



Grace at Work

February 2022

CEO Corner: Housed!

Carol Roberts, PhD

Every time I learn that the incredible LSS program team has “housed” one of our most vulnerable community members, I feel a burst of pride and gratitude. While I know that LSS is in the business of housing, it warms me to know that we are guiding and supporting individuals and families who are living in shelters, tents, cars, parks—wherever they can—into a permanent housing solution. There is such joy when this happens, but there are also challenges.



Some of the people we serve have experienced homelessness for a long time. Others have been wounded by those who were supposed to care for them. Some of them have disabilities or health needs that have gone unaddressed. Some of them have given up many times. Even with all the struggles and challenges these individuals and families experience without having a home, guiding and supporting them into housing and helping them stay in that housing takes effort, dedication and love. Absolute love.

Over the past few weeks, LSS staff in several areas have been participating in the bi-annual PIT (point in time) count of people experiencing homelessness. By doing this, we meet those without housing where they are. These are our perspective participants. These are our neighbors who we are devoted to housing.



When we house them, there is joy. We see it on their faces and in their bodies when they unlock the doors of their new apartments and walk in. We see it when they look around the warm, safe home of their own. In this story, we are sharing pictures of individuals LSS has recently housed. We are honored to do this. We do not house people on our own. We do this in collaboration with our partners—you. Thank you for being such an integral part of LSS of Northern California.

Thank you for joining us to **end homelessness...for good.**



DONATE: www.lssnorcal.org

LSS Announces New Board Officers

Lutheran Social Services of Northern California is pleased to announce this year's officers, elected by the Board of Directors:

This trio of amazing individuals bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and energy to their offices, and we look forward to a fantastic year!



Regina Q. Banks, Chair



Yolanda Gan, Treasurer



**Sandra Hamilton Slane,
Vice-Chair & Secretary**

To contact the Board of Directors of LSS, please email boardofdirectors@lssnorcal.org.



Holiday Gift Drive Serves 3,800!

LSS of Northern California's holiday gift drive 2021 was a tremendous success, and we couldn't have done it without the dedication and generosity of individuals, churches and companies who wanted to make the holiday season brighter for the vulnerable people we serve. With your help 3,800+ people that we serve received a gift for the holiday, and for many this was an unexpected and welcome surprise. Many of them had not received a gift in years, and for others, this was their first gift!

To see pictures, go to:

www.lssnorcal.org

San Francisco Money Management Welcomes Seniors

BeBe moved to San Francisco, because of hardship and dangers she faced in Oakland as a transwoman. While she felt safer in San Francisco, remaining in housing was a challenge because of her sexual orientation and her gender identity. For several years she had no steady home. She eventually moved into a Navigation Center, which provided shelter, meals, and essential services to long-term unsheltered individuals. Several years ago, BeBe moved into an apartment building for LGBTQ+ seniors.



"But I had trouble paying my rent," she shares. "When I would get my social security checks, I would just spend them." Like many others in her situation, she lived a cash-based life, and this made her susceptible to a criminal element.

“I was robbed more than once,” she explained. “And because I liked to spend money, people took advantage of me.”

A case manager in her senior residence brought her to LSS, so she could get assistance and guidance in paying her rent and managing her money. She was immediately connected to Senior Caseworker Sylvia Marquez and the new LSS Money Management Program for Seniors.

In late 2021, in partnership with Lutheran Care for the Aging, LSS launched LSS Money Management for Seniors, specifically to provide LSS’s successful financial management programming to those from age 67 on up. For seniors on a fixed income who have experienced homelessness or are at high risk of becoming homeless, this program helps them budget and pay their bills. The priority is to pay their rent, so they can remain in their housing. The overall role of the program is to increase the likelihood that the seniors we serve, most of whom have histories of chronic homelessness, remain housed.

The most recent Point in Time (PIT) count of people experiencing homelessness (taken in 2019) revealed that on a single day in January there were 8,035 people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, 10% of whom were 65 and older. As the Baby Boomers age and lifespans increase, the overall population of seniors 65 and older is predicted to continue to increase at a rapid rate. In 2018, seniors comprised 14.6% of the population of San Francisco. In 2020, that percentage has risen to 16%. Add this information to the quickly rising costs to live in San Francisco (and the entire Bay Area) with many seniors on a fixed income, as well as the overall lack of housing, let alone affordable housing, and the future appears ominous.

After only a few months in Money Management for Seniors, BeBe is becoming a more self-sufficient person. “Sylvia and I created a budget. My rent and bills get paid, and then I have my own spending money,” she says. “I am learning how to be responsible. It’s a big change, but I am doing it.

“This program saved my life!”

Money Management for Seniors is currently accepting applications for participants. To qualify, a person must be 67 years or older; a resident of San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo, Alameda or Contra Costa counties; and have a referral from a Social Service Agency, Church Congregation or Community Point Person. For more information, contact Program Managers Mike Brezinzski (MBrezinski@lssnorcal.org) or Gabriela Avalos (GAvalos@lssnorcal.org).

To other seniors in the community, BeBe says, “You better hurry up and get there.”

FoodMaxx is supporting LSS!



FoodMaxx has selected LSS of Northern California as a partner in the new Give Back Bag Program!

From February 15 through March 31, LSS will receive a \$1 donation from each purchase of the \$2.99 **reusable** Give Back Bag at 3860 Florin Road FoodMaxx in Sacramento CA.

FoodMaxx
3860 Florin Road
Sacramento, CA

Buy a Bag, Make a Difference
February 15 – March 31, 2022



Our Mission

To promote stability and honor the dignity of those we serve by providing supportive housing services that lead to self-sufficiency.

DONATE: www.lssnorcal.org

