

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2022



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WHY DONOR DOLLARS ARE IMPORTANT

BY: TONI EBY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Recently, I have been meeting with donors to discuss SafeHouse plans for expansions and the need for additional housing options for the women we serve. One question that comes up often is around how the money is spent. Since this is a frequently asked questions, I thought it would be a good idea to explain why donors like you are so important, and how you all are the glue that holds non-profits like SafeHouse together.



SafeHouse does not only depend on its donors and is funded in a variety of different ways, we receive government grants, foundational support, and individual or group private donations. The first two types of funding are what we call restricted funding, in that they are for a very specific purpose and allocation of those funds are preapproved. For example, if we receive a foundation grant for rental subsidies for our women we can only spend that money on rental subsidies, or if we receive government funds for supportive services we can only spend that money on direct service salaries and supportive services activities.

When we say that individual donor support is vital and the glue that holds our programs together, we mean that we literally could not continue to operate without that support. Donor funds are generally unrestricted, which gives SafeHouse the flexibility to spend those funds in areas that are most needed during the budget cycle. It may be to launch a new service, such as when we launched the rapid rehousing program, or it may supplement direct support of clients such as covering food, clinical retreats,



"Individual donor support is vital and the glue that holds our programs together"



or therapy. Sometimes those needs are not so glamorous but are vital for SafeHouse to continue, such as partial coverage of the Finance Coordinator salary, who ensures that we are keeping accurate books, or covering the utilities at the transitional residence. We thank you for your continued support, as these donations allow us to make real time decisions to ensure that we can best meet the needs of our women. If you would like an individual meeting with me or our team, please feel free to reach out at info@sfsafehouse.org.



The Road to Permanent Supportive Housing

By Carly Savage, Residential Case Manager

Allow me to introduce myself, I am Carly Savage, Case Manager at San Francisco SafeHouse's transitional residence. I am a Bay Area native and currently in the progress of obtaining my B.A. degree in Ethnic Studies, concentration in Genders and Sexualities in Communities of Color through Cal State East Bay. I joined SafeHouse in the Fall of 2020.

The road to permanent supportive housing is the ultimate goal for the residents of the SafeHouse transitional residence; and although rewarding can come with its challenges. The program is designed to support residents in establishing foundations in areas such as: education, employment, financial counseling, legal referrals, mental health, and physical health with an emphasis on harm reduction. The Case Managers (Sandra Sanchez and I) support the residents with creating individualized treatment plans as a guide to living independently in permanent housing.

2020 was a turning point for many with the onset of a global pandemic that would change life as we once knew it; however, it would not stop for the womxn in our program who were unhoused. Global shutdowns, a decrease in the workforce, agencies operating remotely, and unemployment are some of the challenges that our residents not only faced but overcame.

Additionally, due to the income gap in San Francisco and inflation, resident affordability is a major issue. The average one bedroom in San Francisco is approximately \$2,300 per month with minimum wage expected to increase to \$16.99 on July 1, 2022. For residents who receive government income assistance or working full-time at minimum wage, they cannot afford or would be expected to spend the majority of their income on rent alone. This makes our supportive services even more essential to the women we serve.

Despite this, the residents secure jobs, establish and/or repair their credit, open bank accounts, create savings plans, obtain their GED, attend vocational programs, earn certificates, attend San Francisco City college, and volunteer within the community. With the foundation set and in motion and despite challenges, the Case Managers support the residents with accessing permanent supportive housing through government funded agencies such as: Dahlia, CAAP Housing, the Emergency Housing Voucher program or housing websites including Craigslist and RentSFNow.

"We have established excellent relationships with housing providers"

Still, finding affordable housing in the Bay Area and working with landlords can be difficult for anybody let alone anyone facing the barriers our clients face. As Case Managers, we will accompany the client to examine the available unit and speak to the landlords with them. We help our clients successfully negotiate accommodations that work well for them and the landlords. For example, SafeHouse provides move-in cost, first and last month's rent, security deposit, and rental subsidies for the first six months. Additionally, while in the program, residents pay 30% of their income as a live-in fee. That money goes into a savings account that they receive in full upon graduation, which helps demonstrate to their new landlord that they can afford the unit. We have established excellent relationships with housing providers like RenSFNow who are

"Supporting survivors is a revolutionary act of womxns empowerment"

also willing to be generous in their flexibility when working with our clientele.

Once a SafeHouse transitional house resident graduates she has the opportunity to participate in Aftercare where the case managers continue to provide an individualized care plan of support in areas such as housing maintenance and resource management. This gives the graduates a chance to learn how to not only transition into permanent supportive housing, but how to maintain it long term.

Supporting survivors on the road to permanent supportive housing comes with its rewards; it's a revolutionary act of womxns empowerment.





Making Client Success the Rule Not the Exception

By Jerahmeel Lee, Hope Center Case Manager

My name is Jerahmeel, I am a Case Manager at the Hope Center. We work with survivors of sex-trafficking and domestic violence to help them get a second chance at life. Our organization supports female and non-binary identified clients to access services ranging from harm reduction supplies to participation in housing programs like the Rapid Rehousing grant or our transitional living house. When I first started working at Hope Center I met Betty (name changed) a 56-year-old African-American female with roots in the Fillmore.

Betty lived in a tent next to the Hope Center with a community of other older African-Americans of mixed genders. Members of this encampment looked after each other in the best of times. This manifested in members pooling together supplies such as clean syringes, Narcan, and being present to reverse possible overdoses. Every morning before work I would stop by to drink my morning coffee and speak with Betty and her crew.

Over time I learned that Betty had a son that did not live with her that was about to graduate high school. Betty still supported her son to the best of her ability, she was always hustling to get new shoes, clothes and other things her son would need. I also learned that Betty was a widow. Before, when her husband was alive, she worked as a social worker herself. After her husband passed however, she lost everything and ended up on the streets. Since she was a daily substance user, and always working on her various hustles to survive, Betty was often passed over for housing opportunities by prejudiced providers that assumed she was not worth the investment of time needed to see the client through her dark times.

"We work with survivors of domestic violence and sex-trafficking to help them have a second chance"

During COVID she had secured a SIP hotel, but she struggled in this situation due to curfews, visiting limitations on her son and partner, and the fact that she had to be at the hotel EVERY night. Which was difficult for a grown woman of 56 years of age to accept. On top of these issues, the staff at the hotel had thrown out Betty's husband's ashes, which were one of the few things in this world Betty had to remember him by. This of course generated friction between the client and the SIP staff, which led to the client being discharged to the streets.

It was during this time that myself and former case manager Joanie Ayoade stepped in and started directly communicating with the hotel staff.



"The importance of collaboration and navigation with the client and other agencies"

Through our joint advocating we were able to get the client back into housing and on track to placement in permanent housing.

Because of us staying in contact with the SIP staff constantly to ensure they followed through, they eventually offered Betty permanent housing for her and her son. Betty currently lives in this housing and hopefully she will be for a while thanks to the EHV program allowing us to get some of our client's section 8 vouchers.

This experience demonstrates the importance of collaboration and navigation with the client and other agencies so that we may hold each other accountable when needed. The work we do is hard, but the lives of our clients tend to be harder. It is our job to work with and follow through with clients to achieve these sorts of results. It is my hope that stories like Betty's become the rule and not the exception.



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HOW TO GET INVOLVED?

- Make a donation on our website at <https://www.sfsafehouse.org>.
- Donate through our text to give number - 801801 SAFE
- Send a gift card for Home Depot, Amazon, Costco.
- Go to safehouse.org and click on WishList. You will find every thing from PJ's to cookware to toothbrushes.
- Have an item on the list or something else you wish to donate? Send us an email to info@sfsafehouse.org or kaylena@sfsafehouse.org.
- Organize a fundraiser for SafeHouse.

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