A BFHP major donor is anyone who makes a financial commitment of $500 or more per year to the operations of the agency. One of the benefits of being a major donor is an invitation to join us every year for a special breakfast. Here you will meet BFHP’s board and staff, get a detailed report on our achievements and our plans for the future, participate in a question-and-answer session, and engage in open dialogue.

Thursday, May 5, 2016
St. Clement’s Episcopal Church
2837 Claremont Blvd.
Berkeley, CA 94705
7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

SAVE THE DATE – MAJOR DONOR BREAKFAST

Since joining Berkeley Food & Housing Project last June, I have been working to manage a sweeping change in the way we deliver services to men, women and children who are homeless in our community.

This change is happening in Berkeley, and will eventually affect all the counties in the Bay Area and across the United States. This is due to a new mandate from the Federal Government that requires communities to create a single entry point – or Coordinated Entry System (CES). Informally, we are calling ourselves the Hub. It is not an acronym; it just means a centralized place where people who are homeless can come for services.

BFHP was awarded a contract by the City to be the sole agency in Berkeley to implement this new system. We are jointly at the forefront of this transition, and the rest of Alameda County will be following suit in the coming year.

The new mandate from the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD) prioritizes people who have a disability and who also have had many episodes of being homeless over several years. In other words, the higher your needs, the more resources and services you will receive. This changes the focus on who receives services first. BFHP has always served the most vulnerable and the poorest of the poor and this is one of the reasons BFHP is leading this system overhaul at this time. We have the mission, the vision, the expertise and the proven track record to get this job done.

We formally began services on January 5th at our new offices at 1901 Fairview Street. We have hired many new staff and, in addition, have formed an outreach team...
A NEW ERA FOR BERKELEY FOOD & HOUSING PROJECT

Continued from page 1 that spends time on the streets of Berkeley connecting with people who would not otherwise walk through our doors. This system change is designed to help with challenging situations. The new model demands tough choices and some complex processes. It will also evolve in structure and content over time with feedback from the city, community organizations and clients. Between now and June 30th, we expect to serve about 750 people through our phone lines, walk-ins and outreach. People can walk in or call in to our offices Monday–Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

There are other CESs springing up across the country, in Seattle, Los Angeles, Connecticut, Maine and Texas. Slowly, agencies are adopting this model because any community that receives HUD funding is mandated to do so. However, BFHP is an “early adapter” – as they say in the tech world – so we will be working out the kinks, testing new approaches, and finding out what works and what does not work. I want to stress that our other services will remain intact. Our meal program continues to serve a free daily meal at Lutheran Church of the Cross on University Ave. Our Russell Street facility continues to provide permanent supportive housing to disabled men and women. We continue to operate our men’s and women’s emergency shelters, though under new guidelines from the city. Homeless veterans across three counties are finally moving inside thanks to our Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. In my 30+ years of work in homeless services, I don’t think I have witnessed so much agency-wide change in such a short period of time. I am proud that BFHP has been chosen by the city to be at the forefront of this change. I am excited for the future and hopeful that these changes will make a lasting impact in our community and on the state of homelessness across America. You can expect to hear much more in future issues of our newsletter.

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TODAY’S FUNDRAISING CHALLENGES

BY JIM HUNTFLEY, DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Since becoming Director of Advancement for BFHP in 2011, I have seen this agency grow from an annual operating budget of $3.5 million to more than $5 million per year in 2016. That is a remarkable rate of growth for any organization. Nevertheless, each year we must raise approximately 20% of our budget from private contributions. These include foundations and corporations, faith-based organizations, and more than 1,500 generous individual donors. With the new Coordinated Entry System, BFHP has now assumed a central role with the City to address the rising tide of homelessness. What that means for our donors is that you can be assured that your contributions to BFHP will have maximum impact on easing and ending the crisis of homelessness in our community.

This year I am increasing my own donation to the annual fund and I invite you to join me by increasing your financial commitment as well. Your partnership is vital to our work and – by working together – we can have a lasting impact on resolving the crisis of homelessness in our community. Thank you for your generosity and support. On behalf of all the clients we serve, we are very grateful to you.

LAURA OSNAS HELPS CLIENTS SECURE JOBS

Laura Osnas was hired in late August 2015 as an employment specialist for BFHP’s Employment Services Program. The program, which recognizes the link between maintaining housing and bringing in income, would not exist without a grant from Y & H Soda. “Without the generous support of The Y & H Soda Foundation, our employment services program would not be possible,” says Laura. Laura, who holds a Master’s Degree in Social Work, challenges the common narrative that people with disabilities or mental illnesses cannot work, and she strives to place her clients in long-lasting careers. Laura is inspired by her job because of her clients’ tenacity to persevere as well as their positivity. She encourages them to think about their strengths, to recognize their skills, and to believe they are capable of obtaining employment. When Laura’s clients get a job, they feel a strong sense of achievement. “For a lot of them, getting a job is a huge first step in the direction they want to go. I like that they’re allowing me to be a part of that moment,” says Laura.

At BFHP, Laura interacts with clients, prospective employers, and community partners. She helps clients with job searches and applications, and teaches them how to build resumes, write cover letters, and how to network. Laura also conducts mock interviews with her clients. If a client has a criminal record, she helps them clean up their rap sheet and suggests how they can address their criminal background with prospective employers. BFHP’s Employment Services Program also provides public transportation passes so clients can get to interviews, work clothing, and vouchers for haircuts.

In addition to her one-on-one work, Laura provides twice-a-week employment workshops to Coordinated Entry System (CES) clients. The CES is a model that enables a team of Employment Specialists, Case Managers, and Housing Specialists to work collaboratively under the same roof to help our clients overcome their barriers to getting and staying housed.

UNSHeltered HOMEless POPULATION IN BERKELEY INCREASES BY 53%

Results of the most recent homeless count in Alameda County, organized by EveryOne Home, showed a drastic increase in the unsheltered homeless population in Berkeley by 53% from 2009 to 2015. In a memo from Dee Williams-Ridley, Interim City Manager, to the Mayor and members of City Council dated 1/28/2016, this radical increase occurred despite a significant decrease (40%) in the number of homeless veterans, due in part to the investment of significant resources by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). BFHP is working with the VA in three counties to combat veterans’ homelessness.

The memo also noted the launch of the “Hub,” operated by Berkeley Food & Housing Project, which is “designed to serve the unsheltered homeless population in Berkeley more effectively.” Williams-Ridley went on to say that City staff will return to Council to recommend fully funding BFHP to continue the Coordinated Entry System for 2017. The entire document can be viewed by typing “Berkeley 2015 Homeless Point-In-Time Count” into Google.