

OCTOBER 2020

Episcopal Community Services

The Spotlight

Join Top Chef Masters Winner Chef Chris Cosentino at **ECS's Virtual Friendsgiving!** Tickets on Sale Now



On November 7 at 6:30 pm, join us around Top Chef Master Chris Cosentino's **Virtual Friendsgiving table**. Sip an artisanal, seasonal mocktail while Chef Chris prepares a three-course culinary feast.

Bay Area guests who **purchase tickets by October 22** (givergy.us/ECS) may select to have this three-course meal and mocktail delivered to your door to enjoy during the event! All guests nationwide can enjoy a virtual seat at Chef Chris's table by **purchasing tickets by November 7** (givergy.us/ECS) We look forward to celebrating Friendsgiving with you!

Get Your Tickets Now!
(givergy.us/ECS)

Your ticket makes an impact! Funds raised will support the CHEFS (Conquering Homelessness through Employment in Food Services) culinary training program and address heightened food insecurity right here in San Francisco.

Introducing Rapid Rehousing Staff Members

ECS embraces a culture of dignity, equity, and opportunity for everyone involved in our organization. This is central to our mission, strategy, and programs. As such, we greatly value the lived experiences of our staff, residents, guests, and clients. Their voices are critical to ensuring that we provide the holistic services that meet each individual's needs and support them in achieving their goals. In our Reentry Rapid Rehousing Program, staff members Heather Leach and Garry Grady share how their lived experiences guide and inform their work at ECS.

"When an individual who is formerly incarcerated comes into the office, they are full of apprehension," explains one of the staff members. "Myself being formerly incarcerated gains the trust of my clients. This shared experience allows my brothers and sisters to relax and realize that our program may be something which will help them."

Heather Leach



Heather Leach, ECS Rapid Rehousing Navigator/Tenancy and Housing Stabilization Specialist, speaks to program participants about her lived experience of incarceration and addiction. She is both a Rapid Rehousing program staff member and client.

In 2012, Heather was arrested and incarcerated. While in jail, she joined an in-custody drug and alcohol program and earned two Associates degrees, the first woman to graduate from this program with two degrees. Prior to her release, she secured transitional housing and shortly thereafter, employment with ECS. Then she joined the Rapid Rehousing program.

“This is not just about housing,” Heather says. “I am driven to never be incarcerated again. When I was accepted into the Rehousing Program and signed my lease, that was true freedom! I come home to my apartment. I am proud to pay my bills a month ahead of time. This program not only offers an incredible financial subsidy, but there is also a financial clinic. When I finish the program, I will be stable and able to thrive in San Francisco.”

Garry Grady



Like Heather, ECS Rapid Rehousing Navigator and Justice Involved Specialist Garry Grady is a participant in the Step Up To Freedom program, a partnership between the San Francisco Adult Probation Department, Tipping Point Community, and ECS.

Garry brings his lived experience of incarceration and housing instability to his work with clients experiencing homelessness with a history of involvement in the criminal justice system.

“When I was released [from San Quentin State Prison], I had no options for housing,” Garry says. In July, he moved from a shelter into transitional housing, noting that through the Rapid Rehousing program at ECS, he has the opportunity to seek permanent stable housing. Garry is particularly pleased that his stability has enabled him to reconnect with his family.

“Being in this program is wonderful. Having a chance to have rental assistance is a miracle for someone recently released from prison,” he says. “I am not only doing it for myself to be successful, but to provide opportunities for my fellow brother and sisters leaving incarceration.”

ECS Board of Directors Elects Officers

The Episcopal Community Services Board of Directors elected the following officers for the 2020-2021 fiscal year:

President: Keith Geeslin (Partner, Francisco Partners Management LLC) **Vice-**

President/Treasurer: Yvonne Tatsuno (Controller, Retired)

Vice-President/Secretary: The Rev. Dr. Susanna Singer (Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of Ministry Development, Church Divinity School of the Pacific)

Congratulations to our officers and thank you for serving our community!

ECS Welcomes New Board Members



Dara Silveira

Dara Levinson Silveira is an attorney at Keller Benvenuti Kim LLP. She has been involved with ECS since 2017, first serving as a volunteer at the Sanctuary Shelter kitchen and then on the planning committee for the CHEFS Gala. Ms. Silveira notes, "I'm honored to join the ECS Board. As a resident of SoMa since 2012, I've seen firsthand the good work ECS does both in the neighborhood and in the broader San Francisco community. I'm constantly impressed by how innovative and compassionate ECS is in its approach to providing housing, shelter, job training, and essential services to San Franciscans experiencing homelessness."



Tajel Shah

As Chief Assistant Treasurer of San Francisco, Tajel Shah serves as Deputy to José Cisneros. Previously, she managed policy and planning for the Department of Children, Youth and their Families and started one of the first AmeriCorps programs in San Francisco. Ms. Shah served as the first woman of color to lead the national advocacy organization United States Student Association. She lives in San Francisco with her husband and two children. Ms. Shah joined the Board of Directors to support the ECS mission and the staff who dedicate their lives to bringing justice to those experiencing homelessness.



Jonathan T. Rodriguez

Jonathan T. Rodriguez is a civil trial attorney who owns his own practice and lives in San Francisco with his wife and son. "I was raised in upstate New York and moved to San Francisco in the early 1990s and fell in love with the City, its history, the surroundings, and most of all, the people. Human dignity. It is a concept that continues to evolve in legal jurisprudence and social justice. ECS' extraordinary success and deep knowledge in

housing our vulnerable neighbors represents a profound endowment to human dignity. I am both humbled and excited to be a member of the Board supporting its mission."

CHEFS Culinary Training Program Re-Opens

Following health and safety guidelines established by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, ECS's CHEFS program has resumed its culinary training. We invite individuals to accelerate their path towards becoming a culinary professional through this workforce development opportunity. The comprehensive, individually-centered program features culinary training, job readiness, and career services. While programmatic adaptations have been made due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the core of the program is the same - training that will allow participants to alleviate poverty through career-wage employment in food production. Programming will take place in the ECS kitchen and remotely. This new structure enables the CHEFS program to offer ongoing open enrollment. To register, contact workforce@ecs-sf.org.

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

Donate Today
ecs-sf.org/donatenow

Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco
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