As spring 2010 approaches, BFHP is planning our 40th anniversary. My thoughts drift back across the decades to spring 1970 when I was a freshman in college. My high school friends and I were adjusting to our first year in college as the world we had known was shifting under our feet. Our youthful idealism and boundless energy brought us to student rallies and propelled us to storm the administration buildings in our frustration when we didn’t feel heard. We received an education about the military industrial complex and protested to end the "military action" in South East Asia. Increased oil prices and increased wartime government spending led us into the recession of the 1970’s. The middle class began to shrink and the divide between rich and poor widened.

Those with money speculated on land prices in the 80’s and became extremely wealthy in California, while the result on the poor was an emerging homeless population. The California real estate speculation game coupled with a sizable decrease in federal affordable housing dollars led to the perfect storm going into the 1990’s. Communities built market rate housing during the housing boom of the 2000’s but not a commensurate amount of affordable housing.

Affordable housing for low income and extremely low income individuals and families rapidly decreased and the homeless population radically increased. Unfortunately, many communities blamed the victims for the communities’ homeless population, when not having a home is due to nothing more than the inability to afford a home in urban California communities.

During all these decades BFHP attempted to provide compassionate and caring services to all those who entered its doors. We fed those who were hungry, provided shelter to those with no place to sleep, and linkages to a wealth of community resources. As we focused more and more on housing those who entered our doors, we realized that the newly homeless were not arriving because of our lack of services. We realized that the system needs changing and that without more affordable housing for those that are poor, we cannot end homelessness.

As we look forward to the next 10 years, BFHP wants you to join us as we work at solving these problems at the local level while advocating at the state and national level.
Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP)
From Geoff Green, Associate Director

One of the unforeseen and tragic by-products of the economic crisis of the past three years is the number of Americans who have become newly homeless and/or are imminently at risk of becoming homeless.

In an attempt to mitigate this new crisis, President Obama added the Homeless Prevention/Rapid Rehousing program (HPRP) to his American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

Money was allocated to counties across the country to develop new program models to address this growing problem. Alameda County jurisdictions received more than $9.5M in ARRA funds. During the past 18 months, all of the County’s cities and other jurisdictions approved and adopted the Alameda County 15-year plan to end homelessness and pledged to adopt a cohesive and complementary HPRP plan.

With agreement on a common approach, cities then developed their plans and proposals, with Berkeley joining other North County cities- Albany, Emeryville and Piedmont. In July, Berkeley put out their application for $1.3M in funding, and in a highly competitive process, BFHP was awarded funding to provide all HPRP services, in conjunction with their partner agencies and to create the Berkeley/North County Housing Resource Center.

HPRP provides households with information and referral, housing stabilization and location services, and time-limited financial assistance with their housing (rent and utilities) costs, which may include:

- Help with paying rent and/or utilities arrears
- Payment of first month’s rent and security deposit
- Payment of short term housing subsidies to landlords
- Other moving costs such as storage, truck rentals, and temporary motel stays

Clearly, for many individual and family households, these are crucial and often life changing services. BFHP staff has partnered with the City’s excellent Housing and Community Services department in this endeavor, which hopes to assist more than 200 families over the next two years. For information for a family or friend, please call 2-1-1 and you will be referred to the Housing Resource Center in your area.

For further information on this and other BFHP programs, please visit the Client Resources page and About page of our website (www.bfhp.org)

One of the unforeseen and tragic by-products of the economic crisis of the past three years is the number of Americans who have become newly homeless and/or are imminently at risk of becoming homeless.

As of 2009, BFHP adopted an environmental policy that requires us to reduce the amount of waste we generate. One way to eliminate waste is by eliminating the paper it takes to list our donors in the printed version of our newsletter. Donor acknowledgements can be found on the contributions page of our website. Thank you for understanding and supporting our desire to be an environmentally conscious agency and thank you for supporting BFHP!
While BFHP survives on large and small contracts and grants and outright gifts and willed estates, there are many other ways people donate to BFHP. Online giving through our website (www.bfhp.org) has seen a dramatic increase over the past three years.

Registering through the website and making monthly re-occurring donations sustains the operation of the agency. Monthly re-occurring donations, as opposed to spurs, make BFHP a more efficient agency. Donors who give in this way strengthen the agency’s capacity to serve clients and lower the fiscal agents’ anxiety levels.

Ways to Give

Workplace giving is an easy way to give and some companies match employee-giving. Chevron, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, PG&E, Kaiser, Levi Strauss and others encourage employees to give through payroll deductions and seasonal campaigns.

Government employees and military personnel donate through the Combined Federal Campaign, designating BFHP (#47013) as their beneficiary. Other employers make payroll deductions using United Way as its clearing house. Employees can designate BFHP as their beneficiary.

BFHP also has its own “Cash for Clunkers” program. Donors turn their cars into cash for BFHP by using www.cars4causes.net or www.donate4charity.com.

Shoppers can give through:

1. Electronic Scrip Incorporated (eScrip), a corporation dedicated to establishing relationships between commerce and community. Donors register their credit cards or Safeway cards on www.escrip.com and designate BFHP as charity of choice. A monthly donation is deposited to BFHP’s account.

2. Save Mart Supermarket’s Lucky SHARES card can be used at Save Mart, S-Mart Foods, Lucky and FoodMaxx. The program Lucky SHARES is an acronym for Supporting Humanities, Arts, Recreation, Education and Sports in our community. Save Mart sends a quarterly check for 3% of qualified purchases. To obtain a Lucky SHARES card, contact Joanna Lavenberg, Development Associate (510-809-8512 or jlavenberg@bfhp.org).

Stockholders can benefit by donating stock. To view BFHP’s new stock donation policy and procedures, go to the Donate page of our website or contact Paul Cwynar, Development Director (510-809-8515, pcwynar@bfhp.org).
Regina Williams, BFHP’s Russell Street Residence Manager, and her staff started teaching clients that live at the facility basic cooking skills. It was Regina’s idea that clients should know all the basic living skills, with meal preparation being an essential skill.

Staff members supervise the residents and are present to help them prepare meals one day a week. Meals include a protein, side dish, salad and juice.

Russell Street Residence is a State of California licensed Adult Residential Facility for mental health clients ages 18-59. Staff provides care, supervision, three daily meals, administers medication and coordinates therapeutic groups and other activities. Twenty-one men and women live at the Residence and the Annex, a four-room house providing independent housing for formerly chronically homeless mental health clients.

Interested volunteers should contact Regina Williams (510-843-3420, rwilliams@bfhp.org).
Health Care

Homeless Connect Health Fair
From Dianna Kane, Health Care Coordinator

On November 12, 2009, BFHP hosted Berkeley’s first-ever Homeless Connect Health Fair. The purpose of the health fair was to provide an array of health services for 150 homeless men, women and children in one location.

BFHP’s Health Care Coordinator, Dianna Kane, brought together eight local agencies and dozens of volunteers. Alameda County Health Care for the Homeless provided seasonal flu vaccines, H1N1 vaccines and primary care, as well as TB tests and Hepatitis A/B vaccines. The Suitcase Clinic, a UC Berkeley student organization, provided foot washings, massages, haircuts and free winter clothing. Clients were also able to access recovery services, mental health services, HIV testing and counseling, referrals for women’s health screenings, child and family services, and vision screenings. To top it off, lunch and toiletry kits were also handed out! BFHP intends on making this an annual event.

Our Health Care Program is supported by:

Photos courtesy of Doug Oakley, 2009
Stand Up and Be Counted

The 2010 Census is here. The Census Bureau mailed questionnaires to households in March asking householders to list everyone (related and unrelated) living at their address on April 1, 2010.

Sherrol Gray, BFHP Transitional Services Manager, is leading an endeavor that ensures that underserved populations are counted. BFHP staff will assist individuals who may not receive or complete their census forms. BFHP’s Multi Service Center, located at 2362 Bancroft Way, will host a Questionnaire Assistance Center (QAC) to help residents fill out their 2010 Census form. The QAC will be open from March 19 through April 19, 2010.

BFHP received a $10,000 grant from the San Francisco Foundation (www.sff.org) to support this project. For more information on the 2010 Census, go to www.2010census.gov and for information on BFHP’s involvement, check our website (www.bfhp.org).

Thanks!

We thank the following businesses, churches, corporations and foundations that made it possible for us to continue serving a burgeoning client base through these difficult economic times. We also appreciate all individuals who have made it possible for us not to eliminate any services. Those names are listed on our website.


BFHP Participant in The San Francisco Foundation’s Immediate Disaster Response Grant Program

The San Francisco Foundation recognizes the critical role nonprofits can plan in the aftermath of a disaster. The Foundation will grant $25,000 each to 51 local organizations that are providing essential services - including food, shelter, health care and mental health care - to Bay Area vulnerable communities in the first month following a disaster. [BFHP and 50 other] grantees also have committed to developing organizational emergency plans, enabling them to serve their communities quickly and effectively when they will be needed most; the Foundation is offering training and technical support to assist these organizations in their planning efforts.
Homeless Court
Volunteer Appreciation

BFHP’s Multi Service Center is home to regularly-scheduled sessions of the Alameda County Homeless and Caring Court. Instead of ordering homeless people to court for fines they can’t pay and that disqualify them for benefits, the homeless court comes to the homeless and guarantees a clean slate if they can show they are “cleaning up their act”.

BFHP is one of several organizations collaborating in the homeless court effort. The first CA homeless court was initiated in San Diego and in 2004 The Superior Court of California, County of Alameda, opened its first homeless court session with Superior Court Judge Gordon Baranco presiding. Judge Baranco has been the presiding judge ever since the court’s inception. Service providers like BFHP work with the Alameda Countywide Homeless Continuum of Care Council, the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office, the Alameda County Public Defender’s Office, and the court to assist homeless individuals.

BFHP refers defendants with non-violent, low-level misdemeanors to the public defender and works with the Public Defenders office to show that the defendants are using services and working to solve their problems. The court only accepts non-violent misdemeanors like traffic violations and public drunkenness and limits defendants to one appearance. BFHP has assisted over 300 applicants in the required documentation review process so that each individual is prepared for their scheduled court appearance.

Volunteer Appreciation
From Elaine Chang, Volunteer Coordinator

Berkeley Food and Housing Project loves our volunteers! National Volunteer Week is April 18-24, 2010 and BFHP will host its Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event on Wednesday April 21nd, 2010 to show you how much we appreciate your contribution to our agency. Come and meet other volunteers that are also dedicated to easing and ending homelessness in the Berkeley community. We will barbecue meat and vegetarian options for everyone to enjoy an evening of good food and good company. Contact Elaine Chang, Volunteer Coordinator, with questions or comments (510-809-8506, volunteers@bfhp.org).

What: Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event
Who: For all of BFHP’s wonderful volunteers
Where: BFHP’s North County Women’s Center, 2140 Dwight Way, Berkeley CA
When: Wednesday April 21, 2010 from 5-7 p.m.
DEAR BELOVED BFHP READER,
For spring, we need your help with:

Shopping for BFHP’s Shower for the Shelter
We created a gift registry at Target of items that will be helpful for women and children as they make the transition from staying in our housing programs to living in their own permanent home.

Copy this direct link into your browser: http://www.target.com/lists/38Z6ICX8LN2C2 - (list id must be in all CAPS)

Or take this shopping list with you to your favorite store:
- Set of Dishes
- Set of Flatware
- Set of Pots & Pans
- Set of Glassware
- Laundry Baskets
- Sets of Towels
- Sets of Sheets
- Blankets
- Comforters

Needed Items:
• Conference Table
• Twin Beds/Mattresses
• 10-15 new/gently used yoga mats for our North County Women’s Center Wellness Program

Other items are on the Wish List page of our website. Contact Elaine Chang, Volunteer Coordinator, to donate in-kind gifts to BFHP (volunteers@bfhp.org, 510-809-8506).

BFHP cannot pick up donations or accept clothing donations. On the Wish List page of our website are some referrals for organizations that do accept clothing donations (www.bfhp.org).

Love social networking? So do we!
Stay up-to-date with the latest BFHP news, events and pictures.

Facebook Cause Page: www.causes.com/bfhp
Facebook Fan Page: www.facebook.com/pages/Berkeley Food-and-Housing-Project/177416198139
Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/berkeleyfood
View our photo album: http://www.flickr.com/bfhp