

SEPTEMBER 2020

Episcopal Community Services

The Spotlight

ECS Continues to Serve Our Vulnerable Neighbors During COVID-19

Dear ECS Community,

We hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and safe. As we are in our seventh month of Shelter-In-Place (SIP), we thank each of you for your continued support. Our entire team continues to strive towards our mission of a more equitable and just world, where everyone has the resources and services needed to exit homelessness permanently. While our mission and values remain the same, the nature of our work has changed. With that in mind, we want to provide an update on changes to our programs.



The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many fragilities within our social safety nets, and our emergency shelter system is no exception. Congregate living facilities present challenges when needing to socially distance during a Shelter-In-Place order, especially for vulnerable populations—our seniors and people with underlying health conditions. In order to promote the health and safety of those we serve, ECS, in partnership with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), shuttered Next Door Shelter and our two Navigation Centers over the summer.

These programs have a long and rich history from the very beginnings of our organization. In 1989, Canon Kip Community House and the Episcopal Sanctuary merged to form Episcopal Community Services. Next Door opened shortly thereafter in order to serve those displaced by the Loma Prieta earthquake and remained a bastion of support for our most vulnerable communities for twenty years. Know that this was not a decision we made lightly, but is a critical first step in creating a *new vision for emergency shelter services* (www.sfexaminer.com/opinion/a-new-vision-for-emergency-shelter-services); one that is human-centered, upholds health, safety, and dignity, and incorporates the lessons and experiences learned from the

challenges of today. To learn more about this vision, please read our *Op-Ed* published in the *San Francisco Examiner*.

We continue to serve our unhoused neighbors at Sanctuary Shelter and in more than 800 rooms through the new state and local effort called Project RoomKey, which was designed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, ECS is operating eight Project RoomKey hotels, serving almost 900 people. During this time, we are working with our City partners to facilitate exits from these hotel rooms and homelessness to permanent stable housing.

Our Adult Coordinated Entry and Problem Solving teams, as well as our new pilot rapid rehousing programming, are focused on housing and employment solutions. For these long-term solutions, we continue to pursue necessary financial support that will ensure that the progress we are making continues beyond this current moment of crisis, and that we use this opportunity to enact long lasting change to our homelessness response system.

As you know, ECS is the lead provider for Adult Coordinated Entry (ACE) in San Francisco, and our work of securing supportive housing for those in need has continued throughout this crisis. Our ACE and Problem Solving staff are performing outreach to the Project RoomKey hotels and safe sites throughout the city to connect people to housing. **In the midst of a pandemic, our remarkable Housing Navigation and Problem Solving staff has secured 200 permanent supportive housing placements, and 167 housing solutions through Problem Solving programs since the beginning of Shelter-In-Place.**

Our adult education and workforce development services continue to operate in a mobile format, providing tutoring and employment supports in workforce development. Our CHEFS staff is providing meals to Supportive Housing residents, as noted in our stories about how ECS is addressing heightened food insecurity amongst our participants. While our Canon Kip Senior Center is not presently able to host group activities, staff visit seniors via a mobile center that travels to them, as expressed in the video *Hello from the Canon Kip Senior Center* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JI09ZpjyKxE>). Every weekday, we provide a hot meal to-go to 150 seniors and adults with disabilities in our community. We continue to provide case management and social services remotely or following social distancing guidelines.

In an ever changing and unpredictable pandemic environment, we are grounded in a single purpose—focusing on providing solutions to housing and employment. We thank you for commitment to our cause and [ask for your continued support](https://ecs-sf.org/donatenow) (<https://ecs-sf.org/donatenow>) to address food insecurity, offer job readiness and training, and secure stable housing for our vulnerable neighbors.

With Gratitude,



Executive Director

Save the Date



A VIRTUAL CULINARY BENEFIT WITH TOP CHEF MASTER

Chef Chris Cosentino

Saturday, November 7
6:30 pm



ECS and Partners Tackle Food Insecurity

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased food insecurity among the residents of ECS supportive housing units. Many of these low-income individuals routinely accessed food from free congregate meal programs, low-cost diners, soup kitchens, and other low- or no-cost food sources that closed as a result of the pandemic. A survey by ECS staff conducted in March showed alarmingly increased rates of food insecurity for residents of permanent supportive housing. To address this need, ECS pursued multiple partnerships with food providers, such as the [San Francisco/Marin Food Bank](http://sfmfoodbank.org) (sfmfoodbank.org) for groceries and hot meal providers and was able to increase food deliveries to the 1,600+ residents we serve.



In April and May, **Pica Pica Arepa Kitchen** (picapica.com), a Mission District restaurant prepared, individually packaged, and delivered a total of 900 hot meals per week to nine of our Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) sites . Not only were they able to provide these meals, but the venture also secured paid employment for vulnerable restaurant workers.

In May, **SF New Deal** (sfnewdeal.org) which works with restaurants to provide meals to our vulnerable neighbors, provided two meals per week at two of our single-unit supportive housing sites and one of the SROs. The combined total was 590 meals per week.

Beginning in July, **Food Runners**, (foodrunners.org), which collects prepared foods, began packaging individual meals for ECS supportive housing residents. This organization currently provides 900 meals weekly, which are delivered by ECS volunteers. We have also received funding from **Catalyst Kitchens** (catalystkitchens.org), **Albertson's Companies Foundation** (national.albertsonscorporationsfoundation.org), and **Silicon Valley Bank** (svb.com) for our own CHEFS program to prepare meals for supportive housing families and seniors.



As part of the Muslim Festival of Eid Al Adha (July 31st), **Pacifica Institute** (pacificainstitute.org/bay-area) donated more than 150 lbs. of ground beef to our food insecurity programming.

“There are many people around the world and locally who are suffering, so we want to support local organizations in serving them,” explained Fatih Ferdi Ates of the Pacifica Institute. Ates connected initially with ECS through his service on the San Francisco Interfaith Council, where he serves on the Board of Directors. Previously, Pacifica Institute volunteers served dinner at the ECS-operated Interfaith Winter Shelter.

Pacifica Institute, a Turkish-American organization, is also a partner with Grace Cathedral, which hosts Ramadan interfaith dinners.

“It is wonderful to develop our relationship with the Episcopal community,” Ates said. “We look forward to connecting more.”

Rapid Rehousing Connects Employment to Stable Housing

Episcopal Community Services (ECS)'s new Rapid Rehousing (RRH) pilot program is a short- to medium-term housing intervention that offers housing navigation support, move-in costs, short-term rental subsidies, and employment and housing stabilization services. The RRH model differs from transitional housing because participants are not connected to a single service program, have a geographic choice in their residence with a lease in their own name, and income through employment that enables them to remain in the housing unit when the subsidy concludes. The services provided are tailored to each individual via a stability plan designed by the participant with support from our RRH team. The focus is to remove the barriers to housing retention through employment—for individuals to earn livable wages to cover housing, utilities, meals, transportation, and other necessary living expenses.

There are currently two distinct groups of individuals being served. The first program is *Adult Rapid Rehousing (ARR)*, which was launched last year. ARR provides housing subsidies and employment and stabilization services for 40 adults chronically experiencing homelessness for up to 24 months. A number of employment programs and city agencies, as well as ECS's own Workforce Development and Problem Solving teams, provide referrals.

Step Up to Freedom, the second RRH program was launched in May, during the Shelter-in-Place. Step Up to Freedom provides stability to 40 individuals who are exiting or recently exited the criminal justice system, with the goal of enabling participants to permanently exit the system and achieve housing security. This programmatic partnership between ECS and the [San Francisco Adult Probation Department](https://sfgov.org/adultprobation) (sfgov.org/adultprobation), with financial support from the State of California, [Tipping Point Community](https://tippingpoint.org) (tippingpoint.org), and the [San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing](https://hsh.sfgov.org/services/coordinated-entry) (hsh.sfgov.org/services/coordinated-entry), addresses the disproportionate rate of homelessness among recently released populations. Both programmatic areas follow the [National Alliance to End Homelessness RRH standards](https://endhomelessness.org/rapid-re-housing-works) (endhomelessness.org/rapid-re-housing-works) to ensure success for the participants.

Thank You For Your Support



ECS gratefully acknowledges our Foundation and corporate funders for their robust partnership in addressing increased needs during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Bank of America Charitable Foundation * Catalyst Kitchens

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Dauber Foundation * Dodge & Cox Investment Managers

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George F. Jewett Foundation * George H. Sandy Foundation

Menorah Park * Radiance Christian Church

The Albertson's Companies Foundation

The San Francisco Foundation * Silicon Valley Bank

Tipping Point Community * United Way Bay Area

Walter & Elise Haas Fund * Wells Fargo Foundation

Directly engage and become a part of the solution to homelessness.

[Donate Today
\(ecs-sf.org/donatenow\)](https://ecs-sf.org/donatenow)

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