




A Catholic Social Services Publication | Fall 2018

Faces of Hope

Ending homelessness one family at a time

Two Friends' Journeys

BUILDING CONNECTIONS AT BROTHER FRANCIS SHELTER

 Sitting in the Medical Respite lounge in Brother Francis Shelter, Dana, 59, and Nichole, 36, bantered back and forth, smiling and petting Kratos, Nichole's service dog. The women met when Nichole came here a month after Dana, in April 2018. They became friends when Nichole moved into Dana's room.

"We're opposites," Dana laughed. "I'm an introvert and I would have my curtain closed, and Nichole would just come," she flung her right hand, as if jerking a curtain open, "and waltz right in!"

"Kratos started it!" Nichole joked, and the dog repositioned his head in her lap.

These women are now best friends. They finish each other's sentences and encourage each other to take bigger steps toward independence. Meeting at Catholic Social Services helped them to restore their hope.



PICTURE ABOVE » Kratos rests at Nichole's feet.

Dana's husband passed away in 2011, and grief overwhelmed her. Through the years, it worsened. Dana struggled to take care of herself and her home. After several admissions to the hospital, she was referred to Medical Respite.


"If I hadn't come here, I wouldn't be here," Dana said. Nichole held her hand.

Nichole faced other challenges. She moved to Anchorage from rural Alaska in hopes of better employment. She couldn't find a job, and one of her medical conditions worsened, requiring surgery. She became sicker and was admitted to ICU for a second surgery. She had to stay in the hospital 6 weeks.

Dana smiled. "I never had children, but Nichole's become a daughter to me."

"Yeah, but I'm more of the mother hen," Nichole joked again. Dana nodded.

Now Nichole has her own apartment, thanks to rapid rehousing and Medical Respite. Dana will move into hers soon.

Friendships like theirs empower and protect people. Catholic Social Services wants all clients to find a safety net. Your support of Brother Francis Shelter makes building connections possible. 

Guests heal
and move into
homes from Medical
Respite.



94% remain
in housing.

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Path to Independence
CSS LEADS ANCHORAGE IN RAPID REHOUSING

Path to Independence, a program designed by Catholic Social Services, kicked off on August 1, 2018. Its goal is to quickly house 40 families who are experiencing homelessness. We're already making great strides. In about a month, the first family was housed. Path to Independence works by providing rental support to families facing homelessness. It operates on a sliding scale, so as the families achieve more stability, they receive less assistance. In this program, our case workers can help families with unexpected expenses -- like moving, transportation, and childcare -- that can make meeting rent difficult. After a year, the families are prepared to remain housed on their own. This program is possible because of your generous support. Your donations helped us begin thinking about new solutions and unique approaches to ending homelessness in Alaska. We already lead Anchorage in rapid rehousing -- the best first step to ending homelessness. It makes sure families get into permanent homes quickly. As we rapidly rehoused

families, we realized there was more to do. Some needs were being left unmet. We wanted to solve this problem. We began reaching out to leaders in housing in Anchorage and developed and funded Path to Independence. Thank you for helping us lead the way in ending homelessness! Together we can restore hope, one family at a time.



Partner Spotlight
MAKING PATH TO INDEPENDENCE POSSIBLE



Twenty-three businesses and community organizations have come together to support Catholic Social Service's Path to Independence program. Altogether, they have generously donated more than \$600,000. Cook Inlet Housing Authority partners with us to administer these funds. We are so grateful for their support and partnership. They're committed to ending homelessness and helping us rapidly rehouse and stabilize the vulnerable families we work with. Please join us in thanking: \$200,000 - \$100,000: Weidner Apartment Homes, Rasmuson Foundation, Wells Fargo

\$50,000 - \$25,000: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, ConocoPhillips Alaska, British Petroleum, Carr Foundation, First National Bank Alaska \$15,000 - \$10,000: GCI, Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI), Arctic Slope Regional Corporation \$5,000 - \$1,000: Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Doyon, Limited, Nana Corporation, Calista Corporation, Chugach Alaska Corporation, Sealaska Corporation, Aleut Corporation, Ahtna Corporation, Koniag

New Director at BFS
LETTER FROM DAVID RITTENBERG

Seven years ago, I began working as a case manager at Brother Francis Shelter. I supported many individuals experiencing homelessness as they worked to achieve independence. That job was formative. It taught me perspective and humility. It also reinforced the idea that meaningful relationships lead to change.



PICTURE ABOVE » David Rittenberg, the new BFS Program Director

I took these lessons with me as I moved into management at BFS and to St. Francis House Food Pantry, where I served as Program Director. While there, familiar faces of people I had known at BFS lifted me up. They had secured permanent housing. Families who shopped our food pantry lifted me up too. They didn't have to worry where they'd get their next meal. My journey brought me back to BFS, and I am honored and humbled to be the Program Director. I am excited to be a voice for those experiencing homelessness and a leader for BFS staff. I am also thrilled for the opportunities coming our way. The needs of our community are changing, and the response must continue to be dynamic, courageous, and rooted in data. But, like I learned while serving as a case manager: building meaningful relationships will make the difference -- whether with clients, staff, or organizations around town. The strength of our relationships will help Anchorage's most vulnerable citizens, and I am pleased to be a leader in that effort.

Holiday Giving
You can help restore hope this holiday season to guests at our shelters and food pantry as well as to families we've rehoused by giving things like:

- Towels, blankets, sheets, pillows
- Toothbrushes, shampoo, body wash, razors
- Jackets, hats, gloves, hand and feet warmers
- Shirts, sweaters, fleeces
- Socks, underwear, under garments
- Band-Aids, tissues, nail clippers, lip balm
- Dish soap, sponges, laundry detergent

Drop-off Locations: Mondays, 10:00 - 11:00 AM and Thursdays, 3:00 - 4:00 PM // 3710 E. 20th Avenue, Anchorage, AK // Daily, 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM // Brother Francis Shelter, 1021 E. 3rd Avenue, Anchorage, AK Drop-off Deadline: Monday, December 17 Drop-off Instruction: Deliver items unwrapped. Website: www.cssalaska.org/donate/holiday-giving For more information or to volunteer, please contact our Community Engagement Manager, Clara Williams, at cwilliams@cssalaska.org or 907-222-7335. Would you like to help wrap gifts? Contact Clara Williams to schedule a shift at Brother Francis Shelter on December 19-24 between 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Please bring scissors and wrapping paper too!





PICTURE ABOVE » Drummers perform at Spirit of Denali.

SPIRIT OF DENALI

ALASKA NATIVE CULTURE CELEBRATED

Brother Francis Shelter guests and members from the Anchorage community enjoyed muktuk, caribou stew, and akutaq for our annual Spirit of Denali. This event helps connect people with Alaska Native traditions, like the Mount Susitna Sleeping Lady Intertribal Drummers and Yari Walker, a Cultural Program Specialist from the Alaska Native Heritage Center. We are grateful for everyone who supported it by coming out! 🙏

YOU RESTORE HOPE!

THANKS TO YOU, EACH DAY ON AVERAGE

280 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN RECEIVE **SHELTER**



324 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN RECEIVE **FOOD**



LAST YEAR WE **HOUSED** MORE THAN **400 FAMILIES.**

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT!



Upcoming Events



Thanksgiving Blessing

Help us pass out turkeys and other Thanksgiving foods so everyone can have a homemade meal. // Monday, November 19, 2:00-9:00 PM // St. Patrick's Parish, 2111 Muldoon Road, Anchorage, AK

Mitzvah Mall

Learn about local non-profits and make donations to them in lieu of regular gifts this holiday season. // Sunday, December 2, 12:00-3:00 PM // Congregation Beth Shalom, 7525 E. Northern Lights, Anchorage, AK

Advent Concert

Enjoy beautiful music for \$7/person or \$20/family of 3. Bring your Holiday Wish List donations too. // Friday, December 7, 7:00-9:30 PM // St. Patrick's Parish, 2111 Muldoon Road, Anchorage, AK

Christmas Eve Mass

Join us as we celebrate Mass with Brother Francis Shelter guests and members of the community. // Monday, December 24, 6:00 PM // Brother Francis Shelter, 1021 E. 3rd Avenue, Anchorage, AK

For more information or to volunteer, contact our Community Engagement Manager, Clara Williams, at cwilliams@cssalaska.org or 907-222-7335.

Restore hope, stay involved, and learn more at www.cssalaska.org/get-involved/upcoming-events/.



Catholic
Social Services