



HOUSEWORK

news from transition house • santa barbara, california • fall 2012

Mom's Brings Families Home

By Isabelle Walker

Last spring, Abby Richards' life took a turn for the "normal." After twelve months of living in motels, doubled up with relatives, and in Transition House's emergency shelter, she and her daughter moved into their own two-bedroom apartment in the Mom's complex Transition House recently constructed next to its administration building. Ordinary things most Americans take for granted are a reality again for her. She has a job, and she's cooking meals for herself and her daughter in their very own kitchen.

"I had given up," said Abby. "[I thought] I was going to have to find a family for my daughter [to live with]." Then she found out she was eligible for one of the eight new units in the Mom's building.

Eight families moved into the new apartment building in May after a long planning and construction process. Funding came from Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), the City of Santa Barbara's Community Development Department, and Section Eight Project-Based vouchers from the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara (HACSB). The units are designed for low-income families, and case management is offered to all. Intensive case management is also available for those who have special needs, including a physical or mental disability, or some other significant



Mom's apartments offer supportive housing and a new infant day care center.

barrier to either employment or housing stability. Both the tax credits and vouchers allow Transition House to charge some residents on fixed incomes very low rent. A brand new infant-care center, with double the capacity of the former center, is also up and running in the building.

Abby was born in Ethiopia but was raised both in the United States and Africa as her father was a high-placed general in Emperor Hallie Selassie's army. Her parents lost everything when Selassie's government was overthrown in a 1974 coup. Abby was sent to the United States to attend Mills College, and graduated with a B.A. in Government and Administration. Though she held highly skilled positions in the U.S. and Ethiopia, mostly in informa-

tion and computer systems, when her daughter was born at age 39, juggling work and parenting without the support of a spouse led to financial problems. In 2009, she was laid off from her job. She lived off savings and credit cards, then moved in with relatives. But in 2011, a day came when that was no longer feasible either, and they began staying in inexpensive motels. It was tough, she said.

The day Abby realized their only remaining alternative was to stay in her car was the worst day of all. She joined Transition House's waiting list but room was not immediately available. She remembers sitting in her car, waiting for her daughter to get out of school, and

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Camp THINK Mixes Learning with Fun

This summer, for the second year in a row, Transition House partnered with the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) to



At the fire station: learning to crawl low if there is a fire.

run Camp THINK (Transition House Igniting the Need for Knowledge). The three-week camp, which began at the end of the school year, consisted of one-on-one tutoring and field trips. Twenty children participated.

Linda Locker once again ran the camp's tutoring program. With her strong background in education, Locker matched students with highly qualified tutors from our community. Her program began by testing students and then focused on assisting them in the subject area that challenged them most. This allowed the children to continue developing academic skills throughout the three-week period and prepared them

for the upcoming school year.

In addition to tutoring, Camp THINK kids were immersed in our community's diverse offerings, allowing them to discover places and professions they wouldn't normally experience. There were trips to museums, the Ty Warner Sea Center, the Botanic Gardens, and both the police and fire stations. The kids also got to tour Santa Barbara Junior High and High Schools, and UCSB. Santa Barbara City Councilmember Cathy Murillo gave them a tour of City Hall. Camp THINK emphasized all the opportunities available to the kids if they stay in school.

A huge thank you to our partners, staff and volunteers who made Camp THINK a success! 📌



Touring Santa Barbara Junior High School.



Experiencing The Ty Warner Sea Center with intern Trevor.



Music time with tutor Nate Latta.



Spraying the fire hose during our trip to the fire station.

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receiving a call from a Transition House staff member.

“It was a Friday. [I’d] put my stuff in storage. I’m sitting there thinking, ‘What are we going to do?’ [Then] I get a call from Transition House.”

“The staff at Transition House had more confidence in me than I did,” Abby said. “When they told me they saw potential in me, I was thinking, ‘They don’t know. I’m going to disappoint them.’”

But she didn’t disappoint them. She kept looking for work and, shortly after moving into Mom’s, received two job offers. Now that life is returning to normal, Abby said her daughter seems more confident.

“The one word that describes the feeling we have towards Transition House is Gratitude. I thank all those who believed I had the ‘potential’ when I myself did not believe it and had given up.”

A few steps from Abby’s apartment, another single mom is experiencing the safety of permanent housing. Vivian Goodchild (which is not her real surname) and her 15-year-old daughter recently moved into one of Transition House’s new units; theirs is a one bedroom. But Vivian’s quest for financial and housing stability was longer and more arduous than Abby’s, carrying her and her child to seven different cities. Sometimes they stayed with extended family, sometimes they stayed in shelters; sometimes they slept on the street.

“I lost opportunities when I didn’t have proper care for my daughter,” Vivian recalled. “You can’t make anyone keep your child for you [while you work].”

Finally, in 2010, they were referred to Transition House’s emergency shelter. After receiving case management from shelter staff, Vivian and her daughter were placed in one of its new units. For the first time in her life, Vivian’s



The new infant care center has brand new furnishings.

daughter has a room of her own, and Vivian is beginning to envision a future for them. She said her daughter is getting good grades and playing basketball in high school, but feelings of bitterness remain after their years of living without a home. Healing doesn’t happen overnight.

Sitting at her dining-room table clipping coupons, Vivian credits both Transition House and her faith for helping her out of a punishing period. After years without housing, she and her daughter are finally home.

With Mom’s, Transition House has expanded its development of affordable supportive housing because the agency realizes the enormous and traumatic impact homelessness has on families. During their stay at Transition House’s emergency shelter, families can work to address the immediate financial crisis. But for some, moving back to permanent housing is only the first step in recovering from the impact of homelessness and the dramatic issues the family experienced leading up to their loss of housing. Long-term case management services are often required to keep the household financially stable and ensure that every member of the family has the

opportunity to realize the promise of a bright future.

Transition House is proud to bring Mom’s to the community and honored to work with families like Abby’s and Vivian’s as they begin to rebuild their lives. 🏠



The inner courtyard at Mom’s provides plenty of light.

Celebrating the Memory of Three Extraordinary Women

They say things happen in threes. This summer, Transition House lost three beloved and veteran volunteers: Sibyl Holder, Mary Ryan and Margaret Corman. Each of the women was strong-minded, faithful, and passionate about serving those in need. As we mourn them, we also celebrate the many ways they blessed Transition House by giving of themselves so selflessly for so many years.

Ryan Never Stopped Caring for the Children

Mary Ryan began her service to Transition decades ago, back when the agency was still located in the Quonset hut on Ortega Street. She cooked and coordinated volunteers from St. Barbara Parish at the Old Mission to serve dinner to residents every third Wednesday of the month. Though she wasn't able to serve the dinner herself in past few years, she was still able to organize its preparation. Perhaps most touching about Mary's loss, and exemplary of her life, is that she was helping Transition House until the last moments of her life. "She was making telephone calls about the dinner the day before she died," said her friend Nancy Schooler.

Mary Gay Gaines was born November 1, 1929, in New York City. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College in 1951 and in 1952, married the late John Ryan, who she met while working as an editor at a New York publishing house. In 1967, Mary and her husband moved to Santa Barbara with their sons, John, Michael, and Peter.

More than one of Mary's friends recalled her dedication to Transition House and the children it serves. At her memorial service, Transition House Operations Manager, Annette Perez, was touched to hear so many of Mary's friends and family mention her involvement with Transi-

tion House in their eulogies.

Mary Pat Surmeier served on the St. Barbara's Parish "dinner provider" team with Mary. "Mary was a very determined person. She felt really strongly about Transition House and was never shy about asking people to help. She was determined that we would do it!"

All the close friends contacted for this article mentioned Mary's admiration for Dorothy Day, a bohemian convert to Catholicism who went on to found the Catholic Worker Movement. According to Mary's friends, Day was a chief inspiration to Mary throughout her life. Schooler, (also on the "dinner provider" team) said that, like Day, Mary cared about those who couldn't defend themselves.

In addition to her work at Transition House, Mary participated in the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Committee at St. Barbara Parish and was a teacher's assistant in the Head Start program. Sharon Brownnett, who met Mary in the early seventies in the Head Start program, recalled her friend's first



Mary Ryan

adventure as a volunteer there: "On her first day, she went into a shed to get paint supplies, and one of the children locked her inside!" It seems Mary took this very well. "I liked her immediately," said Brownnett. "She was really funny. Mary had a self-deprecating humor that was delightful."

Schooler wants people to know "how much [Mary] cared about them. How much she cared about the children at Transition House."

Bless you, Mary, for your long service to Transition House! ⬆

Margaret Corman: A Cheerful Voice on the End of the Line

Veteran Transition House volunteers will remember receiving calls from Margaret Corman, her cheerful, vibrant voice on the end of the line reminding them of an upcoming volunteer commit-



Margaret Corman

ment. Hearing from her every week or month became a part of the whole Transition House experience.

Sadly, Corman passed away this summer at the age of 97, but her passion for the poor and underserved in our community will be remembered for years to come.

Corman was a Midwestern gal, born in Carlisle, Kentucky in 1915. She attended the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky and then moved to Washington D.C. to serve in the U.S. Civil Service. Her bold, adventurous spirit later prompted her to join

the Women's Army Corps during World War II. She was assigned to the European Theater of Operations and rose to the rank of Senior Warrant Officer.

After the war, Corman became an ordained elder in the Presbyterian Church and a parishioner at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C. With other parishioners there, she marched in Martin Luther King's great civil rights march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Georgia.

In 1978, Corman retired to Santa Barbara and, true to form, quickly became active in her church and community. She was a longtime member of the First United Methodist Church of Santa Barbara and a Transition House volunteer for 25 years. Corman will be sorely missed by friends and colleagues in the community, and by the staff and volunteers at Transition House. Gifts in her name can be made to Transition House and The First United Methodist Church of Santa Barbara. 📍

Transition House's Longest Volunteer Passes Away

Sibyl Holder was there from the beginning; when Transition House was the parish hall at Trinity Episcopal Church, before the Quonset hut on Ortega Street, before the purchase of the current shelter building, Sibyl Holder was there, organizing Trinity's feeding of shelter residents for nearly thirty years.

On June 2, 2012, Sibyl Holder passed away peacefully in her home. Born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, in 1915, Sibyl married the late Julius Holder of Brooklyn, New York, in 1956, and moved to Santa Barbara in 1959. Sibyl worked at The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions until her retirement in 1979. From that point on, she was a devoted Transition House volunteer and home-

less advocate.

Sibyl organized dinners for shelter residents every fourth Saturday of the month. She'd had that position so long, none of the current Transition House staff knew how long she had been there...because she'd always been there! Sibyl discussed her beginnings at Transition House in a 2003 article in the now-defunct *South Coast Beacon*: "We put down mattresses and cots [in the parish hall]. We had them [clients] for a month. We fed them every night. We had a shower stall. It was a makeshift thing." Now, of course, Transition House is a well-established provider of housing and anti-poverty services to Santa Barbara's homeless families.

Trinity parishioners had only words of praise and fondness for their dear colleague.

Michael Neal Arnold, a Lay Eucharistic Minister, said this: "Trinity was in on the beginning of Transition House and Sibyl Holder was the anchor of the Trinity participation for years and years. By anchor, I mean she did all the meal planning, shopping, and volunteer coordinating. It's only been in the past five years or so that she agreed to let me and others carry some of the load."

Sibyl's friend Edith Hollister also mentioned Sibyl's devotion to Transition House. The two met as ushers at Trinity's ten o'clock service.

Hollister said Sibyl was the backbone of Trinity's service to Transition House and wants everyone to know how devoted she was to the shelter. Hollister also wishes to highlight how well Sibyl treated everyone. She was always approachable and gentle and she loved people of all generations, Hollister said, and added that she will miss just being with Sibyl, talking with her, and hearing her (strong) opinions. But, Hollister emphasized, she never heard Sibyl say a bad word about anyone.



Sibyl Holder

Melinda Carey, Trinity's Secretary, said that by always showing up with able hands, Sibyl was a model of faith lived out. "I believe she had some place to bring her faithful witness each day, to serve God as she understood. And, as you probably know—always wearing stockings and a dress or skirt with her hair pulled back—the consummate lady."

Carey related the following story about Sibyl's strong character and service:

"Sibyl was always petite, but in the last few years of her life, she became increasingly frail and small in stature—but not in spirit. Each time Sibyl was scheduled to read a lesson in church, the entire congregation would hold its collective breath as she walked up to the podium on those tiny legs. Many people voiced their concerns and suggested that she not be scheduled to read. But none of them wanted to be the one to talk to her about it. One of those concerned was an interim associate priest who spoke to me about it. And I said, 'Why don't you speak to Sibyl about it?' And he did. I asked him how that went and he replied, 'Not well.' Sibyl continued to read the lessons for many months, but we did have someone escort her up and down the steps."

Sibyl Holder was 97 years old when she died. 📍

Shelter Dinner Providers

St. Raphael Catholic Church
 First Congregational Church
 Mt. Carmel
 St. Anthony's
 Society of Friends - Quakers
 First Presbyterian
 Our Lady of Sorrows
 Vedanta Society
 Franciscan Sisters Association
 Santa Barbara Church of Christ
 Grace Lutheran Church
 Goleta Presbyterian
 All Saints by the Sea Episcopal Church
 Feed Your Soul
 Pascucci Restaurant
 805 Deli
 Living Faith Center
 B'nai B'rith
 St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
 Santa Barbara Community Church
 Carpinteria Community Church
 Calvery Chapel
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 Organic Soup Kitchen
 Old Mission Santa Barbara
 St. Barbara Parish
 Live Oak Unitarian
 St. Mark United Methodist Church
 Knights of Columbus
 Trinity Episcopal Church
 Kathy Bailey and Friends
 Christian Science
 The Gittlers and Friends
 Montecito Covenant Church
 Ocean Hills Church
 El Montecito Presbyterian Church
 Unity Church of Santa Barbara
 Mother's Kitchen (MA Center)
 Transition House Auxiliary
 The Village Gardener
 Amie Parish and Friends
 Teresa Pietsch and Friends

PROGRAM SERVICES AND EXPENSES

Program	\$1,874,639
Management and General	147,297
Fundraising	182,418
Total:	\$2,204,354

INCOME AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Individuals	\$370,592
Foundations	407,150
Corporations	75,052
Federal	387,005
State/Local	161,240
Churches	29,851
Rental Income	290,888
Fundraising	176,683
In-kind	315,030
Total	\$2,213,491

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Because of the generosity of the hundreds of individuals and organizations listed below, Transition House was able to help over 600 family members through its shelter, housing, and homelessness prevention programs. Thank you, friends!

\$100,000+

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\$40,000 - \$99,999

Santa Barbara Foundation
 Transition House Auxiliary
 Wood-Claeyssens Foundation

\$10,000 - \$39,999

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Transition House regrets any misspellings or omissions. Please let us know of any errors so we can correct our database.

Our gratitude goes to children living at Transition House who drew the thank-you notes that appear on these pages--they appreciate your support!



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Transition House

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Picnic Party Honors Volunteers

On June 3rd, over 250 people came to Oak Park for Transition House’s 21st Annual Family Picnic, enjoying a day of food, fellowship, games, music, and beautiful weather! Transition House hosts the event to honor the many dedicated volunteers who help make its mission a success. Guests were entertained with a variety of activities including face painting, balloon animal making, the ‘guess how many’ game, and a soccer match. Santiago Perez and Santiago Landeros specially prepared the mouth-watering barbecue chicken and tri-tip, and our favorite band, The Other Woman (including board members Steve Epstein and Craig Allen) provided music. There was even dancing!

As part of the festivities, Transition House singled out the following volunteers for their exemplary service:

- Outstanding Service Organization Award:* Saint Raphael Catholic Church
- Ferd Rapp Award for “Spreading the Spirit of Service”:* Allen Gersho
- Sally Rausch Award:* Bill Dodson
- Rookie Screener of the Year:* Bette Saks
- Most Dedicated Screener of the Year:* Gray Felsteiner
- Children’s Program Rookie of the Year:* Nicole Janowicz
- Best TLC Volunteer:* Kelsey Santoro

Children’s Program Volunteer of the Year:

Kalie Brown

Childcare Volunteer of the Year: Natalie

Greenside

Most Dedicated Volunteer: Angela

Huffman

Kids Helping Kids Award: Liam Freniere

Board Support to Staff: Jay Rawlins

Infant Care Center Volunteer of the Year:

Jenny Rojas

Dedication to the Transition House

Auxiliary: Pat St. Clair

We would also like to thank the following groups for their generous donations which made this year’s picnic feast possible: Rincon Catering, Shalhoob Meat Company, Fresco, Our Daily Bread, Starbucks, and cupcake bakers Janet and Liam Freniere. ⬆

