Discovering Hope in a New Home: Hanna’s Story

For some people, a home is more than just a roof over your head. A home is a refuge...a place of safety and comfort. And for Hanna, her new home is just that.

A victim of domestic violence, Hanna found herself without a home after fleeing her house with her 11 year old daughter and 8 year old son. Hanna and her children lived first in a shelter, but when that fell through she was forced to move back in with her abuser. Hanna needed to find a permanent and stable home for her and her children—a place where she did not have to worry about her family’s safety.

And then Hanna came to West Valley Community Services.

With the help of the housing specialist, Hanna was able to move into shared housing. By working two jobs, she was able to cover the rent and supplemented her groceries with food from the food pantry. Hanna’s case manager encouraged her to apply for below market rate housing through the City of Cupertino, and in April 2018, Hanna and her two children were able to move into their own home.

Hanna and her children can now live without fear, and she is grateful to supporters and volunteers like you that made this happy ending possible.

Partners in Community: The Saratoga Sereno Group

For the last two years, the Sereno Group has provided funding to support Gift of Hope, our annual holiday gift program. Here is an interview with Saratoga Sereno Group’s Pelin Erdal about this partnership, and the culture of giving that infuses their organization.

What made you decide to support West Valley Community Services?

We know that the holidays can be an incredibly difficult and stressful time for families. The Saratoga Sereno Group office wanted to contribute to a
local organization that provided much needed goods and gifts for families and children living in the local community. I knew WVCS would be the perfect partner. Thanks to our office’s 95% participation rate, we were able to double our donation to the 2017 Holiday Gift Program. In total we were able to donate $15k to WVCS!

Please tell us about the 1% for Good Program.
The 1% for Good Program is completely voluntary and each agent who participates contributes 1% of their gross commission to the fund. Organizations are chosen quarterly by agent committees in each Sereno Group office.

What is your and your company's philosophy of giving back?
Sereno Group is a small (but mighty!) real estate brokerage in Silicon Valley with 357 agents and 9 offices. Our company was founded in 2006 by two visionaries who sought to create a revolutionary real estate business model - one that was focused on quality over quantity, social impact, and doing good in the community. To date, companywide Sereno Group has contributed approximately $2,000,000 to over 130 local nonprofits. We love that our clients know they’re giving back to the community.

Why do you think it is important for community members, corporations, and realtors to support the fight against hunger and homelessness?
One of the guiding principles at Sereno Group is that personal choices affect our community in unexpected ways. We feel strongly about doing what we can as individuals to support the community. But Sereno Group also feels a responsibility to bring awareness to the need for more businesses to create social consciousness within their company. Our hope is that 1% for Good will inspire others to contribute to the collective good because that is how we can truly propel change.

Meet Kay, a senior living in Cupertino with her husband, Barry. Barry requires a walker to get around and is no longer able to drive. Like her husband, Kay also cannot drive and was struggling to make it to and from work every day.

Kay is not alone. For many seniors in the west valley, the lack of affordable, safe, accessible transportation options leaves them stranded. Without the ability to participate in daily activities such as getting to medical appointments or work, shopping, and seeing friends, they become socially isolated and can experience serious mental and physical challenges. With poor bus route coverage and the lack of local train or light rail services, senior adults are finding it harder and harder to get where they need to go.

But now there is a solution. Thanks to a partnership between Supervisor Joe Simitian, Santa Clara County, VTA, and the West Valley cities and towns, all local seniors need to do is make a call to their local RYDE dispatcher to get where they need to go.

RYDE, short for “Reach Your Destination Easily,” offers affordable and reliable curb-to-curb transportation for seniors over the age of 55 living in Saratoga, Cupertino, Campbell, Monte Sereno, and Los Gatos.

For more information about RYDE please contact Sam Sloan, RYDE Coordinator at 669.220.0831 or by email at sams@wvcommunityservices.org. We hope you will consider taking a RYDE with us!
Finding a Home for Faizah

There are 7,400 homeless individuals living in Santa Clara County. Without a roof over their head, these men, women and children are facing the scorching summer heat and freezing winter nights without a home to call their own.

That was the problem facing 22 year old Faizah and her 18-month year old daughter Lily, who had been homeless on and off for 2 years. On any given night they were couch surfing at a friend’s apartment or living outdoors in a tent. Faizah felt her situation was hopeless...until she discovered West Valley Community Services. Faizah was immediately enrolled in WVCS’s Rapid Rehousing Program and within only a month, Faizah found a home.

Rapid Rehousing is based on the Housing First Model, in which quick and successful housing is the first step towards self-sufficiency. Once Faizah had her own apartment, she was able to get a new job. She was also connected to an array of services such as subsidized child care for her daughter. Faizah and Lily are just one of many families whose lives have been positively impacted by this program. Thanks to the support of people like you, Faizah and her child sleep safely and soundly every night without discomfort or fear.

Save The Date
Back to School Program—August 4, 2018

Each year, more than 150 low income and homeless children in Kindergarten through 12th grade receive new clothing, school supplies, and backpacks to help prepare them for the school year. Each child is accompanied by an adult volunteer as they select the clothing they need at Kohl’s in Campbell.

To learn about this program, to volunteer, or to sponsor a child, please contact Trishya Movilla at trishyam@wvcommunityservices.org.

Program Spotlight
Gift of Hope—December 16, 2017

For many families in need, the holiday season can cause increased financial hardships. This year WVCS was able to help 331 households and more than 800 individuals. Thanks to community volunteers, individual donors, corporations, local hospitals, O’Connor Hospital employees and the YMCA for making this program possible. We had nearly 60 volunteers who helped before and during the event. Thank you for supporting the 2017 Gift of Hope program.

New Outdoor Walk-In Refrigerator

West Valley Community Services has a new outdoor walk-in refrigerator, thanks to the generous support of the Rotary Club of Cupertino, the Western Digital Foundation, and a gift in memory of K. Fisk. The walk-in will help us distribute more food to the growing number of hungry people in our community. If you have not seen our walk-in yet, check it out next time you are at our office.

Like us...follow us...engage with us...WVCS is online!
Volunteer Spotlight:
Tina & Dennis Korabiak

April is National Volunteer Month, a perfect time to reflect on all the ways our volunteers make a difference in the lives of low income and homeless people in our community. We are so grateful to our volunteers for all they make possible—and Tina and Dennis Korabiak are perfect examples of why we love our volunteers!

Tina and Dennis help West Valley Community Services in so many ways. Tina volunteers in the food pantry and also leads food prep/cooking demos. Dennis has been helping West Valley Community Services on various projects along with helping out in the pantry.

“My shift and cooking demos provide just what I was looking for after retiring in 2012: physical work, friendly/interesting people, and perspective. I see firsthand the challenges faced by many and I value being personally connected to the needs of my community. I volunteer here because I see the positive results. It’s more than good intentions. Our work helps folks build better lives.” - Tina

“I was a City Planner, and I often developed future land use plans for different parts of San Jose. I explored locations for homeless shelters, some combined with community service providers. Shelters alone aren’t enough and these services are critical to raising client’s spirits and ability to get back on their own two feet. Continuing that work, I’m grateful to be helping West Valley Community Services.” - Dennis

Securing our Future:
Legacy Giving with WVCS

Impact Your Community...Create Your Legacy

Including West Valley Community Services in your estate plan enables you to make the most of your personal philanthropic objectives. By supporting something you care about through a planned gift, you can expect to gain some or all of the following benefits:

- Allow your personal values to make a lasting impact on the community
- Help West Valley Community Services continue to fight hunger and homelessness in your community
- Inspire others to join in your commitment
- Participate in special programs for Legacy Society members
- Gain valuable tax benefits

For more information about including WVCS in your will or estate plan, contact Kohinoor Chakravarty at kohinoorc@wvcommunityservices.org or 408.255.8033.