

2014–2015

ANNUAL REPORT



free from homelessness and family violence

CLIENT SUCCESS

Hard Work Builds Stability—With Our Help

Arkanas native Mercedes Alexander had moved to Los Angeles to start a new life in a region that provided lots of opportunity—but where she had no friends or family. Marriage and a baby daughter followed, but all was not well. “I hid the bruises and hoped my daughter wouldn’t notice,” Mercedes says. “I told myself I was staying for my daughter. Then I realized if it was really for her, I needed to leave.”

She and little Jolie* lived at our San Leandro Shelter for six months. The San Leandro Unified School District worked with Mercedes and the shelter’s case manager to ensure Jolie had a smooth transition to her new school. Mercedes quickly secured a part time as a school crossing guard. She worked closely with our case manager on budgeting

and goal setting, and participated in San Leandro Shelter’s onsite domestic violence support group.

Mercedes had some professional tax preparation experience, so she took the initiative and stopped in to a local tax prep office to introduce herself. Soon, she was hired there. When her stay at the San Leandro shelter was over, Mercedes was accepted into our Housing/Jobs linkages program. This program provides 18 months of rental subsidy while recipients work and/or participate in vocational training, develop independent living and life skills, and address individual or family issues.



Mercedes today (Photo by Patricia Bidar)

Today, Mercedes works as a tax preparer. Her dream is to own and operate her own tax service office. Jolie is doing well in school and Mercedes says they have both “fallen in love” with the City of San Leandro and hope to live here permanently. Mercedes has even joined our Circle of Strength monthly giving club. “So much was given to me,” she says. “I feel it is my responsibility to give back.”

**This name has been changed*



“BCC” LAVISHED WITH LOVE

Bessie Coleman Court was lavished with community love over the year, with major exterior paint and structural improvements funded by the City of Alameda, barbeque area and memorial garden improvement projects undertaken by Eagle Scout Connor Prime, and a major vegetable bed project by members of Trinity Lutheran Church. The site provides 52 units of supportive housing for formerly homeless survivors of domestic violence and their children.

“Spending the day positioning, filling with soil, and planting the raised beds was a wonderful way to work alongside some of the residents and get to know them,” says volunteer Colleen Vermillion. “We even created a seating area for their rest and relaxation.” BCC residents are making great use of the welcoming spaces, grateful to know how much the community cares.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Did you know one in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime? Men can also be victims. Apart from wounding individuals, families and communities, intimate partner violence has economic repercussions; namely missed work, health care, legal costs ... and homelessness. The National Network to End Domestic Violence's recent survey of domestic violence service providers revealed that the most common request for help that the provider could not meet was for housing.



I am proud that across the range of our services, Building Futures' top priority is to connect our clients with housing. Without it, no one can truly re-build safe and stable lives for themselves and their children. During 2014-15 we also provided mental health services, linkage to employment or public benefits, landlord and school advocacy, and so much more. But a laundry list of services can only say so much. I hope you are moved by Mercedes Alexander's story of abuse and triumph.

We are moved and empowered by community support for these individuals and families. I am grateful to each and every one of you who gives of your time and treasure to help your neighbors in need.

Sincerely,

Liz Varela

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SPEAKOUT AT ALAMEDA CITY HALL DRAWS CROWD, RAISES AWARENESS

In October, a well-attended "Speakout" and Resource Fair on the steps of Alameda City Hall marked Domestic Violence Awareness Month and helped raise awareness. The event featured speakers Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan, Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley, and Alameda, then-mayor Marie Gilmore and Chief of Police Paul Rolleri.



(L-R) County Supervisor Wilma Chan, Alameda Police Chief Paul Rolleri, former Alameda Mayor Marie Gilmore, and District Attorney Nancy O'Malley

"Alameda has been great about uniting against street crime. Now it's time for the community to address this crime that happens inside of our homes," said Chief Rolleri. The event was sponsored by the Alameda Domestic Violence Task Force, which is led by Building Futures. We are currently launching a Domestic Violence Task Force in San Leandro. For information about the Alameda of San Leandro Domestic Violence Task Force, please contact Annie Maltester at 510-924-3095 or amaltester@bfwc.org.

OUR MISSION

To build communities with underserved women and children where they are safely and supportively housed, free from homelessness and family violence.

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SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS

Building Futures seeks volunteers to serve on our board of directors and help lead and advance our mission, core values and sustainability. Ideal candidates have prior board experience and either human resources; "first responder" (i.e., fire, police, or sheriff's department); domestic violence services; nonprofit agency and/or finance backgrounds. If interested, please contact Nancy Heastings at n.heastings@comcast.net or 510-521-8534.



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BY THE NUMBERS

During 2014–15, Building Futures helped Alameda County individuals and families achieve successes large and small. While numbers tell only a part of the story, we are proud to share the statistics behind the many whose lives were changed for the better through our life-changing shelter, housing, and supportive services.

HOMELESS SHELTERS

Over the past twelve months, **204 women** and **119 children** were served at the Midway or San Leandro Shelter. In addition to meals and a welcoming place to call home, shelter residents benefited from case management, support groups, mental health services, school advocacy and linkage to housing—among many other services. (Our front page story relates the success of former San Leandro Shelter resident, Mercedes Alexander.)

HOUSING AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE

At our Housing Resource Center, we provided **257 people** with services designed to quickly re-house them after they became homeless, or help them avert homelessness. At Bessie Coleman Court, **52 households** were provided with a place to call home, as well case management and community gatherings for residents. (See page one article on volunteer-led improvements that made “BCC” a great place to call home.)



Building Futures' smiling staff (photo by Marilyn Hulbert)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

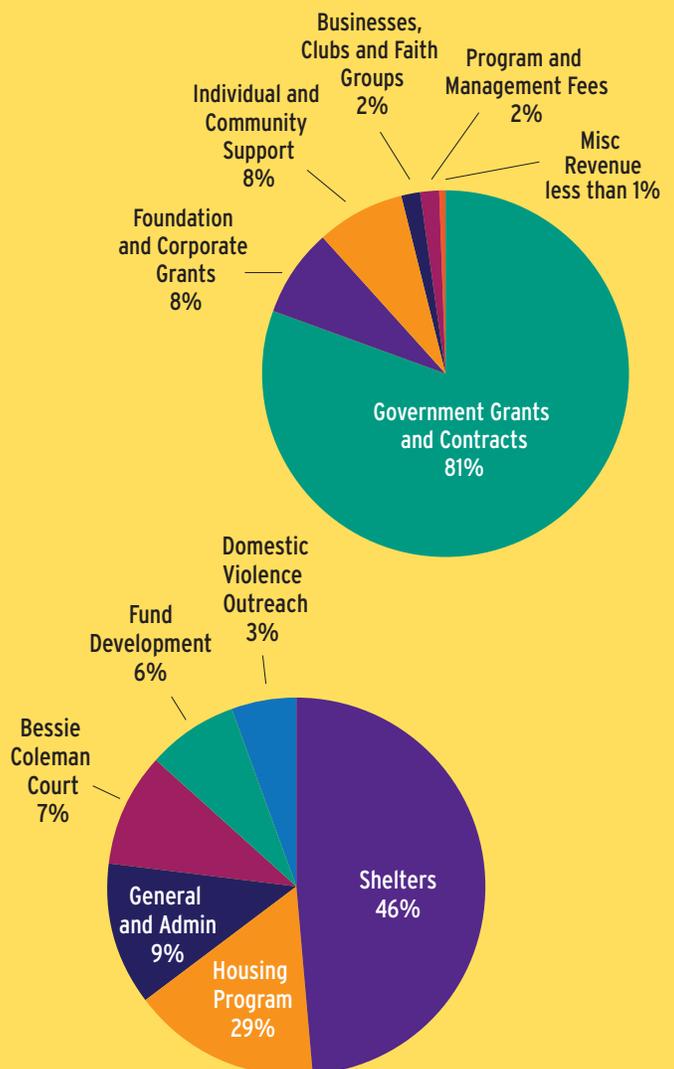
During 2014–15, **50 women** and **59 children** found safe harbor and a wealth of supportive services at Sister Me Home Safe House. In addition, we provided counseling, intervention and safety planning to **189 survivors** of intimate partner violence from our shelters and the communities we serve. Our toll-free, 24-hour crisis line handled **9,592 calls for help**. (See page two to learn about our October 2014 Speakout Against Domestic Violence on the steps of Alameda City Hall.)

REVENUE \$2,769,744

Individual & Community Support	\$213,925
Foundation & Corporate Grants	\$218,598
Businesses, Club and Faith Groups	\$47,790
Government Grants & Contracts	\$2,234,722
Program & Management Fees	\$43,867
Misc Revenue	\$10,842

EXPENSES \$2,750,402

Housing Program	\$790,189
Shelters	\$1,260,048
General & Admin	\$258,151
Bessie Coleman Court	\$197,975
Fund Development	\$156,007
Domestic Violence Outreach	\$88,032



FOOD FOR THE SOUL Volunteer Cooks Serve Dinner and Community Care

Our San Leandro and Midway Shelter volunteer dinner cooks provide much more than a weekly or monthly meal to the women and children we serve. They provide nourishment for both the body and soul. These amazing volunteers give shelter residents the hope and strength of a community that cares.



San Leandro Shelter dinner donors Kat and Chef Paul Haas

“We always bring whatever we ourselves are having for dinner,” explains Kat Haas, who just marked her and her husband’s one year anniversary as dinner donors to the San Leandro Shelter. “We figure, why not make something new and different that perhaps some of the residents have never had?”

The following volunteers help provide a healthy and positive environment at the shelters by providing meals:

1st Congregational Church of Alameda • 1st Presbyterian Church of Alameda • Alameda Democratic Club • Alicia Schwemer • Allen Temple Baptist Church • Amy Silverman & Friends • Andrea Mahli • Angela Rice • Barbara Curtis • Bethel Community Presbyterian Church • Brookins AME Church • Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints • Community Christian Church of California • David Gill • Farrelly Pond Neighbors • Fred and Susan Lebe • Grace Baptist Church • Ingrid Del Carlo • Jenny Michaels • John Kovacevic • Kat and Paul Haas • Kelly Quinn • LaShawn Hill • Lillie Modic • Margaret Dos Santos and Dawna Dondell • Nosso Lars Spiritist Society • Rejoice In Christ • San Leandro Church of Christ • Sri Sathya Sai Baba Center of Pleasanton • St. Gregorios Orthodox Church of India • St. Joseph’s Basilica • St. Philip Neri Catholic Church • Still Standing Strong • Sue Jardine • Susan Campbell • Susan Neilson • Temple Israel • Thao (Anna) Mac • Tina Downey • Trinity Lutheran Church • Twin Towers United Methodist Church • United Postal Service

To learn more about providing meals for the San Leandro or Midway Shelters, contact Lorie Curtis at lcurtis@bfwc.org or 510-357-0205, ext 206.

Warming Shelter Provides Refuge for San Leandro Residents

Between December 2014 and April 2015, Building Futures and April Showers piloted an overnight Warming Shelter for unsheltered homeless San Leandro residents. The shelter was open on rainy nights or when the temperature fell below 40 degrees. Men were served at the host site. Women were diverted to Building Futures’ San Leandro Shelter. What great things happen when we throw our energies together! We are thankful to the City of San Leandro for funding the shelter—and to the City Council for approving two more years of support.

We also built a solid partnership Warming Shelter host sites First United Methodist Church and Bethel Presbyterian Church. San Leandro’s faith community provided an absolute wealth of needed items and monetary donations, and hearty dinners for those staying at the warming shelter. Some of these generous volunteers began serving as new volunteers for April Showers: another great benefit for unsheltered San Leandrans!

Community members wishing to assist in the Warming Shelter next year should contact Moira Fry at moirafry@gmail.com after November 1, 2015.

