

The Spotlight

HIGHLIGHTING PEOPLE, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES



SEPTEMBER 2019

Adult Coordinated Entry: SF's Gateway to Exiting Homelessness

Episcopal Community Services operates San Francisco's **Adult Coordinated Entry** (ACE) system, the gateway for people experiencing homelessness in the city to be matched with the services they need.

ECS became the lead agency of ACE for the SF Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing in November 2018. This critical system was designed to provide a clear, standardized, citywide system to assess and prioritize the needs of people living on the streets, as well as a streamlined process to connect them to solutions to help them exit homelessness.

ACE is essential to effectively assessing and identifying the most vulnerable individuals and prioritizing them for solutions at **Navigation Centers**, as well as permanent supportive housing. Since ACE launched in fall of 2018, ECS and its ACE partners have assessed over 6,000 people experiencing homelessness to determine their eligibility for ACE services. The program has helped at least 543 people and housing and another 305 move off the streets and into Navigation Centers.



Through Adult Coordinated Entry, ECS helps find solutions to homelessness for clients like "Janice," "Sean," and their dog Prince.

Click here to read the full article (<https://ecs-sf.org/?p=4607>)

Staff Spotlight



Welcome Munisha Vohra, Director of Clinical Services

Munisha Vohra is ECS's new Director of Clinical Services, bringing nearly 25 years of experience in providing services and support for vulnerable populations. She has extensive experience in social work, program management, staff development and supervision, interagency collaboration, child welfare, and the juvenile court system. Her clinical expertise also includes dual diagnosis, elder dementia, and psychosocial care for families facing cancer.

Prior to joining ECS, Munisha served as Supervisor for Contra Costa County Child & Family Services and as a Therapist for Cancer Support Community. She holds a Doctor of Psychology degree from JFK University, Master of Social Work from CSU East Bay, and an MA from Sikh National College in India. She is also a licensed clinical social worker. In addition to English, Munisha is fluent in Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu.

In this newly created position, Munisha oversees the full continuum of care ECS provides to its clients. She leads and supervises the Shelters SF-START Behavioral Health team and the Adult Coordinated Entry clinical team. She also oversees our pilot implementation of Medi-Cal-billable behavioral health services across ECS's 13 supportive housing sites, which include more than 1,000 units. Munisha also collaborates with all ECS directors to provide clinical support and leadership to ensure that all ECS guests and residents have the quality of care and support they need.

"I have been blessed to have a career focused on serving and empowering people who have experienced profound trauma," said Munisha. "I am honored to be a part of ECS's mission to eradicate homelessness and to nurture the strong human spirit that lives in all of us."

Allen Matkins Backpack Drive Helps Families Get Back to School

Families at ESC supportive housing sites are ready to go back to school thanks to a generous donation of 136 backpacks filled with school supplies from our corporate partner Allen Matkins.

On August 15th and 16th, backpacks and supplies were distributed to dozens of K-12 students who live at ECS's supportive housing sites in South of Market and Mission Bay.



Allen Matkins raised \$4,500 from its staff by hosting a pay-to-play Bingo event, letting employees buy the chance to wear jeans to the office for a week, and holding a partner karaoke where they could pay to hear a partner sing. The firm's staff and attorneys personally stocked the backpacks with supplies for the various grade groups. "It was a great team effort and really is exciting to be able to see a finished product and know it will be going to a great cause," said Elise Perez, Allen Matkins' Human Resources Generalist.

We're so grateful to Allen Matkins for their valued partnership and longstanding support, including this latest gift to help set these eager kids on a path to success!

See **photos in our gallery** (<https://ecs-sf.org/back-to-school-backpack-drive>).

How ECS Supports Families Like Shardonnae Mitchell's



Shardonnae Mitchell and her daughters.

Ninety-seven families, including 161 children, live in Supportive Housing provided by Episcopal Community Services. Those include **Shardonnae Mitchell** and her family, who have lived in ECS supportive housing in Mission Bay for nearly five years.

Before that, the Mitchells ended up in homelessness the way many families do — through eviction. Shardonnae, her partner, their newborn baby, and Shardonnae's mother were evicted from the apartment they shared for eight years. They then stayed in a family shelter in San Francisco while Shardonnae cared for their one-year-old child and was expecting their second child, and her partner worked two full-time jobs.

"Now, I am somewhere where my kids are secure and safe," said Shardonnae. "We have friends here, and I am working full-time. Every Wednesday, my kids go to the Drawbridge Arts Group, which they love a lot. It's held in our community room. We participate in community meetings, events, trips, and activities. I really loved that two years in a row we got to go to a water park and amusement park. More than 20 families went."

Both of Shardonnae's kids are now in school, one in elementary and the other in transitional kindergarten. "I want my kids to graduate, go to college, succeed, and find a career that they love," she said. With her life stabilized, Shardonnae now has the opportunity to pursue her own dream of being a nurse.

"I am very grateful for ECS, because they helped me find a job, go back to school, and have a career."

September is Healthy Aging Month

It's national Healthy Aging Month, and ECS is helping the seniors we serve celebrate and make the best of their golden years.

ECS has long been one of San Francisco's leading providers of interim and supportive housing and other services for homeless and/or low-income seniors. Our [Canon Kip Senior Center](#) serves more than 1,400 seniors annually, providing a vital hub of daytime meals, case management services, and community activities for older adults.



ECS's First Director of Healthy Aging

Seniors who are currently or formerly homeless comprise roughly one-third of residents at ECS shelters and supportive housing sites. And seniors are the fastest growing demographic among homeless populations—their number is expected to double in major cities over the next decade.

To better meet the chronic, high-acuity needs of this growing population, last November ECS hired its first Director of Healthy Aging, **Liz Tarzon**. In this role, Tarzon is dedicated to assisting all ECS staff in serving our seniors effectively, including leading the creation of a new model of care specifically for seniors. She continues to lead and expand ECS's efforts to provide education, training, and public policy advocacy to help seniors age healthily in place.

New Senior Supportive Housing Coming to 1064 Mission Street

One of our most exciting developments is in the works to help unhoused, highly vulnerable seniors: In fall 2021, ECS will open [the city's largest Supportive Housing residence](#) in partnership with Mercy Housing and the City of San Francisco. Located at 1064 Mission Street (at 7th Street), this new building will provide 256 supportive housing units for individuals, **104 of which will be exclusively for seniors**.



A rendering of the new Supportive Housing building coming to 1064 Mission Street.

Throughout Healthy Aging Month, keep an eye on ECS's social media accounts ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#)) for posts about fun activities and other information about our work to help seniors live their best lives.

Make a Greater Impact on Homelessness Every Month



Sign up to give monthly and get a free ECS mug!

We invite you to join the growing number of heroes who are signing up to make an automatic monthly donation of \$10-\$50 to serve those experiencing homelessness in their community. Just go to our [donation page \(https://bit.ly/2hCt2nx\)](https://bit.ly/2hCt2nx), select the "Monthly Gift" option, and complete the information.

When you become a monthly donor, you join ECS's elite group of partners who regularly make a difference in the lives of seniors, veterans, families, and children who are experiencing homelessness every month.

Sign Up Now and Get a Free Mug: If you [sign up as a monthly donor \(https://bit.ly/2hCt2nx\)](https://bit.ly/2hCt2nx) of \$25 or more by September 30, 2019, you'll get one of our fabulous Episcopal Community Services mugs for free.

What are you waiting for? **Make a difference this month** (<https://bit.ly/2hCt2nx>) – and every month!

Directly engage and become a part of the solution.

[Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[Donate Today](#)

Episcopal Community Services | 165 8th Street | 415.487.3300 | ecs-sf.org

