



Raphael House

Moving Families from Crisis to Community

**How did
Raphael House
serve families
last year?**

106

families moved into
stable housing

2,652

individuals accessed
the Residential and
AfterCare programs

118

days was the
average length of
stay

93%

of AfterCare families
remain stably
housed

140

children participated
in weekend outings

640

children and their
families received
gifts during the
holiday season
through Adopt-A-
Family

Dear Friends,

Joining Raphael House marks a significant turning point for me both professionally and personally. My first few months here have been busy; our staff and board are always on the move as we respond to families in crises in an immediate and comprehensive way. The experience has been rich, and I'm grateful for this opportunity to lead and learn from an organization and a vast community of supporters who share my bedrock belief that it is our duty to help the most vulnerable children and families in our community.



Today, families with children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. Studies show that children who have been homeless are more likely to experience developmental problems, educational delays, behavioral issues, and learning disabilities. The stress of homelessness and economic instability can lead to lapses in education and long-term adverse health effects.

In response, what Raphael House has to offer is a port amidst the storm of family crises, a crucial intervention that can actually reverse the negative impact of homelessness on children and their parents.

What is most significant about the services provided by Raphael House is that they empower individuals to make lasting changes in their lives that can interrupt generational cycles of poverty, underemployment, and poor mental or physical health.

In this issue we give you a firsthand look at the latest developments and successes of some of our core programs: Residential Shelter, AfterCare, ChildReach and Academic Enrichment. It is through these key initiatives that we offer solutions to homelessness and poverty for at-risk families in the Bay Area.

Of course, none of this programming would be possible without the loyal and heartfelt support of our individual donors, private foundations, and corporate partners. Your efforts to partner with us during both the challenging and rewarding times speaks to your commitment to impact change in the lives of homeless families. I look forward to our work together as we further our mission to help at-risk families achieve stable housing and financial independence, while strengthening family bonds and personal dignity.

Sincerely,

Amanda Heier
Executive Director

CURRENT VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Work Force Development: *Mock Interviewers, Career Advisors* • AfterCare: *ESL Tutors, On-call Child Care Supervisors*
Kitchen: *Drivers for Food Bank Pick-ups, Dinner Servers*

To access our online volunteer application or to learn more about volunteer opportunities, please visit raphaelhouse.org.

Commitment Begets Commitment: Teen's Dedication to Academic Success is Supported by AfterCare Staff's Dedication to Helping Her Succeed

Sasha was fourteen when her mother and father brought her and her two younger brothers to Raphael House. Newly immigrated from Mongolia, she started school and did well in math, but struggled in most of her other subjects because of her English language skills. But Sasha loved school and was determined to do well despite her barriers. Every day after school, when she got back to Raphael House, she participated in the After School Program, where she would work on her homework and practice her English skills.

Three years later, Sasha and her family were living on their own, but they maintained a connection to Raphael House. Sasha, who was now a junior

in high school, had enrolled in the Raphael House Saturday Tutoring Program and was committed to attending three weekends a month, for the entire school year.

That summer Sasha got to take a trip to Washington D.C. with Raphael House staff and other teens from the program. While on the trip, she talked about how much she wanted to go to college and how she was determined to make her dream come true. During her senior year of high school, Raphael House staff worked with her once a week, for three months, offering feedback and support as she crafted her essay and navigated the daunting college application process.

After sending her last application, Sasha told the Raphael House staff members who had been helping her that now she needed to work so she could save for her books. They helped her identify some possible job and internship opportunities and with writing a resume and preparing for interviews. This coming summer Sasha, who says she is interested in studying medicine, will be an intern for the San Francisco Health Department!

She recently told the staff who'd worked with her, "I can't believe how far I have come. I was so scared of what the future was going to be for me, but now I am so excited for what the future will bring. I never thought places like Raphael House existed. Thank you."

ESL Tutoring Helps One Mom Communicate with Confidence at Her Job

Teresa, a single mother of two, was experiencing homelessness when she entered the Raphael House Residential Program two years ago. Then within just a few months, she'd found a job that she loved at a social work agency, which made it possible for her and her family to move into stable housing. But with English being her second language, Teresa was very self-conscious of her writing and speaking abilities. In the first year at her new job, she would often ask colleagues to make phone calls for her and was constantly worrying about the content of her emails. Tired of having to struggle because of the language barrier, Teresa decided to enroll in the Raphael House ESL Program.

Working over the past 10 months with her volunteer tutor, Polly, Teresa has been learning basic

concepts that have helped improve her written English. Polly has also helped her to edit work emails and to practice writing messages for various situations which has made her feel much more confident in her work. Teresa plans to focus next on furthering her knowledge of conversational English and practicing her phone skills.

We regularly get requests from parents and teens seeking English instruction at various levels of proficiency, so we have an ongoing need for individuals who are interested in volunteering as ESL tutors. If you have a passion for learning and helping others, this may be a rewarding and exciting opportunity for you! It is not necessary for tutors to know a foreign language or to have prior teaching experience. To apply to be an ESL tutor, you may submit an application online at: www.rafaelhouse.org.



Slide Ranch is a small educational farm near Muir Beach, where we were able to meet goats, catch chickens, and make cheese!



Recently, the ChildReach Program enjoyed a performance by the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra and the Trio Chaskinakuy, who play traditional South American instruments. This concert taught us all about the evolution of music and instruments; we learned that you can make music out of just about anything, and that music from around the world is delightful.

Mother and Daughter on Track for College Degrees with Help From Work Force Development

Last year, a single mother, Susan, and her three children (7, 9, and 17), were able to move out of Raphael House and into their own apartment in Oakland. When Susan first came to Raphael House she had just left an abusive relationship and had lost her job and housing during the transition. While she now had a safe place to call home, she still needed to secure employment. However, she

resume, writing cover letters, and preparing for interviews. After working consistently in our WFD Program and completing weekly action plans for herself, she found a job in the security industry. But she has not stopped there. Now, Susan is working on finishing her degree in Nursing.

In addition to working toward her own degree in evening classes, Susan has been helping

“I was barely staying above water last year at this time, and now I’m on dry land.”

was overwhelmed emotionally from navigating the changes of being a single mother, juggling the needs of her children, and recovering from an abusive relationship.

First, Susan focused on creating a stable home and schedule for her children so that she could put her full attention on re-entering the job market. With guidance from Valerie, our Workforce Development (WFD) Specialist, Susan worked for three months on applying for jobs, building her

her oldest daughter with her college applications. She is elated to report that her daughter has been accepted to her top choice school within the UC system and will be receiving a scholarship! She recently told her Case Manager, “I pinch myself to make sure that I’m really standing in this world I’ve created for us. I was barely staying above water last year at this time, and now I’m on dry land. I just know we’re all going to finish college someday.”

Raphael House Programs Include:

Core Programs

Residential Shelter • AfterCare
ChildReach • Academic Enrichment

Adults

Case Management • Workforce Development • ESL
Financial Literacy • Mental Health Services • Housing First

Children

Evening Activity • Scholarships for Extra-curricular Activities
Weekend Field Trips • Summer Camp
After School and Weekend Tutoring

Two New Community Partners Bring Sweet Dreams and Birthday Wishes to Raphael House

Sleep Train Mattresses 4 Kids:

According to Alyssa Del Vigna from Sleep Train/ Mattress Discounters, it normally takes weeks before she’s able to respond to the requests that the company receives for donations. But when she read that Raphael House needed help replacing the mattresses and box springs for the bedrooms at the shelter, she had to get in touch with us right away. As a Northern California nonprofit dedicated to assisting at-risk children and their families, we were exactly the kind of organization that Sleep Train had in mind when they created their Mattresses 4 Kids Program. Through this new partnership, Sleep Train has already provided us with upwards of 30 new beds over the past few months, and they will continue to do so as needed, on a monthly basis, for both our Residential and AfterCare families.

A Celebration of You:

Patti Hester, who had recently relocated to San Francisco, heard about Raphael House from friends and associates. She had been seeking a reputable charity in the community that dedicated its services to families in need, through which she could begin providing birthday packages for children via her new nonprofit organization, A Celebration of You. Patti said that she felt honored to be able to partner with Raphael House after all that she had heard from others about the services we provide for families. A Celebration of You (ACOY) helps to ensure that every child’s birthday is special by delivering cakes made by local bakeries and presents (chosen by the parents) to families in need. Through our partnership, ACOY is now graciously providing birthday presents for our children, on an ongoing basis. (Birthday cakes, an important Raphael House tradition, are still made by our chefs!)





Raphael House

Moving Families From Crisis to Community

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San Francisco, CA 94109-5817

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40th Anniversary Benefit Lunch

Celebrating 40 Years of
Service to our Community

Wednesday, June 1, 2011
11:30AM to 1:00PM
The Westin St. Francis

For further information, please call 415.345.7262

Raphael House of San Francisco

Mission

Raphael House is dedicated to helping at-risk children and their parents achieve stable housing and financial independence, while strengthening family bonds and personal dignity.

Contact Us

Mail: 1065 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

Phone (Main): 415.474.4621

Fax: 415.474.7020

Development Office: 415.474.3245

To learn more, please visit our website: raphaelhouse.org

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