Success! North County Winter Shelter Now Operating

Thank you to everyone who contacted your elected officials and let them know that it is unacceptable that hundreds of people are sleeping out in the cold this winter. The County and Cities have contributed enough additional funding for the Homeless Services Center to open and operate the emergency winter shelter for 100 individuals every night from November 16th until early April. If our rainy season continues past April, the jurisdictions will reassess whether additional funds are needed.

Like you, Smart Solutions recognizes that 100 beds are not enough to keep every person living on the streets healthy and safe this winter, but it is an essential life-saving service and we thank YOU for supporting it.

For more information about how you can help our most vulnerable neighbors this winter, check out any of these important programs:
- The Warming Center
- Pajaro Rescue Mission
- Homeless Services Center- Volunteers are needed to help
Did you know? Homelessness has decreased 44% since 2013. Learn more!

The 2015 Community Assessment Project is now available for free online or purchase a hardcopy at the United Way of Santa Cruz County!

Thankful for So Many Ways to Give This Holiday Season

“If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

– Lila Watson

If you have received this newsletter and are reading this, then there is a good chance you are someone who already gives a lot of your time, energy, and resources helping make our community a better place to live. You may not need us to encourage you to donate, volunteer and advocate this holiday season. But just in case you could use a reminder, here are a few reasons why giving all year long makes a difference:

- **36%** of Santa Cruz County households live below self-sufficiency standards
- **25%** of residents sometimes or often run out of food for their families

Also, did you know that:

- Non-profits need you to help them help others
- Faith-sourced programs run almost entirely on unpaid volunteers
- You cannot put a price on neighbors helping neighbors

Check out the Volunteer Center’s Holiday Volunteering Guide for a list of volunteer opportunities!

Ally Spotlight: River Street Shelter
Our VISION is a Santa Cruz County in which every community member has some form of safe shelter, and where homelessness is a rare occurrence.

Our MISSION is to build the community will to reduce and ultimately end homelessness in Santa Cruz County through education and collaborative action.

After a solutions-oriented presentation on homelessness by Smart Solutions to Homelessness Leadership Council members Don Lane and Monica Martinez last Thursday, United Way's Emerging Leaders Circle toured the River Street Shelter.

The River Street Shelter is operated by Encompass Community Services and provides beds, meals, and showers for adults experiencing homelessness. The shelter is November's Ally Spotlight because this year they have secured permanent housing for 22 participants! This emergency shelter provides the necessary case management and supportive services to end homelessness for the people that find refuge from the streets under its roof.

Thank you to all the hard working staff at the shelter who provide a safe, welcoming space day after day!

Take a look at the photos of the Emerging Leaders Circle tour, which also included the Homeless Services Center.