

East Oakland Community Project Newsline

Spring 2007

Creating a Haven for Homeless Youth

“I don’t think anyone else would have given me a chance,” states Cornisha Williams, a 23-year old resident of Our House. Our House, a member of the Oakland Homeless Youth Housing Collaborative, is a transitional housing program operated by the East Oakland Community Project (EOCP). Cornisha is one of seven youth currently participating in the program, which assists young adults in overcoming homelessness by providing them with the tools for self-sufficiency.

When Cornisha came to Our House one year ago, she carried a lot of baggage from child abuse experienced while in foster care, a physically abusive boyfriend and a

“My case manager has helped me with shaping my attitude. I’ve always been very independent. I have learned to be interdependent.”

lack of money management skills. These issues culminated in a defiant attitude, low self-esteem and substantial debt. Cornisha’s participation in case management, life skills training, personal financial management training, and mental health counseling helped her turn her life around. Staff motivated her to develop a budget and begin

paying off her debts. When Cornisha was on the verge of losing her job, her Case Manager coached her on working out the struggles with her employer.

The mental health support that Cornisha received from staff also made a difference. In counseling, Cornisha began to address the pain she had suffered and realized that she needed to leave her abusive boyfriend. She reflects, “I

Our House’s 2006 Achievements

- 12 youth participated in the program
- 5 youth found permanent housing
- 9 youth obtained an income source
- 5 youth attended an educational or vocational training program or obtained a GED

learned a lot about womanhood through [my Case Manager]. She cares, you can tell. She will take time out to help you.”

Cornisha has come a long way during her first year at Our House. In addition to working as an administrator, she is taking business and music courses at Laney College in pursuit of a Business Degree. She is starting her own record label and will be hosting a concert that will raise funds for an organization that provides services to foster care youth. Cornisha explains, “My Case Manager has helped me with shaping my attitude. I’ve always been very independent. I have learned to be interdependent.” Cornisha plans to complete her second year at Our House and continue improving her



Our House is a success primarily due to the diligent efforts of Linda Fuentes, Case Manager/Coordinator. Linda joined EOCP in 2000, bringing her skills as a manager for SBC and years of domestic violence support to our fledgling youth program. She has built her reputation on consistently reality testing with clients and maintaining staff’s accountability for the program’s success.

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From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

EOCP is on the move onward and upward. This past February, we delighted in every step of the tour we took through the ground floor of Crossroads, our new emergency housing facility, at 7515

International Boulevard. During this preview, we walked through the reception, lounge, kitchen, dining and respite care areas of our new facility. Our contractors, Oliver and Company, have already started on the second floor and are ahead of schedule.

Our tour of Crossroads was timely, for it gave us a jolt of enthusiasm after years of raising funds and awareness to create a healthy, motivating setting for homeless people to overcome the obstacles to their self-sufficiency. The next few months will be busy ones as we work through the details of the move into our new building. Over the coming weeks, we will be working with an artist to develop a mural for the entrance, determining a phone system and discussing options for furnishing the facility.

This spacious and well designed green building will increase the agency's capacity to assist homeless people by 20% to 125 beds as well as provide a respite care program for people recovering from illness, a meditation room and a dedicated wing for families. As we continue to provide comprehensive services for homeless individuals and families in our current location, we are enthused by the realization of our dream to support our residents in a beautiful and uplifting environment.

Warm Regards,
Wendy U. Jackson
Executive Director

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Haven

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finances so that she can buy her first home when she graduates from the program.

Cornisha's story reflects the many needs of homeless youth. Unfortunately, the problem of homelessness among youth is not improving: At any given time, there are more than 1,700 homeless youth living on the street in Alameda County. Our House provides 19% of the beds available for homeless young adults in the County. Wendy Jackson, EOCP's Executive Director, explains Our House's success as follows: "Because we are small, the program's Case Manager has many opportunities to nurture the growth of individual youth. It is the combination of nurturance and consistency that creates the balanced environment that helps young people grow." ♡



Spring Greetings from the EOCP staff!



*Many thanks to our
generous donors for their
contributions in 2006!*

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Volunteer Wish List

EOCP provides many opportunities for volunteers to assist us in helping homeless people become self-sufficient. Contact Katana Barnes if you can help with any of the following:

- Tutor adults or children
- Help residents fill out housing applications
- Speak on topics such as health, domestic violence or job readiness at life skills training or women's support group workshops
- Provide computer troubleshooting and maintenance
- Copy and file in our administrative office
- Cook or serve meals
- Landscape
- Minor repairs and maintenance
- Organize the clothing room
- Assist with fundraising



Now, Your Shopping Can Really Pay Off!

Your everyday purchases can make a difference in the lives of homeless adults, youth and families! We spend money every day—groceries, clothes, car repair, travel, the list goes on and on. Now, you can

“I was so glad to be able to shop online while at the same time supporting EOCP. Best of all, the purchase I made at 123 inkjet was a great bargain for the ink cartridges that I needed—better than any deal I had found elsewhere. It pays to check out the igive merchants, in more ways than one!” Cindy McBride, Donor

get an extra bang for your buck by registering with one of the three donation programs that let you apply your purchases to benefit the homeless in Alameda County. Sign up today with iGive, Albertsons or eScrip


and designate EOCP as your donation recipient. Or contact us at (510) 532-3211 or elizabeth@eocp.net and we'll sign you up.

- **iGive**—Shop online? iGive will donate up to 26% of your online purchases from over 650 online stores. It's easy! Just go to www.igive.com, log in and select EOCP as your donation recipient.

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

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

- **Albertsons Community Partners Program**—Albertsons will donate up to 4% when you shop with your Preferred Savings Card and designate EOCP as your recipient. First, you need the Preferred Savings Card, which is free at Albertsons. Then, you can sign up online at www.albertsons.com. EOCP's Community Partner ID# is 49001009700.

- **eScrip Program**—eScrip lets you register in one place for your purchases at numerous vendors to benefit EOCP. Merchants include grocery, clothing, travel, tire, and office supplies stores and more. Go to www.escrip.com to sign up and view the list of participating merchants. Designate EOCP as your group (#500002598) and register the credit/debit card(s) you use to shop as well as your grocery club card for participating stores. 

EOCP's 2006 Accomplishments

- 752 people, including 36 families, received housing and supportive services
- 19% of individuals and 53% of families found housing
- 22% of adults and 92% of families secured an income stream
- 68% of individuals and 72% of families participated in life skills training
- 22% of adults and 56% of families received connections to primary care
- 12% of individuals and 25% of families achieved sobriety

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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EOCP—providing the homeless of Alameda County with the tools for self-sufficiency



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