

# New Beginnings Fall News

## New Beginnings Held Their Annual Benefit with the Writer Annabelle Gurwitch to Help De-Stigmatize Homelessness and Establish Landlord Partnerships

*Annabelle Gurwitch*



New Beginnings held our annual benefit this year at the Santa Barbara Club and created an evening featuring an interview with Annabelle Gurwitch, a *New York Times* best-selling author who recently became a landlord. The interview was conducted by local journalist Beth Farnsworth, and the evening included speakers from New Beginnings, as well as a client. Annabelle's story about her journey addressing homelessness brought an enlightened perspective to the issue and helped educate community stakeholders and supporters about how to become part of the solution.

The purpose of the evening was to raise funds to support New Beginnings' work in the community and to provide awareness about the important role landlords can play

in partnering with organizations like ours to address homelessness. To share Annabelle's story with a wider audience, we also held a free, virtual fundraiser featuring a lively discussion about homelessness between Annabelle and her dear friend, Julie Bowen, who stars in the popular *Modern Family* sitcom.

Annabelle's main message is to encourage people, especially landlords, to look past stereotypes and understand that homelessness is something that happens to many people, such as young adults and working individuals facing crises and seniors. Anyone who has a rental unit, financial means, or the time to serve as a volunteer can get involved in addressing the issue, which impacts everyone in a community. In addition, dedicated services providers are there to

provide services to ensure their clients remain housed and to keep landlords happy.

We are grateful for, and would like to thank all of our sponsors: The Coeta and Donald Barker Foundation, Lloyd and Richard Dallett and the Love Fund, the Hon. Susan Rose, the Zegar Family Fund, Amy and Glenn Bacheller, Liz and Andrew Butcher, Susan and Claude Case, Dan and Emily Engel, Santa Barbara Venture Partners, Jackie and Paul Kurta, Charlie and Eileen White Read, Anonymous, Bruce Corwin, Metropolitan Theatres, Santa Barbara City College, City National Bank, the El Encanto, and our Virtual Sponsor, Cottage Psychiatry and Addiction Medicine. We would also like to thank everyone who attended and supported both events.

## Message from Executive Director, Kristine Schwarz



Dear Friends of New Beginnings,

As we enter the holiday season, the start of a new year often inspires us to reflect on personal and professional accomplishments and contemplate human affairs. Once again, this year has been anything but ordinary, marked by global events, seemingly constant crises, and the resulting and ongoing changes to our home and work lives. It has been another year of learning for us all.

And although I imagine that many of you are eagerly awaiting a new year and another fresh start, I find myself reflecting and thinking back upon all that has happened this past year and feeling incredibly proud and humbled by your unwavering commitment to our community, dedication to your work, and genuine caring for each other. Together we have built upon our collective strengths, solidified our foundations, and persevered.

In 2021, New Beginnings' amazing staff and volunteers served 372 veterans, sheltered 464 people in our Safe Parking Shelter, housed 190 people, provided \$1,102,968 in financial assistance to low-income individuals and families, and delivered critical mental health services to 633 clients. Thank you all for your outstanding work and for making a difference every single day.

Wishing you all a joyous, safe and healthy holiday season and a very Merry New Year!

– Kristine



## Celebrating Veterans Day at Johnson Court

We were pleased to celebrate Veterans Day with our 16 veteran clients living at Johnson Court, where we have provided on-site supportive services since the property's opening in early 2020. With the help of our board members, we provided a delicious barbeque with music and entertainment to our clients. We organize similar events for Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and the Holiday Season. Our Veterans Day celebration was a lot of fun and helped further instill a sense of community with our veteran clients.

The types of services we offer to our clients at the site include case management, housing retention, connection to healthcare services, and group counseling. We help ensure our clients have everything they need to thrive, which could include driving veterans to health appointments, purchasing eyeglasses and batteries for wheelchairs, and even arranging for one of our clients to spend a day at Disneyland. We were honored to make Veterans Day memorable for our veteran clients and are appreciative that our community values supporting our veterans.

# Overcoming Anxiety through Vulnerability

Dani\* is a young woman in her mid-20s who suffers from severe anxiety. When she began receiving counseling at our clinic, Dani expressed how she could never be fully present because she was constantly worried about her future. During her counseling sessions, our counselor created a safe place for Dani to be vulnerable and reflect upon the sources of her anxiety. With the help of her counselor, Dani was able to process challenging feelings and learn coping strategies for reducing her anxiety. She has become much more open in her sessions, experiences more joy in life, and has developed the courage to not let anxiety impact her life. Recently, Dani overcame her fear of flying and traveled to another state, accepted a job serving the public, and strengthened her friendships. She is grateful for her counselor and believes her therapy sessions helped her to improve all aspects of her life.

*\*Name has been changed to protect confidentiality.*



## Impact of our Clinical Training Program



*From left to right: Mallory Chandler (Intake Coordinator), Sophia Abi-Najm (Administrative Assistant), Shana Burns, LMFT (Clinical Director), Kaylee Jones (Doctoral Student/Counselor)*

As you are well aware, over the last fifty years, our Counseling Center has provided low-cost counseling services to thousands of people regardless of their ability to pay. We want you to also know that your support of our clinic has empowered us to provide training and supervision to well over a thousand of our area's mental health professionals. Each of our volunteer counselors participates in individual and group supervision, and we organize weekly, monthly, and quarterly trainings on special topics as well. These training sessions are specifically targeted to assist counselors with the populations we serve and the issues our clients present.

Because we work with both masters and doctoral-level counselors gaining hours for licensure, our clinic is often where aspiring mental health professionals see clients for the very first time. Our dedicated staff and volunteer supervisors help our counselors develop foundational skills and their overall approach to delivering care.

## Feedback from Our Counselors

*"Best place in town to train. Treatment rooms are beautiful. Supervision is a great learning opportunity."*

*"We are very supportive to each other. Everyone's helpful, and this trickles down to client interactions."*

*"We can operate at a slower pace. Some people utilizing a lot of resources are expected to be rushed. Clients are surprised, appreciative, and relaxed. We're great at establishing relationships with people and organizations. We know how to be thorough and treat people really well."*

*"To be able to accompany someone across a three-year period of time has been really wonderful. This is something we can offer. Not many places allow or facilitate long-term psychotherapy."*



# Expanding our Safe Parking Program with the Help of the Women's Fund



The Women's Fund \$75,000 grant that New Beginnings received this year to expand our Safe Parking Program within South County has proven to be very successful for our agency. We were able to hire our first-ever Homeless Services Director, Sara Grasso, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who specializes in working with the homeless population. Sara has been able to expand programmatic infrastructure and offer more intensive case supervision to staff, improving client outcomes. We are also focusing on growing our number of lots and landlord relationships, so we can serve a larger population as vehicular homelessness increases.

While the grant will be expended after one year, we will be able to pay for her position in the long run through multiple government grants. In addition to her support of the expansion of the Safe Parking

Program in South County, Sara also directs our Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program and oversees our supportive services contract at Johnson Court. Since starting in her role, Sara has helped to streamline administrative procedures, and is working with staff to update program manuals, policies and procedures to reflect the impact of COVID on our services. She has also improved our collaborations with the County Department of Behavioral Wellness and other social service providers. Both the volume and complexity of our client caseload has increased dramatically over the past two years, and Sara has been able to help us address these challenges. As a result, the funding from the Women's Fund was provided to us at a crucial time. We are so grateful for the members and their support of our program.



## Veteran Support Staff Formally Recognized for Their Efforts

Two of our staff members received awards recognizing their tremendous service to our veteran clients. Our Program Manager, Victor Virgen, was recognized by the Department of Veteran Affairs' HUD-VASH team for the innovation he showed serving veterans over the past four years. Victor is also a Marine who served eight years in the military and has been a staff member of our program for nearly four years. In his letter of recognition, the HUD-VASH Supervisor described how Victor's patience and capability working with partner agencies and veterans has been incomparable.

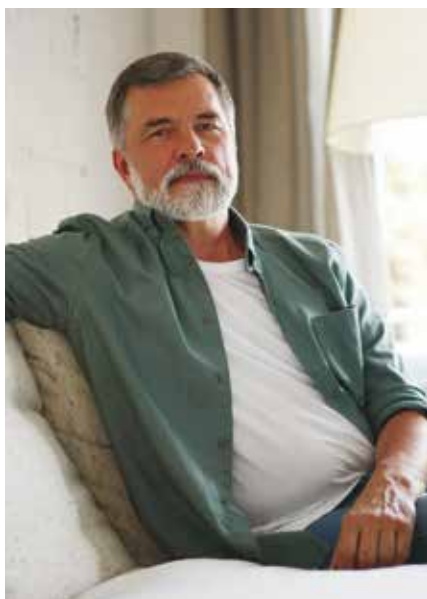
In addition, our South County Case Manager, Cassidy Rea was also recognized with the Tracie Gunderson Award, an award created by Veterans Treatment Court to honor Tracie Gunderson. Tracie was a leader of our SSVF program who tragically passed away during her time in the program. Cassidy was recognized for her dedication to housing veterans in Santa Barbara over the past year and a half. We are so proud of her, as well as Victor, for their achievements!



## Janice's Story

Janice is one of our veteran clients living at Johnson Court. Janice was a bus driver who fell on the job and developed nerve damage. She could not continue driving and unfortunately did not know of some of the benefits she could receive through the VA for a service-connected disability she had developed while in military service. She experienced housing instability and was living at the Salvation Army prior to moving into Johnson Court. Janice was the first veteran to move into the property in 2020 and moved in with her cat. She keeps her place nice and clean and follows all of the rules.

Now that she has stabilized, Janice has been focusing more on her health and is so appreciative to work with our supportive services specialist. She says we have acted as a liaison for her, assisting in filling out paperwork, taking her to doctor appointments, and motivating her to become an advocate for herself. Janice enjoys volunteering as well and is looking forward to getting more involved in giving back to the community as her health improves.



## Hector's Story

Hector\* is a community member who was living in his vehicle and searching for an apartment that would accept a housing voucher. Unfortunately, he was emotionally and mentally unstable, and his behavior prevented him from working with four other community partners. Hector was very isolated and began illegally sleeping in his vehicle near one of our lots. We were alerted by one of our parking lot partners and sent one of our case managers into the field to establish connection with Hector.

Unfortunately, Hector was unable to enroll in our Safe Parking Program at the time because his vehicle was inoperable. Our agency covered the car repair cost, and our case manager started working with Hector to find him permanent housing. Just days before Hector's voucher was set to expire, our case manager was able to move Hector into housing. We supplied Hector with furniture and continue to work with him to ensure a smooth transition. Throughout the process, Hector's demeanor has changed drastically, and he is grateful to have a bed to lay in at night.

*\*Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.*

## Kristine Receives Founder's Award by the Association for Women in Communications

Earlier this month, our Executive Director Kristine Schwarz was a recipient of the Lois Phillips Founder's Award by the Association for Women in Communications (AWC) – Santa Barbara chapter. She received her award at a holiday party organized by the chapter for its members. In her speech to members, Kristine shared insights into the communications strategies she has employed to provide a voice for vulnerable community members served by our agency. She credits much of her success in the field of communications to being able to adeptly tailor her communications to a variety of audiences. We are so grateful to Lois and the AWC for recognizing Kristine for her excellence as a communicator.



*From left to right: Lois Phillips, Co-Founder of AWCSB, Kristine Schwarz, and Lisa Osborn, President of AWCSB and KCSB News Director*

# Q&A for Planned Giving with Jackie Kurta



## Why Did You Choose to Make a Planned Gift to New Beginnings?

*"I chose to make a planned gift for several reasons. In addition to wanting a way to continue to support the agency after my passing, I wished to further emphasize the importance of New Beginnings' mission to my own family. I also feel that making a planned gift will allow me to further champion our planned giving program and allow me to ask family members, friends, and colleagues to join me as a legacy society member."*

## What Giving Vehicle Did You Use to Make Your Planned Gift?

*"I was advised by our planned giving consultant and my own financial advisor to make a planned gift through my Individual Retirement Account (IRA). The whole process was very easy. I simply named New Beginnings as a beneficiary and designated a percentage of my IRA to be distributed to the agency after my passing. One of the biggest financial benefits is that 100% of my gift goes directly to New Beginnings and is not subject to income or estate taxes."*

## What Do You Want Donors to Know About New Beginnings' Planned Giving Program?

*"Our agency has grown so much over the past decade with the help of our generous and loyal donor community. We're honored to offer an opportunity for donors and others in the community to leave a legacy of new beginnings in our community. Our goal is to grow our legacy society and meet annually as a group to honor members' commitment to our work. We're looking to build something that is very special that empowers us to also deepen our relationships with our donors."*

## Leave a Legacy of New Beginnings by Remembering Us in Your Will or Trust!

For more information about planned giving, please contact our development department at [development@sbnbcc.org](mailto:development@sbnbcc.org) or visit our website at [www.sbnbcc.org/planned-giving/](http://www.sbnbcc.org/planned-giving/)

## What Other Types of Planned Gifts Does New Beginnings Accept?

*In addition to simple beneficiary designations in retirement or insurance plans, New Beginnings also accepts bequests in wills or trusts, payable on death designations from checking or savings accounts, irrevocable provisions in charitable remainder trusts and charitable lead trusts, and real estate and other property."*

## When is the Best Time to Start Planned Giving?

*According to our new board member, Warren Ritter, the answer is today! Based loosely on the Rule of 72, a rule showing the time it takes for an investment to double, the best time to start putting money aside is today. The sooner you do, the bigger an impact you can make within an organization and your community as your investment grows. Starting the planned giving conversation sooner rather than later may also have some favorable financial benefits for both the organization and the individual donor. A small amount set aside today can grow into a sizable amount down the road!*



## In Memoriam: Bruce Corwin

While we were so sad to hear about the passing of our beloved community supporter Bruce Corwin, we are humbled thinking about his generosity and support of people experiencing homelessness in our community. Bruce was a tremendous advocate for New Beginnings for many years. He lent us his family's movie theaters on numerous occasions, allowing us to implement our new fundraising initiative where we educate community members about our work through cinema, theater, and entertainment. Bruce was a kind soul and will be dearly missed.



## Stasia Huiner, MBA – New Board Member

**Stasia Huiner** has held various executive roles in the healthcare and healthcare technology industries for more than 20 years. Her efforts at those companies have included building and selling a strategic venture investment portfolio, being Chief of Staff for a Fortune 200 CEO, leading Client Success functions in a healthcare technology company, and eventually becoming a Chief Operating Officer. Stasia and her husband have lived in Santa Barbara for over 20 years and have teenaged triplet boys. Stasia is a former Board member of the Peabody Charter School Foundation and is currently serving as Treasurer of the Santa Barbara league of btc (boys team charity). She enjoys supporting organizations that make a deep impact at the individual level.



***“We are honored to welcome Stasia to our Board. Her extensive business background and expertise in the financial management of healthcare-related organizations will be very valuable as New Beginnings continues to grow its revenue and expand its operations.” – Jacqueline Kurta, Board President***

## Kathryn Keene – New Board Member

**Kathryn Keene** is an experienced human resources executive with over 25 years of experience who is currently the senior vice president and HR talent, technology, inclusion, and people analytics manager of City National Bank. Kathryn has also held similar positions at Paramount Pictures and NBC Universal Picture’s Group and has worked at Radio City Productions and the Walt Disney Company, where she launched The Disney Store division. She is also a member of Chief, a private network built to drive more women into positions of power. Active in the community, Kathryn is also on the board and governance committee of MURALism.org, an organization that connects people with special needs to the community through art.



***“We have been searching for a board member with a background in human resources for a while. We are so grateful to have found a board member with as much experience as Kathryn and look forward to seeing her contribute to our work.” – Jacqueline Kurta, Board President***

## Warren B. Ritter II – New Board Member

**Warren B. Ritter II** is a wealth manager with a background in public policy who is very involved in the community. Originally from South Carolina, Warren worked for the South Carolina State house and focused on advancing policy reform for working-class families. He found his true calling as a financial advisor because he is passionate about representing people and promoting financial literacy. Warren serves on several boards and commissions, such as the Santa Barbara Education Foundation and the Human Services Committee of Santa Barbara County. He looks forward to supporting our efforts as a board member, specifically in helping us strengthen our planned giving program.



***“Warren’s expertise in wealth management and public policy empower him to serve as a great advocate for our organization, not only with our donors, but also with other stakeholders and members of the public. We are so happy to welcome Warren to our board.” – Jacqueline Kurta, Board President***

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# NEW BEGINNINGS

## New Beginnings

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Thank you so much for your support of our work! We wish you and your loved ones a very happy Holiday Season and New Year. Please make a donation today to support our mission of strengthening our community by empowering individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency and resiliency.

*Thank you*



New Beginnings' mission is to provide quality, affordable counseling, shelter, case management, and education that strengthens our community and provides our clients with the ability to lead healthy and productive lives.



# NEW BEGINNINGS