

Housing Matters

2021 FISCAL YEAR Annual Report

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Progress Together

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that our collective health depends on each other.

The same is true when it comes to addressing homelessness in our community. It takes all of us, working together, to help those experiencing homelessness find pathways to permanent housing.

Last year, our community doubled shelter capacity to house our most vulnerable neighbors as the pandemic continued to spread. The key to making this happen? Working collaboratively with local agencies and partner organizations. Housing Matters was honored to bring our 35+ years of experience in addressing homelessness to join these important efforts.

In addition to providing training, support, insights, and best practices, we worked as part of the Housing for Health Navigation Team to develop and implement Housing Now—a new program for moving people beyond the temporary shelter provided through state programs like Project Roomkey and into more permanent housing. **See *Collaboration Leads to Housing Now,* pg. 4.**

We also started construction on our 801 River Street renovation, converting a historic Victorian house into seven affordable, low-income apartments. Equally exciting, we're deep into the design phase on our Harvey West Studios project, which will bring 120 new studio apartments—and the largest permanent supportive housing building of its kind—to Santa Cruz County. **See back cover, *Breaking New Ground*.**

We witnessed our community pull together in the wake of the CZU fires to help those displaced start to rebuild their homes, and their lives. Out of this amazing effort grew our Pathways Home Toolkit—a free community resource available to anyone with the desire to help someone who is experiencing homelessness, or on the verge of experiencing homelessness.
See *From Ashes to Inspiration: Introducing the Pathways Home Toolkit*, pg. 10.

In 2020 – 2021, we launched a webinar series to give anyone in the community a window into what we do here at Housing Matters—and a forum for discussing the issues surrounding homelessness. In all, more than 400 people logged on and joined the conversation.



What we learned has become invaluable in helping us shape our programs and services, and helping our community as a whole better understand and engage in creating solutions to homelessness. Because one organization can't do it all. It's when we work together that the magic happens.

Phil Kramer
Phil Kramer
Chief Executive Officer

Your Impact: Who We Served

Look what you made possible with your generous gifts in the fiscal year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021!

262 **Adults and Children** permanently housed

2,478 **Total People** served

52,106 **Bednights** 1 person for 1 night in 1 bed

10,174 **Showers** at day services

10,293 **Restroom Visits** at day services

1,345 **Mailroom Users**

Thank you!

Mission

Housing Matters partners with individuals and families to create pathways out of homelessness and into permanent housing.

Vision

We hold firmly to the vision that homelessness in Santa Cruz County should be rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Community Collaboration
Leads to Housing Now



In the spring of 2020, as COVID continued to spread throughout Santa Cruz County, the need for additional shelter options that would allow those experiencing homelessness to safely social distance and shelter in place became abundantly clear.

"We had expanded our Loft capacity through the addition of 40 pallet shelters when COVID began, but we soon discovered that wasn't enough," recalled Tom Stagg, Chief Initiatives Officer. "We needed to step up alongside other leading organizations and local governments to find solutions to protect our most vulnerable neighbors, and fast."

Point-in-Time Census and Survey data revealed that roughly 2,167 people were experiencing homelessness in 2019. To meet the urgent need to help everyone safely shelter in place, County officials approached Housing Matters to assist in creating new shelter options. Tom worked closely with County and local government officials, sharing insight and best practices and helping to train staff and guide operations. The collaboration quickly resulted in two new congregate shelters opening up: one in Watsonville, and one at the Vets Hall in Santa Cruz.

At the same time, California implemented Project Roomkey and more than 300 people began moving off the streets and into shelters at local hotels and motels in the County.

"One of the most hopeful and positive things I noticed throughout this time was that a lot of the red tape and processes that slow things down really fell aside. We all came together and found a way to make it work as a community," recounted Tom. "But we knew the funding was not going to last forever."

Those placed into shelter through Project Roomkey, a federally funded initiative for homeless relief, would need long-term housing options to support them beyond the program's end-date.

Participants in Project Roomkey included grandparents and elderly, people suffering from disabilities, and those recovering from illnesses. To ensure that these people would continue to be housed even after Project Roomkey ended, we launched our newest program—Housing Now. The program grew out of the County's "Rehousing Wave," a partnership to connect those

> "*One of the most hopeful* and positive things I noticed... was that a lot of the red tape and processes that slow things down really fell aside."
>
> — **Tom Stagg**, Chief Initiatives Officer

sheltered through Project Roomkey with supportive services, and assist them on pathways to permanent housing.

"The main goal of the program is to make sure that these folks who we know are incredibly vulnerable don't go back onto the streets," explained Pan Narez-Mendez, Housing Now Program Manager. In partnership with the County of Santa Cruz and Abode Services, Housing Matters' Housing Navigation Team began working with roughly one-third of the 300 people sheltered by Project Roomkey.

"We are searching for housing everywhere," said Pan Narez-Mendez. "From big property management companies to Craigslist and word-of-mouth. We are looking for every possible lead on housing in the community."



Although COVID-19 has thrown more hurdles our way than any of us could have imagined, we're proud of how we've been able to respond. With the generous support and commitment from donors, community partners, and the Housing Matters team, we've been able to come together and care for one another like never before.

Are you a landlord?

You can receive a **signing bonus of $2,000** when you rent to someone who is currently experiencing homelessness. Learn more about the benefits of accepting Housing Choice (commonly referred to as Section 8) vouchers by contacting the Housing Authority of Santa Cruz County at:

(831) 454-9455

"I was determined to find a place to call home and I felt deeply supported by the people I worked with at Housing Matters. Because of the stability housing gave me, I can finally start to dream again."

— **Jenny**, former guest at Rebele Family Shelter



Teamwork moves us forward

We want to recognize the following organizations for their tireless energy, compassion, and collaboration in rolling out Project Roomkey and the Rehousing Wave. Working together, we were able to respond quickly to meet the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors, and put many on the path to permanent housing through Housing Now. This was and continues to be a countywide team effort:

Abode Services
Cabrillo College
The Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville
The County of Santa Cruz
Encompass Community Services
The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz
The Salvation Army
Santa Cruz Veterans Memorial Building Board of Trustees

Thanks to our Service Provider Partners

To solve the issue of homelessness requires consensus, compassion, and dedication—qualities we see in abundance at the agencies we work with everyday at Housing Matters. These agencies, listed below, provide daily services that have become vital to realizing our shared vision—that homelessness in Santa Cruz County should be rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Homeless Action Partnership
La Alianza · The Alliance — Central California Alliance for Health
dientes Community Dental Care
Dominican Hospital Foundation. A Dignity Health Member
encompass Community Services
Families In Transition
Homeless Garden Project
The County of Santa Cruz
Hospice of Santa Cruz County — 30 years of compassionate care
VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Nation's Finest
Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter
Palo Alto Medical Foundation Sutter Health
Wings

SUCCESS STORY

A Long Road Home, and a Place to Heal

Just as this annual report was going to print, we were saddened to learn that KC recently passed away. We offer our deepest condolences to KC's family and friends, and we hope that everyone who knew him can take some comfort in the knowledge that KC had found a home before his life ended. We share his inspiring story here in his memory.

KC began working with a Housing Matters case manager through Housing Now and was placed in permanent housing in August 2021. What follows is his story.

"I was raised in a military family here in Santa Cruz. My father and I never got along growing up. He was really aggressive with me, especially when he was drinking. My mom did what she could, but she couldn't do much quite honestly.

I spent a lot of my upbringing in the Boy Scouts, which I loved. Things, unfortunately, took a turn around the age of 14, when my troop leader began molesting me. It happened repeatedly, and it really messed me up. I still wake up in a panic and have nightmares about it.

I left the house a few years later because of my relationship with my father, and ended up living on the streets. I am now 72 and have been on and off the streets since then. I lived in my car, worked at a local cannery, and did a lot of contract work. I liked getting my hands dirty.

Eventually I fell in love, got married, and started a family. I worked hard as a janitor for 20 years here in Santa Cruz. The job was hard on my body, but it gave me security. Then my marriage fell apart and I had to leave. I left my family with a lot of my belongings, and I ended up back out on the streets.

I set my tent up on State Park property in Santa Cruz. I was under a tree and it was quiet and safe for the most part, nobody was in there. The coyotes and deer would come around, and I could hear owls at night. It was peaceful but I was always so dirty and sick. I just couldn't take care of myself. I'm recovering from cancer, blind in my right eye, and I can barely hear. My teeth are so bad, I am really worried about infections. I was deeply suffering.

One day I was approached by the police. The pandemic had just begun and I was sick and stressed, worried I wasn't going to be able to stay safe as COVID spread through the town.

The cops ended up connecting me with a hotel room at Pacific Inn through Project Roomkey, and I moved into a room in August of 2020. I couldn't believe I was going to be off the streets. I was very grateful to the cops for getting me a room. It was a huge relief.

While staying in the hotel, I began working with a case manager from Housing Matters to find a place to live permanently. We searched for quite some time and eventually, I found a place and moved in. It made a world of difference. I was able to sleep in a warm bed and shower, use the toilet, and keep myself clean.



KC was connected to Housing Matters after being placed in a hotel room through Project Roomkey in August 2020.

I am so happy to have been connected with Housing Matters. I don't know where I'd be today if it wasn't for this program and my team of support. I wake up each morning and open my window and feel the fresh air. I ride my bike around and exercise and eat well.

Now that I have the security of a home, I feel very sad about my past. I am working to forgive those who hurt me and also forgive myself, but it isn't easy. I regret a lot. I lost everything, my marriage, my relationship with my kids. So I am working on coming to peace with that and working on my relationship with my kids, too. Now that I'm off the streets, I really do think I have a chance at finding some peace."

> "*I am so happy* to have been connected with Housing Matters. I don't know where I'd be today if it wasn't for this program and my team of support."

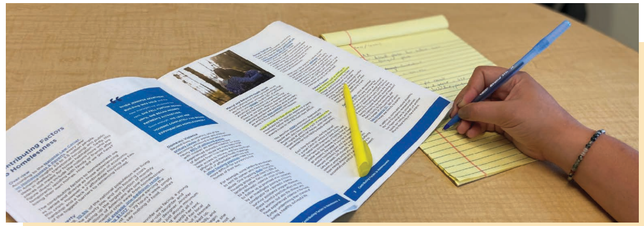
From Ashes to Inspiration:
Building the Pathways Home Toolkit



The CZU Lightning Complex fires began in August 2020, and that's when the phones at our front desk began to ring with questions from locals wanting to know how to help newly unhoused friends, family, and neighbors. The fires destroyed over 900 homes in our community. Hundreds of families were displaced from their homes in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and teams of volunteers organized to lend a helping hand.

"People began to realize that homelessness could happen to anybody," said Evyn Simpson, Associate Director of Programs at Housing Matters. "And, you know, they wanted to do something about it." When community members began looking for ways to help fire victims, our communications team was inspired to organize a workshop along with a toolkit to support volunteer efforts.

Evyn and the team hosted a workshop called "Case Management 101." This was a unique opportunity for Housing Matters' expert staff to support a community effort to help the newly unhoused. "We were also motivated to shine a light on the huge capacity of our community to help those experiencing homelessness, in general. No matter the circumstance or the causes of someone's homelessness, the basic strategy and tools we employ are generally the same," said Evyn. "That goes for CZU fire victims, a neighbor who loses a job and then loses his housing, a survivor of domestic violence, or someone struggling with a physical or emotional disability."



The Case Management 101 workshop held in September 2020 was well attended and provided basic training for volunteers to help meet the immediate needs of someone who had lost their home. The workshop focused on long-term goals, and also covered trauma-informed care, and the self-care needed to help someone navigate a crisis.

Housing Matters created the Pathways Home Toolkit to provide ongoing support for volunteers inspired to continue helping those who find themselves in the crisis of homelessness, for any reason, now or in the future. "All of the information we covered in the workshop, and then some, is available in the Pathways Home Toolkit," said Evyn. This free resource is now available on our website for anyone wanting to learn how to lend a hand.

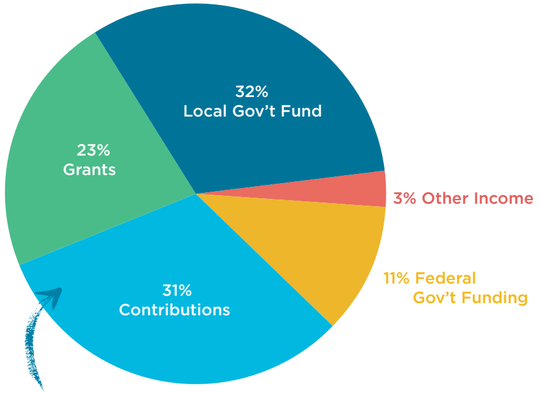
"The fires were heartbreaking, but these natural disasters often bring out the best in people," says Evyn. "Resources for people experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County are very limited. The way our community showed up for those displaced by the fires, all of the amazing volunteers who banded together to help, really was incredible."



> "*No matter the circumstances* or the causes of someone's homelessness, the basic strategy and tools we employ are generally the same."

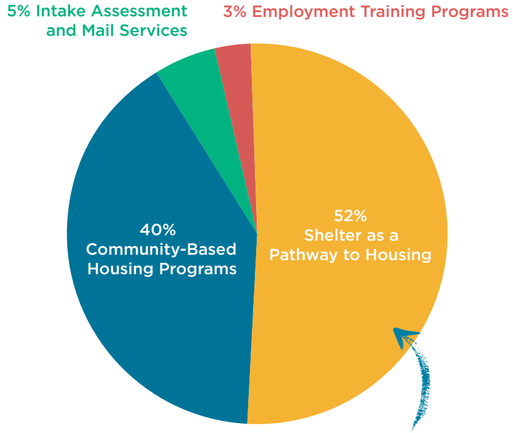
Financial Overview

DOLLARS IN



Nearly a third of our income comes from individual contributions, made by supporters right here in our own community.

DOLLARS OUT



A little more than half of our expenses support our shelter programs, which serve as the first step on the path to permanent housing.

Income	Contributions	$2,657,415
	Temp Restricted	3,345,000
	Grants	1,889,085
	Temp Restricted	2,000,000
	Local Gov't Funding	2,709,804
	Federal Gov't Funding	952,726
	Other Income	241,142
	Income Total	**$15,051,853**
Expense	Personnel and Contract Services	4,532,221
	Client Services	1,370,836
	Banking/Insurance/Filing Fees	48,203
	Facilities and Technology	1,161,479
	Other Expense	718,207
	Expense Total	**$7,830,948**
	Net Surplus	**$7,220,906**

	STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	
Assets	Cash and Investments	$8,904,848
	Accounts Receivable	1,203,079
	Other Current Assets	119,663
	Fixed Assets	5,896,025
	Other Assets	1,412,798
	Total Assets	**$17,536,413**
Liabilities	Current Liabilities	$3,246,856
	Long Term Liabilities	553,350
	Total Liabilities	**$3,800,206**
Net Assets	Without Donor Restrictions	$6,732,892
	With Donor Restrictions	7,003,315
	Total Net Assets	**$13,736,207**
	Total Liabilities and Net Assets	**$17,536,413**

Financial Highlights

Fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

A complete copy of the audited financial statements is available on request from Housing Matters.

We're grateful for your support

Your support in FY2020 – 2021 (July 2020 – June 2021) was invaluable. Together, we were able to help hundreds of individuals and families stay safe in the midst of a global pandemic, access critical programs and services, and reclaim the dignity and stability that comes with having a place to live. That safety and stability ripples out into the community, creating an environment where all of us can thrive.

Leading with Heart

It has been a year of coming together and finding common ground. At Housing Matters we've been heartened by our community's willingness to respond in meaningful, actionable ways to help those who are living unhoused.

Our work continues with state and local government agencies and highlights our leadership in advancing solutions to address homelessness in Santa Cruz County. California state senator John Laird, D-Santa Cruz, and Assemblymember Mark Stone, D-Scotts Valley, each (separately) toured the Housing Matters campus last June. Their visits came on the heels of state lawmakers' approval of a budget that included $14.5 million earmarked specifically for the City of Santa Cruz. As quoted in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, Senator John Laird said:

> "The fact that the percentage (of homelessness) in Santa Cruz is overwhelming to local agencies is the most relevant factor, so let's try to get something that breaks the cycle of services and help to address this [in] a way that you can have impact," Laird said [as] he argued with fellow lawmakers in urging the spending line item in the budget. "It's really about providing or finding permanent sites or permanent housing units... you can't truly enforce some of the local laws unless people have an option for housing..."

Assemblymember Mark Stone similarly validated Housing Matters' programs and approach:

> "Look no further than the Homeless Services Center (Housing Matters) and the work that they're doing and the potential expansions that they have," Stone said of potential investment areas. "They're doing a lot of the work, the on-the-ground, day-to-day that shows what can happen. By investing appropriately with the right programs and facilities with a longer-term view in mind, this money could be very well spent."*

As the stories in this annual report show, collaboration and teamwork have been the common threads linking all of our successes over this past fiscal year. Other common threads of sensitivity and awareness have helped us drive positive changes internally. In July of 2020, we created a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) committee to re-examine our policies in light of the Black Lives Matter movement. This staff-led committee arranged in-depth DEI training for all employees and board members that continues to guide us.

In that same spirit, Housing Matters opened its first ADA-accessible public shower (and one of the only ADA-accessible public showers in Santa Cruz) for the people we serve. And, we continue to partner with the County-run Homeless Persons Health Project, which operates an on-site vaccination clinic here on campus for protecting our community against the spread of COVID-19 variants. With all that we've accomplished, there is still much work to be done. I'm convinced that together, we can do incredible things.

Cecilia Espinola
Cecilia Espinola
Housing Matters Board President

*Source: "Budget includes $14.5M for Santa Cruz homelessness" by Jessica A. York, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 6/30/21

> "*As the stories in this annual report show,* collaboration and teamwork have been the common threads linking all of our successes over this past fiscal year."



— **Cecilia Espinola**, Board President

Ways to Give

1 Online
Visit housingmatterssc.org/donate to make a digital donation in any amount.

2 By Phone
Call our development team at (831) 226-2512 to donate using your credit card.

3 By Mail
Use the enclosed envelope to donate by check.

Housing Matters
Resolving Homelessness Together

Contact Us

Housingmatterssc.org
(831) 458-6020
contact@housingmatterssc.org

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Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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Breaking New Ground

We're doing it! Getting closer to our goal of building and operating 120 high quality, energy-efficient studio apartment units on the Housing Matters campus. This 5-story building will house people experiencing chronic homelessness who also need access to daily supportive services. Thanks to our supporters' generosity, we're well into the design phase on this ambitious project—the largest of its kind in Santa Cruz County!



Housing with Purpose

Harvey West Studios

- 56,000 sq ft / 5 floors
- 120 single-occupancy units
- On-site supportive services
- Energy efficient, "clean air" construction
- Solar powered & all electric



Under Construction

801 River Street

- 4,131 sq ft / 2 floors
- Housing for medically vulnerable and disabled
- Renovation of existing structure
- 7 housing units (4 one-bedroom & 3 studio apts)

We're also nearing completion on a massive renovation project right across the street.

This former single-family home is being remodeled to create seven separate living spaces for our medically vulnerable and disabled neighbors experiencing homelessness, as well as families. We expect to open our doors to this newest facility in early 2022.

Your Generosity Matters

Housing Matters is the largest local nonprofit addressing homelessness in Santa Cruz County. Your contributions support our emergency shelter programs (including housing navigation and placement), personalized case management, day services with showers and bathrooms open to the public, on-site supportive services, and the construction of permanent supportive housing for our unhoused neighbors most in need.

Housing Matters

Housing Matters

Thank you

to all our donors who so generously contributed over the past fiscal year (July 2020 – June 2021).

We're so grateful for your support!

Charles & Diane Abraham
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Neil & Eileen Brown
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Brian Coe
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Elena Cohen
Morty Cohen
Kevin Coldwater
Fran Cole
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Barbara Collins
Joe Collins
Maggie Collins
Doron Comerchero
Casey Coneway
Joshua Conner
Leslie Conner
Neil Conner
Katie Connor
Tod Connor
Christopher Connery & Mary Scott
Catherine Conway & Soma Goresky
Dylan Conway
Mary Jane & David Cope
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Chris & Marda Cottle
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Nicolette Czarrunchick
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William D'amico
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Mark Dickson
John Dietz
Margaret Dilfer
Angelee Dion
Sue Dirksen
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Jared Dummitt
J. David & Jo Anne Duncan
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Beth Dyer
Allan Dyson
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Andrew Eichacker
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Candice Elliot
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Eileen Elvins
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