contact Matt Kizer at mkizer@rittercenter.org to learn more.

Explore current opportunities and sign up on our volunteer portal:

