

# New Beginnings Winter Newsletter



The Cast of *Food and Shelter* with New Beginnings' Board of Directors

## New Beginnings Produces the Drama *Food and Shelter* to Help Community Gain a Deeper Understanding of Homelessness

New Beginnings held its major annual fundraiser at the New Vic and produced the drama *Food and Shelter* by the Emmy award-winning writer Jane Anderson. The play tells the heartrending story of a homeless family who spends the night at Disneyland. New Beginnings created the evening to help community members gain a better understanding of how emotional instability, unemployment, and poverty can lead to homelessness. More than 200 community members attended the very powerful and moving performance.

Directed by long-time resident of Santa Barbara, Jenny Sullivan, the production starred Chris Butler (*Designated Survivor*, *Rescue Dawn*, and *The Good Wife*), Hope Dekkers (*The Nightingale* and *The Tower*),

Stephanie Edwards (*AM American* and *Tournament of Roses Parade*), Faline England (*9-1-1*, *The Mentalist*, *Station 19*, and *Valentine's Day*), Eric Lange (*Victorious*, *Lost*, and *Narcos*), and Joe Spano (*NCIS*, *Apollo 13*, *NYPD Blue*, and *Fracture*). The writer, Jane Anderson, whose many credits include *The Wife*, *Olive Kitteridge*, and *How to Make An American Quilt*, attended the evening and when interviewed said:

***“When I wrote the play, I hoped there would be some solution to income inequality in this country. Thirty years later, I’m sorry to say that my play is more relevant than ever. There are men, women, and children out there skirting the edges of your town, needing a safe place to sleep, a hot meal, to feel clean, and above all, to be seen.”***

The evening began with an intimate dinner at Bouchon for the event’s sponsors and ended with a cast and crew reception at the New Vic following the performance. Esteemed guests included Supervisor Gregg Hart, Glenn and Amy Bacheller, Mary Becker, Rinaldo and Lalla Brutoco, Charles and Eileen White Read, the Hon. Susan Rose, Judith Hopkinson, Anne Towbes, and Chuck and Merryl Snow Zegar. *Food and Shelter* encouraged everyone to reconsider how they view homelessness and the reasons why people become and remain homeless. The performance was spectacular, as was the play itself, and many members of the audience were in tears by the end of the evening. For photos from the evening, please see the back cover.



## Message from Executive Director, Kristine Schwarz

Dear Friends of New Beginnings,

In this season of gratitude, my thoughts turn gratefully to you with warm appreciation. Because of you, New Beginnings continues to do remarkable things. Your friendship inspires us and we are truly fortunate to include you as part of our New Beginnings family. Your generosity means the world to us and those we serve. I'd therefore like to thank each and every donor, supporter, community partner, staff member, volunteer, and collaborator for helping so many of our community members this past year. Your time, contributions, ideas, and kindness gave hope to many. Your support and advocacy housed almost 200 people, provided mental health care to 800 people, and served 250 veterans and their family members. Your partnership made this possible. Thank you.

We wish you peace within your hearts and homes; we wish you joy that flows deep no matter the challenges of life; and we wish you the wonder that beholds the beauty in the faces of the many gentle souls you helped us to support this year. May you enjoy much health and happiness in the coming year.

Merry Holidays!

-Kristine Schwarz

## Our Final Luncheon of the Year Celebrates the Achievements of Veterans

At our fourth Coral Casino luncheon this year, we decided to draw attention to veterans who have dedicated their lives to supporting their fellow veterans in their respective communities. Our first speaker, U.S. Air Force veteran, Sandy Blair, is one of our landlord partners and is the Founder and CEO of Operation WEBS, a nonprofit organization based in Orcutt that builds tiny homes for female veterans transitioning to civilian life. New Beginnings has been a key partner for Operation WEBS and has helped them grow their organization into the leading organization solely focused on ending female veteran homelessness in the county.

Our second speaker, U.S. Navy veteran Wayne Frelot was a client of New Beginnings who was housed this past year. In addition to taking care of his young family, Wayne has become a VA-certified peer support specialist and is eager to help veterans who were in a similar situation, as well as other homeless individuals in Lompoc. Wayne chose to begin his speech by drawing awareness to homelessness across the world. He went on to detail how grateful he was to service providers, mentioning how they "impacted his soul", leading him to become a veteran peer support specialist.



*From left to right: Michelle Seaberg, case manager; Victor Virgen, program manager; Sandy Blair, guest speaker; Wayne Frelot, guest speaker; and Kristen Germann, case manager*

Our Coral Casino luncheon series this year was held quarterly and highlighted each of our four programs. We are grateful to Glenn and Amy Bacheller, Maryan Schall, Pacific Western Bank, and the Santa Barbara Foundation for sponsoring the series this year. We will continue our luncheon series next year and are excited to further educate community members to our work.

# On a Mission with My Girl Kirsten

Before enrolling in New Beginnings' Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, U.S. Army veteran, Donna, also known as the "The Queen of England", had been homeless in Lompoc for 29 years. Wearing a great apron and a red hat, Donna was very well known throughout the community and by business owners. She was never afraid to tell people how she felt and frequently 'fired' employees whom she believed were not treating her fellow community members respectfully.

In March of 2018, Donna noticed a flier for our SSVF program and reached out to see if she would be eligible to receive services. After meeting with our North County case manager, Kristen Germann, Donna enrolled in the SSVF program and submitted applications for housing to the County Housing Authority and for a Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) voucher. Donna is an incredibly resourceful woman, and despite our many conversations exploring if she would be comfortable staying in a shelter, she opted out of it. She also denied assistance in applying for a VA pension or for an increase in her service-connected disability. Getting an apartment was Donna's one goal and mission, and nothing would get in her way of accomplishing this.

Since Donna did not own a cell phone, our case manager Kristen met with her on a weekly basis at the Lompoc Veteran Services Office to discuss progress that was made and to fill out applications. Behind the scenes, SSVF staff were collaborating with service providers, such as Carrie Page at United Way, Lauren McAmis at the County Department of Behavioral Wellness, and Kerrie Garrison and Arlyn Sandoval at the Veteran Services Office, who all played an instrumental role in ensuring our success. After being in the program for about six months, Donna was selected to receive a unit through the County Housing Authority that could provide her with permanent supportive housing and supplemental services.

In order for Donna to view and sign the lease for the apartment, she needed to be present. The only problem was that Donna was nowhere to be found and it would be another week before our case manager Kristen was scheduled to meet with her again. For several days,



*Donna and Kristen*

nearly every service provider in Lompoc was looking for Donna. After a week, Kristen received a call from a staff member at the County Housing Authority. Donna was on the line and told Kristen that she got the apartment and was scheduled to sign the lease and move in that very day. Since moving into her apartment, Donna has tremendously improved her quality of life. She exercises regularly at the park and has future goals to study musical composition. She will continue to live in the unit and has been connected to people who care about her well-being and who can provide her with the support she needs to be successful.

While we frequently discuss the impact our programs make in the lives of our clients, we rarely talk about the impact our clients make on our staff members. When reflecting upon her experience, Kristen, a recent graduate of Westmont College who wishes to become a military trauma counselor, said:

"Initially, working with 'The Queen' was extremely intimidating, but my respect and admiration for her grew enormously. It has been an absolute privilege to be her case manager, and I can proudly say that I have never been fired by her. I have now graduated from being known as "Kirsten at New Beginnings" to "My Girl Kirsten" P.S. She is also the only person to be able to get away with calling me Kirsten."

# Safe Parking Team Grows and Moves into a New Office



Our nation-leading Safe Parking Program has grown in size and just recently moved to a new office as a result. In the past year, we have added a housing navigator and a housing retention specialist to help round out our team and improve our programmatic outcomes. The team of four, which also includes a program manager and a case manager, is the only organization in the county solely dedicated to serving the vehicular homeless, which represents 42% of the unsheltered homeless population according to the recent point in time count. The team also provides services to all unsheltered homeless, not just those living in their vehicles, as a result of the implementation of the county's coordinated entry system. Moving to a new office will help us to continue to grow the program and improve the efficiency of our staff members. With the help of a capital grant from the Berkshire Hathaway Charitable Committee, we were able to move in and gain immediate access to furniture and significantly improve the kitchenette. The team looks forward to continuing to serve the homeless and will have a more comfortable space to provide case management and to manage the program. This past year, the team housed a total of 72 households. We have been very successful at helping our clients retain their housing, have assisted with move-in



*From left to right: Cassie Roach, program manager; Jordan Thurston, case manager; Rhandi LaChonce, housing retention specialist, and Erica Morales, housing navigator*

costs, and have provided temporary financial assistance. This success has been a result of the generous grants we receive from the Change a Life, Kind World, Latkin, and Mosher Foundations, as well as the City of Goleta and the City and County of Santa Barbara.

## In Memoriam: Carol Ann Inman

Carol, a long-time client of our Safe Parking Program, passed away suddenly a year ago and donated her car and all of her belongings to the program. Originally from Jacksonville, Illinois, Carol worked as a factory worker and also in retail and was very involved in church, always attending the women's Christmas Party hosted by the Church of the Beatitudes. While

Carol was in the hospital, Reverend Jeanette from the Beatitudes prayed over her. She passed away peacefully, blessed in her journey, and not alone. Carol wished for her belongings to be donated to the agency so we can help provide her fellow Safe Parking clients with assistance to help them pay for vehicle repairs and other emergencies. If you would like to make a donation in her name to support this endeavor and help to grow her legacy, you are free to do so.



## The Impact of Long-Term Psychotherapy

Frank\* is a senior diagnosed with bipolar disorder who has continued to receive psychotherapy from the same counselor at New Beginnings for five years. Frank is on disability due to his severe and persistent mental illness but is also very highly functioning and intelligent. When he first began counseling, Frank spent most of his days at home as his condition made it difficult for him to maintain relationships. Despite some of the challenges, Frank always makes his appointments and very rarely cancels, only when he is extremely sick. New Beginnings' counselor taught Frank how to incorporate mindfulness into his life. This has encouraged him to become more aware and improve the ways he handles his manic states.

Frank has made incredible progress in the last five years, has built a network of friends and connections, and has started his own small business to keep his mind occupied. He continues to surprise his counselor and his psychiatrist with all of the progress he

has made and is now equipped to live the rest of his life in a happier and healthier state. This story is a testament to what somebody in the second half of their life can accomplish through psychotherapy.



People like Frank, who are in need of long-term psychotherapy but cannot afford paying more than hundred dollars an hour on average to see a counselor, have very limited options in Santa Barbara. Our ability to offer long-term affordable psychotherapy on a sliding scale is due to the continuous support we receive from the Towbes, St. Francis, Walter J. and Holly O. Thompson, Carleton, Mosher, and Volentine Foundations, as well as the City of Santa Barbara Human Services Department, and private donors.

## Embarking on a New Journey for her Daughter

Olivia\* was in an abusive relationship and six months pregnant when she decided to leave all of her belongings behind and board a train across the country to a safe house in Santa Barbara. Through this safe house, Olivia enrolled in our Life Skills Parenting and Education Program, which provided her with psychoeducation and connected her to individual counseling offered through our Counseling Clinic. Through individual counseling, Olivia began the difficult process of re-establishing her self-worth and empowerment after being abused for many years. Within a group of her peers at the safe house, Olivia learned how to develop healthy and secure attachment with her child and began to process the ways she could more effectively cope with some of her grief. This support led to Olivia establishing a vision for herself and her child.

Olivia recently gave birth to a beautiful and healthy girl and was able to develop a strong bond with her daughter. She is exhibiting incredible strength and resilience and has become a role model for others at the safe house. Now that her daughter is several months old, Olivia has begun a new job and can afford childcare. Olivia was eventually able to save up enough money to get an apartment of her own and has started a new chapter in her life.

## The Importance of Perinatal Mental Health

Perinatal mental health refers to a woman's mental health during pregnancy and the postpartum period. 1 in 5 women will experience a perinatal mental health condition, such as depression or an anxiety disorder; these illnesses frequently go unnoticed and untreated, leading to long-term consequences for the mother and her child. Understanding how to treat perinatal mental health conditions is essential when providing counseling to pregnant mothers, as these conditions are the most common complication of child birth.

At the same time, there is limited curriculum in graduate schools about how to treat perinatal mental health conditions. As a result, New Beginnings' Clinical Director, Crystal Ramirez, has incorporated the latest research about this topic into New Beginnings' rigorous training program for its more than 30 masters- and doctoral-level counselors. For the size of our agency, the training program is incredibly comprehensive and features advanced clinical trainings in core competencies and topics on a weekly and monthly basis. Over the years, our Counseling Clinic has trained hundreds of our community's clinicians. Additionally, perinatal mental health has been incorporated into our Life Skills Parenting and Education Program.

\*Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.



## Diane Loewe Pannkuk – Board President

**Diane Loewe Pannkuk** has been our Board President for 10 years and has served on our board for 13 years. She has played an essential role in leading our Board of Directors through an incredibly rapid period of growth and has

been instrumental in helping us to grow our donor base to support this expansion. Diane led the organization through a change in executive management and says her biggest accomplishment was her decision to hire our Executive Director, Kristine Schwarz, and then step back and let her do her job.

Diane operates with the belief that the best decisions emerge out of healthy discussion, often resulting from respectful disagreements. As a result, her goal has been to recruit board members who are passionate about our work and who have a diverse range of opinions. Diane has built a structure and a culture on our board that encourages board members to voice their opinions and collaborate to find solutions that are in the best interest of the agency.

Her powerful insight into decision making is no surprise as Diane has served on over 10 volunteer boards over the past 30 years. Much of her volunteer history has occurred in her hometown of Montecito, where she served as an elected board member for 13 years and as president of the Montecito Association from 1998 to 2000. She is also the creator and was chairwoman of the “Montecito Village Fourth” event for 19 years. In 2010, Diane was recognized for her contributions and was designated Montecito Citizen of the Year.

**“Diane’s indefatigable dedication and dependability has been integral to New Beginnings’ success. Her mentorship has been invaluable to me.”**

**– Kristine Schwarz  
Executive Director**

Additionally, Diane has been very involved with the Junior League of Santa Barbara for close to 25 years, has held various executive offices, and was recognized as Sustainer of the Year in 2014. She has also served on the boards of Domestic Violence Solutions, the Music Academy of the West, and the Alpha Delta Pi sorority. Diane is a retired Contract Negotiator for the United States Department of Defense and is president of Silver Creek Corporation. She has an MBA and a MS in Government Contracts from George Washington University and a BA from UCLA. Diane is most proud of her family and has been married to her husband for 40 years and has two wonderful sons.

## New Beginnings Joins an Interagency Collaboration in Carpinteria

This year, Carpinteria has formed a unique resource center, Carp Connect, that provides a mental health headquarters for the first time to local residents. After successfully receiving many referrals from the Carpinteria’s Children Project, New Beginnings was invited to join the newly formed interagency collaboration and will provide individual adult, child, family, and group therapy for the residents of Carpinteria at the Public Health office. This partnership will increase access to our services and will allow us to serve those who are most vulnerable and who are often not able to travel to Santa Barbara to our Counseling Clinic. We are very excited and pleased to commence this collaboration.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### MANAGEMENT TEAM

Kristine Schwarz, MFT, LPCC  
*Executive Director*

Crystal Ramirez, Ph.D, MFT  
*Clinical Director*

## Huge Thanks to Marco Franchina!

Photo: Marco Franchina



**Marco Franchina** is a professional photographer who donated multiple photographs to New Beginnings to serve as the background for our production of *Food and Shelter* this year. Franchina chose amazing imagery that added incredible value to the performance as a whole. We're very grateful for his contribution to the evening.

Born in Pisa, Italy, Franchina began his career as a fashion photographer and studied under legendary photographers Avi Meroz, Fabrizio

Ferri, and Peter Gravelle. He has traveled the world as a photographer, having worked all around Europe, in New York City, Australia, and Los Angeles. He has provided photography for Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine, *Rolling Stone*, *Modern Bride*, *Shape*, *Seventeen*, and *SELF*. He has also been commissioned to photograph for Oliver Stone, Sarah Jessica Parker, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Willie Nelson, and many others. He is currently residing in Los Angeles and experimenting with fine art photography. To find out more about his work or how to contact Marco, please visit [marcofranchina.com](http://marcofranchina.com).

## Supervisor Schwartz's Impact on the Safe Parking Program

Local county leader **Naomi Schwartz**, who passed away in 2012, served three four-year terms as Santa Barbara County's first district supervisor and played an instrumental role in ensuring the successful establishment of Safe Parking in 2003. Long-time New Beginnings supporter and former second district supervisor, the Honorable Susan Rose, had first brought the idea to the Board of Supervisors because she felt that City Council's instruction to simply ticket people living in their vehicles was causing great harm to those already suffering. The Board of Supervisors was overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the idea and spent months looking at various sites that were ultimately deemed unacceptable by community members.

After much discussion, Supervisor Rose brought forward the idea to open the first lot at the County Administration Building. As this site fell under her jurisdiction, Supervisor Schwartz led the effort to assuage community members' concerns in her district. Addressing the concerns of business owners and other constituents was

absolutely essential for the program's successful launch. The program almost did not get implemented. Over the course of several months, Supervisor Schwartz provided assurances to her constituents about the program and stressed that their voices would be heard and their concerns addressed in a timely fashion. New Beginnings is very grateful to Supervisor Schwartz for her efforts to ensure that the program would be successfully launched. In the last 15 years, Safe Parking in Santa Barbara has provided shelter to thousands of individuals and families since the program's initial launch. Supervisor Schwartz will be remembered as an extraordinarily intelligent and caring person.



"She would cut through the meaningless issues and connect with people. She'd always remember what was important to each individual and would always make a personal connection," says U.S. Congressman Salud Carbajal, who was Naomi's successor and former aide. "She was an advocate for environmental protection, someone who encouraged public participation and civic engagement, and she was an advocate for the most vulnerable and voiceless in our community and nation."

**New Beginnings Counseling Center**  
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Thank you to our donors, as well as Annie Garcelon, the Coeta and Donald Barker, Roy & Ida Eagle, Henry Mayo Newhall, Mark and Dorothy Smith Family, Edwin and Jeanne Woods Family, and Williams-Corbett Foundations, for helping our case manager Kristen Germann find Donna, a U.S. Army veteran, a new home. Please see page 3 for Donna's story.



## Thank You to Our Supporters at our Annual Fundraiser!



New Beginnings Counseling Center's 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.

