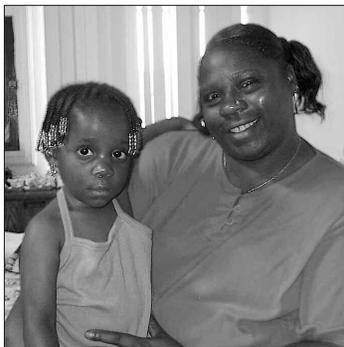


East Oakland Community Project Newsline

Fall 2007

Building *Strong* Families



Recently, Tonya*, a young mother, shared with us, "I want to thank you for helping me understand the importance of having meals with my children and knowing how to find quality time to be with them during the evening and on weekends." Such a statement might sound run-of-the-mill in most circumstances, but for homeless families it is an example of significant growth in understanding how to build a strong, healthy family.

Over 18,000 people are homeless each year in Alameda County.

43% of this population are families. Last year, EOCP turned away 698 families due to lack of space. When the agency moves into Crossroads, our new emergency housing facility, we will increase the number of rooms for families from three to five, which will be enclosed in a family wing that will enable EOCP to provide enrichment activities, such as tutoring, arts and story time, as well as a playground for children. With this expanded capacity, EOCP will provide a stronger continuum of care

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Patricia's Story

When Patricia* entered the Matilda Cleveland Transitional Housing Program with her three-year-old son, she suffered from mild depression, anxiety and poor financial management skills. Nonetheless, she was able to maintain employment as a bookkeeper and take courses in pursuit of a degree in finance. Despite these accomplishments, Patricia neglected her financial issues and mental health.

After about six months at EOCP, Patricia began to act out and look for reasons to disengage from the program. Staff acknowledged the heavy workload that Patricia was carrying and helped her address her stance of "me against the world." Patricia

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Crossroads

A New Home is Opening in Oakland

Save the Date! Thursday, January 24, 2008, 4 to 7 pm

Join us as we celebrate our long-awaited dream to open our newly built emergency housing facility at 7515 International Blvd. With entertainment, refreshments, and remarks by honored guests. Donation requested. For information, contact Natalia López at (415) 282-6941 or lopez186@sbcglobal.net.

*Names have been changed to protect clients' privacy

Building Strong Families

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for families (from homelessness to emergency to transitional housing) and will serve between 40 and 70 homeless families (or 122 to 245 individuals) each year.

Homeless parents frequently lack the skills to nurture their children's development. Often, their own parents did not model healthy behaviors for them, they had children at very young ages, or are overwhelmed by their family's financial needs. In some cases these dynamics are compounded by histories of substance abuse, mental health disorders, health care problems, and learning disabilities among parents and children.

EOCP utilizes a holistic approach to help homeless families overcome the numerous obstacles to self-sufficiency. In addition to providing emergency and transitional housing, the agency offers case management, life skills training, career development coaching and financial literacy training. This wraparound approach enables parents to improve their financial, physical and psychological well-being. EOCP also strengthens fami-

ly functioning by teaching parenting skills and helping parents understand the different stages of a child's development.

The results of the agency's

A Snapshot of Families at EOCP

- **65% are African American, 11% are Caucasian, 9% are Latino, 15% are Native American/Pacific Islander/Multi-racial**
- **64% of families are headed by the mother only, 14% by the father only, 22% by both parents**
- **19% of children have learning disabilities**
- **88% have a history of substance abuse**
- **75% of parents have a mental health disorder**
- **56% of parents have a high school diploma when they enter the program**

Families' Achievements

- 53% found permanent or transitional housing
- 92% secured an income stream
- 58% received referrals for medical and dental care
- 33% participated in substance abuse and mental health counseling
- 82% of children took part in enrichment activities

efforts become evident through the voices of parents and children participating in the program. One

mother, Charice*, stated, "The resources and training, such as money management, life skills training and anger management, helped me most. They are necessities." These positive experiences strengthen homeless families' ability to secure and sustain self-sufficiency for the long-term. ☺

Patricia *continued from page 1*

began meeting with the Mental Health Counselor to reduce her depression and anxiety. She received career development coaching from the Client Empowerment Specialist and met with her Case Manager to tackle her outstanding debt and rebuild her credit. In Life Skills Training, she learned to manage her finances, reduce her stress and understand her child's developmental stages.

When Patricia graduated from the program two years later, she had saved over \$3,000, which she used to rent her own apartment and buy furniture. Her son is attending school and enjoys story time with his mother. Patricia is participating in aftercare with her Case Manager and continues to pursue a degree in finance. She says, "Matilda Cleveland gave me the time, support and encouragement I needed to get myself together and get on my feet again. I don't know what I would have done without their support." ☺



New Community Garden

We offer enthusiastic applause to **Rebuilding Together Oakland** and the volunteers who created a delightful garden for families at the **Matilda Cleveland Transitional Housing Program**. Your generosity and hard work have structured a nurturing space for parent and children to relax, learn gardening and life skills, and par-



ticipate in fun, educational activities together. Families in our program are taking care of the plants, making crafts and sharing story time in this beautiful setting. EOCB's Board of Directors, staff and clients would like to thank volunteers from **US Bank, Kitchell, CEM and UC Berkeley (Cal Corps Alternative Breaks)** for contributing to the well-being of homeless families. 🌱

Our Gratitude

We would like to thank everyone who made our **second annual summer raffle** a success! Thanks to our generous donors, **we raised over \$4,000 to provide enrichment activities for homeless children in our emergency and transitional housing programs**. Youth are engaged in art groups, story time and educational field trips that teach them valuable life skills and help them build healthy relationships. 🌱

You can make a difference in the lives of homeless individuals and families! To make a tax-deductible donation, please mail your check to EOCB at 5725 International Blvd., Oakland, CA, 94621.

For more information, contact **Elizabeth Abernathy** at **(828) 215-0192** or **elizabeth@eocb.net**. We appreciate your gift.

Call for Volunteers

EOCB requests volunteers to **wrap gifts at Borders Books and Music in Emeryville** on **Saturdays, December 8 & 15**. The gift-wrapping is free for customers, and volunteers will use the opportunity to encourage them to make donations to the organization. Help homeless people become self-sufficient by volunteering to wrap presents...or come do your **holiday shopping at Borders on December 8 & 15** and make a donation to EOCB. We appreciate your support. 🌱



Holiday Wish List

- * Diapers and wipes
- * Children's furniture, cribs, play structures
- * Computer software (educational, games)
- * Toys, puzzles, crafts
- * Books
- * Rugs
- * Towels, washcloths
- * Professional clothing
- * Personal hygiene (toothpaste, soap, etc.)
- * Bedsheets, pillows, pillowcases, blankets, twin size comforters
- * Plants, gardening supplies
- * Copier machine
- * Computers, printers
- * Office supplies

MISSION: EOCP empowers homeless individuals and families in Alameda County to regain a life of self-reliance. We provide dignified emergency and transitional housing and compassionate, comprehensive support services that prepare homeless people to successfully transition to well being.



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[**Helping Homeless People Transition to Well-being**]



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