

## Appendix B

### Inventory of Shelters for the Homeless

#### **Families:**

Redwood Family House is the only shelter program designated exclusively for homeless families in Redwood City. Transitional housing is provided for homeless families of varying sizes. The families may stay from two to four months. During that time, they receive social counseling, childcare, financial planning, housing, and job search assistance. The objective of the facility is to break the cycle of homelessness. The facility can accommodate up to nine families at one time. Over the 1998-99 fiscal year the Redwood Family House provided housing for 32 families.

Bridges is a long-term transitional housing program for families which supports rent in a private rental unit up to one year. This is a countywide program serving 40-50 families a year.

#### Single Individuals:

There are three facilities serving Redwood City's homeless individuals.

Clara Mateo Alliance is located in Menlo Park, but provided emergency shelter and rehabilitative services to 105 homeless individuals and veterans from Redwood City in FY 1998/99.

The State of California approved \$80,000 in the State budget for a homeless service center for women and children in Menlo Park. "This first-of-its-kind facility will be located at the hospital adjacent to the Clara-Mateo Homeless Shelter. ... Services to be provided include shelter, nutritionally balanced meals, showers and bathrooms, laundry facilities, hygiene supplies, clothing, intensive case management and counseling, health care, respite care for mothers, preschool, motel and transportation vouchers, budget management training, mentoring, childcare training, support groups and physical fitness activities."<sup>1</sup>

Maple Street Shelter is the first homeless facility in San Mateo County offering both emergency shelter and transitional housing. Maple Street is designed to create self-sufficiency and provide long-term solutions for homeless men and women. The shelter houses up to 76 homeless men and women at a time, with 32 beds available on an emergency basis, and the other 44 beds reserved to provide transitional housing for three to six months. An additional 18 beds are provided for Emergency Shelter for families at the First Step for Families Program which is located in San Mateo and provides assistance to Redwood City clients. The program is staffed 24-hours a day. Participants reside in the emergency shelter housing program for 1 to 60 days, and in the mid-term transitional housing program for three to six months, depending on their individual case plans and situations. All participants are required to develop a plan with their Case Managers, and continue to make progress on their plans in order to remain in the program.

#### **Victims of Domestic Violence:**

The number of abused women and children has increased 18% in the last decade. The only agency in San Mateo County providing supportive services to battered women is the Battered Women's Shelter and Hotline. For security reasons, the location of the shelter is not disclosed to the general public. The agency reports that approximately seven Redwood City residents utilized the emergency shelter for women and children of domestic violence for the year of 1998/1999. Most of these women have children and many fear leaving their abusive husbands due to economic hardship and their inability to provide for their family financially as a single parent. General emergency shelters for the public are often reluctant to accept battered women due to the threat of danger to their other clients. Some women can find friends or family to house them and their children, but this is an imposition and security risk to their safety. If the abusive mate knows the location of the shelter, he may try to retaliate. The agency does encourage women to use any resources that will enable them and their children to escape physical brutality.

The primary function of the program is to assist battered women in emergency situations. In order to provide emergency short-term assistance for period of six to eight weeks, the facility is equipped with 18

beds. The facility is also equipped to accommodate up to three families for long-term assistance for periods ranging from six months to one year. In this fiscal year alone, the facility has sheltered 14 Redwood City women and their children. Presently, these facilities are able to accommodate only a fraction of the women of San Mateo County in need of these services. Many of the battered women seeking services are referred to shelters outside the County. Most of these shelters outside the County are also providing services beyond their capacity and many employed women are unable to commute the distance to their place of employment. As a result the majority of battered women seeking refuge in the County do not receive much needed assistance.

Sor Juana Ines: This organization does not have a specific shelter facility, however, emergency shelter is an integral part of services required for effective assistance to abused women in San Mateo County. This organization is committed to providing bilingual (English/Spanish) and culturally sensitive services for women who have been physically, emotionally, sexually, verbally and or economically abused by a domestic partner. The agency attempts to find shelter and if none is available, funds are provided to pay for emergency shelter in a motel for three to eight days, and up to 15 days as the situation permits. The major objective is to remove the victim from danger. Services provided are 24-hour crisis line in English and Spanish, information and referral, free individual peer counseling, support group, temporary restraining order preparation and emergency food and transportation. This program has expanded its capacity by bringing a staff Attorney on board to assist in the legal issues related to domestic violence and helping the victim to start over. Sor Juana Ines forms partnerships with entities like Pacific Bell who provides phones programmed to the Hotline or 911 in the event of a domestic emergency.

#### **Homeless Youth:**

Homeless youth in Redwood City are another special needs group that is very difficult to count. The 1990 Census estimates that this population of Redwood City is 23% children and youth, ages 0-18. The census also estimated the number of youth under 18 residing in group homes in Redwood City to be 63 residents. Most recently, this population includes youth over the age of 18 with AIDS or HIV related illnesses.

The Daybreak Youth Shelter assists youth, ages 16 to 19, in making a transition to either independent living or a permanent shared housing situation with the assistance of the Human Investment Project, Inc.'s (HIP) home sharing program. Ideally, the program hopes to break the cycle and lower the number of homeless youth, who would later end up in the criminal justice system or rely on public assistance, by developing self-worth and practical skills. For over four years, Youth and Family Assistance, Inc., has operated a transitional housing facility in Redwood City that provides a safe, stable, and nourishing environment, with rules, responsibility, counseling, and education for homeless youth. This facility is designed to give the youth an opportunity for a balanced, productive life.

The program is essentially a transitional housing self-sufficiency program. However, the facility's secondary function is as an emergency shelter to those eligible minors referred by the law enforcement community. There is a maximum six-month stay with supervision, counseling, and a continuous follow-up service to include rental assistance and job development. Presently, the facility can accommodate ten youth at a time and has been expanded to accommodate an additional three to four residents.

A number of supportive organizations also service the needs of Youth in Redwood City. YOUR HOUSE, established specifically for youth by Youth and Family Assistance, was utilized by 1,835 Redwood City youth and assisted 32 through crisis intervention between 1998 and 1999. Youth and Family Assistance has also helped to place 25 youth in temporary residential housing. Another non-residential facility Youth and Family Assistance operates is The Community Living Room, a drop-in-center for homeless youth. The center is open seven days a week, afternoon and evenings, and provides a home atmosphere where youth can relax and communicate their frustrations through peer groups and professional counseling. The primary goal of Youth and Family Assistance is family reunification. In their initial establishment during the 1970's, they met this goal approximately 90% of the time. However, in the last decade the rate of reunification has dropped to 80%. Due to inadequate housing available for youth with intolerable home situations, many must seek refuge on the streets.

The problem of homelessness is an increasingly significant one; it is clear that the homeless problem has worsened over the last ten years. A concerted effort at local, state, and federal levels is needed to address the issue. Availability of affordable housing would help to provide housing for some homeless persons; however, the City needs to continue to provide sites for homeless shelters to meet the needs of the homeless population.

**Persons with Mental Disabilities:**

The Mental Health Division of San Mateo County, Health Services Department provides emergency shelter to single persons, which makes up 72% of the population served. Approximately 62% receive social security benefits and 26% have no means of support. Some mentally ill reside in institutions, others are living on the streets or in shelters, and a small percentage function independently within society. The Spring Street Shelter and the Mateo Lodge provide the current housing available for the low-income, mentally ill in Redwood City.

Spring Street Shelter houses 15 individuals in its emergency shelter and 7 in its single-room temporary housing facility. The facility served an estimated 225 persons with mental disabilities in the last year. Approximately 25% of their clients are Redwood City residents. There is a continual waiting list for the shelter which is funded through the County of San Mateo, as well as fund raising events, federal funds and the United Way of the Bay Area. Spring Street Shelter staff reports a significant increase in the number of persons with mental disabilities using drugs and alcohol. There is a request for alternative support systems and permanent housing so those individuals participating in the program may live independently, while strengthening their rehabilitation process. Additional grants are being sought for program participants to supplement finances and help in meeting these goals for the future.

The Mateo Lodge also serves persons with mental disabilities in Redwood City. They provide care, medication, meals, and emergency housing for homeless persons with mental disabilities. They also provide housing for 12 residents, an estimated 75% being from Redwood City. There is currently a waiting list of ten persons for residential assistance. Mateo Lodge, Inc. maintains contact with about 680 disabled persons for support services, offering support for the family with care, special counseling, and referrals to developing job skills in their strive for independence. Mateo Lodge also provides a 24-hour service mental health hotline and a mobile support team to serve people with mental disabilities throughout the community. However, Mateo Lodge reports that despite providing an excellent level of services and complying with all licensing codes the present and future needs are always greater than the services they are able to provide. Moreover, for the past ten years Mateo Lodge has expanded its programs, yet they constantly face an ever-increasing waiting list for its services and a constant struggle to adequately fund its various service projects.

Another residential program for persons with mental disabilities is Redwood House, and provides an alternative to the psychiatric hospital. It is a short-term crisis oriented program for voluntary residential psychiatric treatment. The residential facility may shorten the length of stay required. The house accommodates 16 adults, ages 18-59, who are provided with 24-hour care for a stay of two to three months, but is not currently wheelchair accessible. The fees for the facility are based on the client's income. Redwood House receives referrals from the Mental Health Department.

Canyon Oaks Youth Center – scheduled for completion in October 2001- will be the county's only live-in treatment facility for young people with severe mental health problems. For years suicidal youths have been sent away for residential care. Treatment providers say having family members nearby is vital for young people in institutions. Parents and guardians must join counseling sessions, support groups and staff reviews before children are deemed ready for release.

The 5,900 square foot Canyon Oaks is being built near the Cordilleras Mental Health Center, an adult campus off Edgewood Road. The 12-bed center will be open to youths 12 to 18, who can stay for as long as two years. Currently, San Mateo County sends an average of 12 youths each year to centers beyond the Peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

More funding is needed to adequately serve homeless people with mental disabilities. Additional daytime activities for vocational educational services are needed. Ideally, patients should spend rehabilitation time at a temporary, intermediate house where they can receive counseling and therapy; however, there is a lack of temporary housing available for them.