Letter From the Executive Director, Terrie Light

Dear Friends,

A few weeks ago I was sitting in a meeting with my amazing leadership team listening to them report on program outcomes and I was struck that in our line of work “doing miracles becomes commonplace.” We almost begin to take for granted the profound effect of our services on our clients.

Yet a miracle, by its very nature, is never a commonplace event. Every time we can take someone who has been homeless, support them, stabilize them, and move them into a permanent home of their own, it is a transformational and life-changing experience.

Recently an 84-year-old first-time homeless woman came to our emergency shelter after being forced into homelessness by skyrocketing rent and declining benefits. Our staff is connecting her with healthcare, employment and income support services in order to move her into a permanent and stable home of her own. This woman’s spirit of resilience is a testament to her character and emblematic of the many clients we serve. Despite every reason to be cynical, they remain hopeful and committed. BFHP is here to help our clients achieve the miraculous: a movement from despair to hope, from trauma to stability, and from the dangers of life on the street to the security of a home of their own with furniture, food and many of the comforts most of us take for granted.

Over the past decade, we have been moving steadily toward an emphasis on housing, while NOT sacrificing our mission to provide meals and emergency shelter. We remain the only true emergency shelter in Alameda County. By that I mean, on a daily basis we take in men and women who are in need of a bed and a warm nurturing meal, regardless of their life history or their current physical or mental condition. This is the humanitarian part of our mission.

The other part of our mission is to move as many homeless clients into permanent housing as rapidly as possible. In agency language, we call these “housing outcomes.” BFHP first began work on housing outcomes at our North County Women’s Center in 2000. In the last couple of years, we have taken that learning and replicated it in the agency at large. I am proud to report that, in the last year alone, we have doubled the number of housing outcomes within both our Men’s Housing Program and our Multi-Service Center. That is the kind of performance that any large corporation would be proud of, let alone a small non-profit social service agency whose resources are always being stretched.

How did we do it? Most importantly, all program staff are now responsible for housing outcomes instead of it being the sole responsibility of a case manager. We have also had the staff look at program rules and policies to evaluate what works best to get clients housed and what gets in the way of a successful housing outcome.

We have begun to look for staff members with real estate backgrounds to help us develop relationships with landlords. We redeployed some of our case managers to become housing specialists who look for vacant rental properties, inspect them for habitability and discuss leasing terms with the landlords.

However, the ‘miracle’ still requires developing the trusting relationship between client and staff that develops over time. Everyday BFHP staff interact with our clients using a variety of techniques and strategies to help them get on - and stay on - the pathway to housing.

Hopefully, bold strategic thinking can create a space where miracles are more likely to occur and everyone can find their way home.

Warmest Wishes,

Terrie Light
Executive Director
Audrey Spector and Lynn Richards are two of our most dedicated and hardworking volunteers. They have been working with Berkeley Food & Housing Project for more than a year and are deeply committed to bringing opportunities for the women at the North County Women’s Center to express their creativity through a variety of hands-on arts projects.

Recently Audrey and Lynn conducted a session using a technique that combines paper and cloth to make a malleable material that the women turned into fabulous bags, purses, and small paintings decorated with paint and jewelry.

Audrey and Lynn sense they are making a positive impact on the lives of women and children at the shelter and enjoy witnessing the visible effects of that impact. They feel honored to share these sessions with the women who often return week-after-week and express their gratitude and enthusiasm. As one of the residents said “We are already stressed when we’re here [in the Shelter], but when I participate in the art class, anything that was bothering me is put on the back burner. These ladies [Audrey and Lynn] help me see everything in a more positive light.”

Audrey and Lynn’s classes would not be possible without the generous donations of art supplies from Dharma Trading in San Rafael and Soft Flex Beading Company, in Sonoma County. They have also received many generous donations of beads from individuals, consignment shops and even a bead donation jar at a local toy store.

Feeling Inspired and Looking for More Ways to Help Your Community? Become a Volunteer!

Volunteer as a Group
- Purchase, prepare and serve a meal at our Men’s Housing Program
- Help paint our facilities

Volunteer as an Individual
- Serve a meal at our Multi-Service Center
- Provide administrative support

To volunteer contact our Coordinator at 510-809-8506 or email volunteers@bfhp.org

Save These Dates!

Nell Robinson to Benefit BFHP

November 11, 2012, 8:00 pm
Freight and Salvage, 2020 Addison Street, Berkeley, CA 94704

Berkeley native and acclaimed bluegrass artist Nell Robinson will appear at Freight & Salvage on November 11th at 8:00 pm with “Soldier Stories”, a show that honors the service and sacrifice of veterans. Proceeds from the show will benefit BFHP and our program for homeless vets. Nell comes from a long line of veterans going back to the Revolutionary War. She has collaborated with other musicians, artists, and photographers to create a show that gives the community an opportunity to thank our veterans.

To learn more about our veterans program please visit our website, www.bfhp.org.

Tickets can be purchased at the door or in advance at www.thefreight.org.

And please visit Nell Robinson at www.nellrobinsonmusic.com.

Rejuvenation Handcrafted Holiday - Artisan Event

November 10, 12, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm
Rejuvenation Berkeley, 1717-D Fourth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710

Wrap up your holiday shopping, contribute to charity, and support American art and craft in one day and one stop.

Find unique art and handcrafted gifts from local artisans and craftspeople

10% of artist sales will be donated to BFHP in support of our work with the homeless.
**BFHP and Rejuvenation: A Charitable Partnership**

When Rejuvenation, the nation’s largest manufacturer of period-authentic lighting and house parts, decided to open a new store on Berkeley’s Fourth Street, they also sought a charitable partner to join forces with. Thanks to Polly Armstrong, CEO at the Berkeley Chamber, BFHP and Rejuvenation were introduced and a great partnership was born. **Rejuvenation will donate 1% of the store’s annual sales to BFHP and collaborate on several special events throughout the year.**

On August 2nd, the store held a grand opening celebration that spilled out into the adjacent parking lot. More than 600 people came through the store from 5:00 until 9:00, enjoying food and wine and a chance to see the new store. BFHP held a silent auction of dining and entertainment packages that raised more than $1,500 and Rejuvenation raffled off a $500 gift certificate to one very lucky attendee.

Said Moira Duvernay, an Oakland resident and niece of Rejuvenation founder Jim Kelly **“I lived in Berkeley for many years but did not know about the good work of Berkeley Food & Housing Project until I attended the opening night event. It gives me a great feeling to know that a portion of my purchases will go toward feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless.”**

On November 10th from 10:00 to 5:00, the store will feature the work of local artists and artisans who will donate 10% of the sales price to BFHP.

We salute Rejuvenation for their commitment to our community and we thank them for their generosity to BFHP.

http://www.rejuvenation.com/

**BFHP Announces Major Grant from the Taproot Foundation**

Recently, BFHP received a major award from the Taproot Foundation, an organization whose mission is to provide awards of pro-bono professional consulting services, called Service Grants. Every Service Grant is delivered by a team of 5-6 business professionals who volunteer their time and expertise to help a nonprofit in their community. The grant is worth approximately $65,000.

A team of consultants from the business community, headed by Project Leader Karl Auker has been hard at work conducting confidential fact-finding interviews with donors and community leaders to find out how BFHP is perceived and how effectively we communicate. The final results of the project will be delivered to board and staff in January 2013. Stay tuned as this important project takes shape. The final results will help position the agency to take on new challenges and secure new sources of funding to meet those challenges.

Visit Taproot at www.taprootfoundation.org.

**BFHP Announces a New Program in Health, Nutrition and Wellness**

At Berkeley Food & Housing Project, we know that providing nourishing food is often a first step toward stability for our clients. What has also become clear to us is that nutritious and healthy food play an important role in both physical health and mental well-being.

When we administered a survey in early 2011, we found that 54% of our clients in our NCWC’s Transitional House and Russell Street Residence were obese with a body mass index greater than 30. As an agency that prides itself on helping our clients to live a meaningful and healthy life, we knew we needed to focus on improving both diet and nutrition.

**Thanks to a grant from the City of Berkeley’s Mental Health Division, we are thrilled to announce a new collaborative program to empower our clients to attain better self-care and a healthier lifestyle.**

We have joined forces with Three Squares, a San Francisco-based organization whose mission is to encourage and enable healthy eating and sustainable food systems through education and advocacy. As our culinary partner, they will provide 12 weeks of classes in cooking and nutrition, plus follow-up classes to evaluate how our clients are able to apply their knowledge. In addition, nursing students from Samuel Merritt University will assist clients in setting personal goals, as well as providing classes in smoking cessation and exercise. Our longtime healthcare partner LifeLong Medical Care will monitor clients’ vital signs to ensure the most effective health outcomes possible.

**This is yet another example of our ability to partner with the right organizations to improve the lives of our clients. Through this program, we continue our work to ease and end the cycle of homelessness by helping our clients improve their physical and mental well being.**

A staff member from Three Squares teaches Russell Street Residents about healthy eating.
Because Giving is the Most Important Part of Thanksgiving. Please help BFHP feed local homeless and hungry individuals and families this holiday season. Please drop off food donations on November 19-20 to Berkeley Food & Housing Project’s Development Department located on the second floor of 2362 Bancroft Way in Berkeley (between Ellsworth and Dana streets).

2012 Thanksgiving Box Check List

(1) Whole chicken (frozen) or turkey (frozen)*
(price varies depending on weight)
(1) 12 oz box Seasoned Bread Stuffing Mix
(1) 13.3 oz box Instant Mashed Potatoes
(1) 29 oz canned Cut Yams
(1) 16 oz box Brown Sugar
(1) 2.25 oz bag of Walnut Chips
(1) 16 oz bag Mini Marshmallows
(1-2) .87 oz packets Turkey Gravy Mix
(1) 14.5 oz can Cut Green Beans

(1) 10.75 oz can Condensed Cream of Mushroom
(1) 12 oz can Evaporated Milk
(1) 2.8 oz can French Fried Onions
(1) 16 oz can Whole Cranberry Sauce
(1) 40 oz box Bisquick Baking Mix or
(1) 8.5 oz box Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix
(1) 21 oz box Brownie Mix or Cake Mix
(1) 10/.74 oz box Apple Cider Mix and/or
(1) 10/.74 oz box Hot Cocoa Mix

Suggested Value: $40.00
(+ Chicken/Turkey price)

To make a monetary donation in lieu of shopping call at the Development Associate 510.809.8585

*Whole chickens are preferable to fit into any size oven