

# The Spotlight

HIGHLIGHTING PEOPLE, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES



June 2019

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## With Rising Homelessness, We Need Leadership More Than Ever

by Beth Stokes, ECS Executive Director

You may have heard last month that the annual count required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released figures that showed the estimated number of homeless people has increased, not just in San Francisco, but also across the Bay Area and the state. The city's point-in-time count found 8,011 people homeless in San Francisco, a 17% increase from two years ago, when the last count was taken.

It can be easy to get discouraged in the face of setbacks, but these numbers should only strengthen our resolve to invest in the kinds of comprehensive, best-practice strategies needed to successfully address the complex nature of homelessness. Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco (ECS) will continue to strengthen our dynamic range of services, from the Adult Coordinated Entry System to our shelters and supportive housing, rapid rehousing, navigation centers and our Workforce Development and Social Enterprise Program, which includes our CHEFS culinary training program. Last week, for example, we celebrated the graduation of 15 CHEFS students, with several already employed.



We will also continue to innovate new solutions. Our Navigation Centers and Adult Coordinated Entry System, which ECS is managing for all of San Francisco, have shown promising results in connecting people to the services they need. Since we opened the Bryant Street Navigation in January, we've served 458 individuals on their pathway out of homelessness.

But we can't do it alone, and there's no quick fix. Ending homelessness requires full-scale partnerships and support from business partners, community members, and public partners across the city, state, region, and the country. We need to do more to ensure we build housing that serves everyone's needs and bolster the safety nets that keep people from falling through the cracks when they're at risk of losing their home.

Thank you for ongoing support. We know that with all of us working together and focusing on individual needs, we can successfully address the needs of our unhoused neighbors.

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## ECS Announces Formal Partnership with Bi-Rite Family of Businesses



We are pleased to share that San Francisco cornerstone Bi-Rite Family of Businesses has entered into a formal partnership with ECS. A longtime partner of ECS, most particularly in our CHEFS program, Bi-Rite Family of Businesses "seeks to uplift the work of nonprofit organizations with underserved populations through their social impact initiatives. At the intersection of food, youth, and education, Bi-Rite addresses critical unmet needs while creating community through food." From their initial in-kind donation for the graduating cohort of ECS's workforce development program in 2016 to their multi-level support of ECS today, Bi-Rite shares ECS's values of community and collaboration to effect positive social change in our community.

Led by native San Franciscan and second-generation owner Sam Mogannam, Bi-Rite Family of Businesses leverages their platform and resources to build a hiring pipeline for students with lived experience of homelessness. Their commitment to ECS includes direct support of the CHEFS program and sponsorship of ECS events throughout the year. **ECS thanks Bi-Rite for their partnership.**

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## ECS Families Welcomed at SF Giants Game

Hosted by partner Bank of America, Episcopal Community Services supportive housing families attended the San Francisco Giants vs. Arizona Razorbacks baseball game at Oracle stadium on Sunday, May 26th. Nine of the children were invited to participate in a pre-game experience on the field, where each was assigned a field position and given a new baseball.



After the starting line-up for each team was presented, the announcer called the guests from ECS to the field. A moment later, the players joined the kids at their respective positions and signed their baseball. Following this wonderful moment, the children went

into the stands where they joined their families to enjoy the game. "This is fantastic!" one of the children cheered. ECS gratefully appreciates the partnership and generosity of the Giants and Bank of America.



ECS serves approximately 100 families in our Supportive Housing program. To learn more, see our Housing webpage (<http://ecs-sf.org/program-map>).

*In 2018, ECS was awarded the Neighborhood Builders Award by Bank of America.*

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## Staff Spotlight **Kenneth Harris, Kitchen Manager**



Kenneth Harris is the kitchen manager for the ECS Sanctuary and Next Door shelters. Since starting as a cook for ECS six years ago, he's worked his way up and continues to be fueled by his passion for cooking and helping people.

"I like making food, I like the taste, I like the results that people tell you from food, how good it is," he said.

As the kitchen manager, Kenneth hires staff and manages budgets, creates the daily menus, and takes a hands-on role in ensuring that the shelters serve nutritious and delicious meals. He also helps manage a garden at the Sanctuary shelter where staff grow fresh vegetables that are cooked and served as part of the meals for shelter guests.

The satisfaction that Kenneth's guests get from his food particularly resonates with him because of his own experience of being homeless for about a year in the 1980s. At that time, "We didn't have these options," he said. "You were just homeless, that was it. We didn't have these avenues where you could go and have shelter, and go get fed."

These days, Kenneth said he's glad to be a part of ECS' efforts to help those in a position where he once was. "You put your heart into it. You make a difference."

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## Why I Volunteer at ECS

by Gregory M. Zinkl, Ph.D., J.D.

After 20 years of living in Chicago, I moved to San Francisco to take a job as a patent attorney at a large biotech pharmaceutical company. I first lived in the South of Market District. After a year of living among individuals experience homeless, the disparity between the haves and have-nots was striking and impossible for me to ignore. I resolved to do something about it, but I realized that I was just one guy with a demanding job. I researched organizations that work with individuals experiencing homeless and chose ECS because the organization provides solutions to clients to break the cycle of homelessness. I like solutions and I want to be part of them.

## Volunteer Spotlight



I was more than a bit out of my comfort zone when I started volunteering with ECS. At first, I helped serve meals at Sanctuary Shelter. After a few months, I met with ECS volunteer coordinator Amar Al Hosani, and we discussed how I could increase my involvement. I had noticed the library position posted on the website, and with my mom having been a librarian for forever, I thought it could be an interesting fit. I applied, interviewed, and was placed in the library, for which I volunteer almost every week for 2-3 hours. In addition to the usual checking out books and shelving returned books, I catalog new acquisitions, update the databases, and keep the tables and floors clean. I also convinced a colleague to donate her **San Francisco Chronicle** and **Wall Street Journal** newspapers every week so that shelter guests have physical papers to read.

I'm now into my second year with ECS and plan on continuing to volunteer. I lead an employee resource group (ERG) at my work, and I have convinced the members that working with ECS is worth their time as a group and within the mission of the ERG. In fact, we are planning a (targeted) book drive to refresh the library's book collection. My employer provides grants to ECS in recognition of my volunteer hours; I'm glad to say that ECS has received substantial funds as a consequence of my time in the library and in the dining halls.

**Thank you to volunteers like Greg who make ECS's work in engaging participants with dignity and respect possible!**

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**Directly engage and become a part of the solution.**

Volunteer Opportunities

Donate Today

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Episcopal Community Services | 165 8th Street | 415.487.3300 | [ecs-sf.org](http://ecs-sf.org)

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