

DECEMBER 2020

Episcopal Community Services

# The Spotlight

## A Year of Challenges and Dedicated Service



The past nine-plus months of the COVID-19 pandemic have been challenging for all of us, and especially for our vulnerable neighbors—seniors, families with small children, veterans, and other adult individuals—who lack permanent, stable housing. Food insecurity has increased. Necessary social distancing has resulted in increased isolation. Income has decreased. Episcopal Community Services (ECS) in partnership with the City of San Francisco and other service providers have been working persistently to provide the support, safety, and care that those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness deserve.

ECS is serving 900 individuals who are staying in eight Project RoomKey Hotels. Our Adult Coordinated Entry and Rapid Rehousing teams are respectively providing housing solutions (more than 500 since the first Sheltering-in-Place orders were issued in March). Our CHEFS team is preparing more than 1,000 meals every day for our Project RoomKey guests and our supportive housing residents, as well as continuing our daily lunches for vulnerable neighborhood seniors. We are continuing to follow stringent health and safety protocols to protect our participants and our staff. Our case managers, housing services staff, hotel staff, behavioral health staff, and adult coordinated entry/problem solving teams are providing mental health care. This year, we are providing nearly 3,000 gifts in our annual holiday gift drive.

We look to the new year with hope. We will continue our partnership with Mayor London Breed and her staff, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), Department of Aging and Adult Services, Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development, San Francisco Adult Probation Department, as well as partner organizations such as Mercy Housing, the San Francisco Housing Accelerator Fund, SF-Marin Food Bank, Tipping Point Community, and many others.

In 2021, we will continue to strengthen our current programming and innovate and introduce new programming to address the public health crisis of homelessness. We are very grateful for your partnership, and we look forward to the new year.

With gratitude,



Beth Stokes, Executive Director

# Make a Difference in San Francisco

Everyone needs and deserves safe, quality, and stable housing. While the public health crisis of homelessness is complex, it is also solvable – and housing is the solution. Episcopal Community Services (ECS) is a leader in San Francisco's efforts to preserve and acquire additional units of permanent supportive housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness. In partnership with the City of San Francisco, ECS was awarded Project Homekey funding from the State of California to purchase two buildings for supportive housing. In fact, we are projected to **double our supportive housing portfolio in 2021**, providing over 1,000 additional homes in our city.

**Your gift to ECS this holiday season creates pathways to stable housing for people experiencing homelessness.**

When you **give** ([ecs-sf.org/donatenow](https://ecs-sf.org/donatenow)) to ECS, you invest in our mission to prevent and end homelessness in San Francisco. *The impact of your donation may be doubled if your employer offers a matching gift!* Our tax identification number is 94-3096716.

**DONATE**

## Interfaith Winter Shelter Is Now Open

Episcopal Community Services (ECS), in collaboration with the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and the San Francisco Interfaith Council, opened the Interfaith Winter Shelter on Monday, November 30, 2020. Now in its 32nd year, the **Interfaith Winter Shelter Program** ([ecs-sf.org/interfaith-winter-shelter](https://ecs-sf.org/interfaith-winter-shelter)) shelter capacity for people experiencing homelessness during the winter season.



As San Francisco Mayor London Breed noted, “The winter season can be particularly difficult for people experiencing homelessness, and it is our responsibility as a city to make sure that everyone has a safe place to sleep at night.”

In past years, the shelter rotated between four host sites (ECS's Canon Kip Senior Center and three churches) with meals prepared and served by volunteers from more than 50 congregations. However, COVID-19 health precautions require a very different model for this season. This year, shelter services will remain at one host site, the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, through January 31, 2021. The program is administered by ECS's **Interim Housing** staff.

In keeping with social distancing and safety protocols, the shelter serves up to 67 individuals experiencing homelessness with ECS's CHEFS team providing three meals per day. Based on COVID-19 public health guidance for congregate-style shelters, the 2020-2021 Interfaith Winter Shelter Program accepts only those individuals referred through the centralized referral process managed by San Francisco's COVID-19 Command Center.

The shelter capacity expansion that the Interfaith Winter Shelter Program will bring to our homelessness emergency response system is critical. It is of the utmost importance that vulnerable members of our community are not only able to seek respite from the elements, but Shelter-In-Place in a safe and dignified manner.

# An Outpouring of Support

## Thank You to Our Holiday Gift Drive Donors!



The ECS community responded abundantly to provide more than 2,700 gifts this holiday season to ECS residents and participants. Gifts include blankets, fleece jackets, towel sets, hand-knitted scarves and hats, super-sized hygiene kits, gift cards, and more, as well as toys for the children we serve. Nearly two dozen faith organizations, companies, and philanthropic organizations participated, as well as many individuals, with both cash and gift donations. Dozens of families and individuals across the country sent in home-made holiday cards to accompany each gift.

### Thank you to our Community Partners!

Airbnb  
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Clever  
DropBox  
First Mennonite Church of San Francisco  
Get Volunteering  
Grace Cathedral  
Giving Tree  
Holy Innocents Episcopal Church  
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Sacred Heart Community Service SF  
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St. Ignatius Episcopal Church  
St. James Episcopal Church  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church  
St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church  
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### From All of us at Episcopal Community Services



*Take care of yourselves. Take care of each other. Be safe.*

Become a part of the solution to homelessness.

Donate Today