

TLR Newsletter



June 2018

Save the Date!

- 6.28.18 Staff & Volunteer Self-Care Workshop with Julie Emery of Real Girl Coaching
- 7.11.18 Staff & Volunteer Training on Human Trafficking
- 7.12.18 Loving The Living Room Event at Wild Oak Saddle Club
- 8.8.18 Back to School BBQ & Backpack Giveaway
- 8.29.18 Staff & Volunteer ACEs Training Part 2 w/ Nancy Vogl

Summer Days

The sun is shining and the tomatoes are planted, which can only mean one thing! It's officially summertime here at The Living Room! With most kids out of school, we are already seeing increased attendance in our Mother & Child Program. For homeless and at risk families, especially those staying in the shelter, The Living Room offers a safe and child friendly environment to accommodate kids of all ages. TLR is also able to help provide families with access to community summer camps and activities including passes to Santa Rosa Children's Museum, Snoopy's Ice Rink, Ridgeway Swim Center, Forget Me Not Farm, Recreation Sensation, and Camp Yu-Chi!

We will also be continuing with our 3rd annual Back to School BBQ and Backpack Giveaway! If you are interested in lending an extra hand at the party (Wed, Aug 8th) please let me know! Last year we gave away over 100 backpacks!

Wishing everyone a lovely summer!

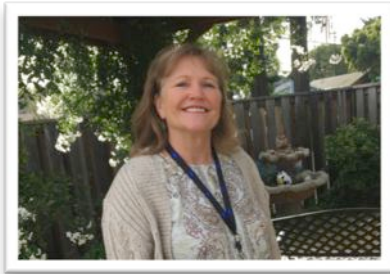
Katie Phillips,
Volunteer Coordinator



Huge **THANKS** to everyone who participated in this year's Human Race!

With your help, **\$12,825** was raised for TLR!

Welcome to New Staff: Donna & Maya!



Program Director, Donna Gabehart

A Sonoma County resident for over 55 years, Donna is very excited to join the team here at The Living Room! Donna's lifelong passion for helping others inspired her to earn a degree in Psychology at Sonoma State University, and since then she has found joy in providing a positive influence for those with mental illnesses, developmental delays, and addiction issues by supporting them as they become stable, self-reliant and confident individuals. Donna brings a delightful combination of earnest compassion and deep understanding of homeless issues (not to mention a fabulous sense of humor!) to her new role as Program Director, overseeing both the Women's and Mother & Child Program. Welcome, Donna!



MAC Program Staff, Maya Contardi

Born and raised in Sebastopol, Maya began her time at The Living Room last September as an intern while completing her final year as a Women and Gender Studies major at Sonoma State University. Maya loves the safety, comfort and welcoming atmosphere The Living Room provides to Participants, and looks forward to gaining further knowledge and insight into the needs of the women and children using TLR services. Maya has a gentle, focused and thoughtful approach to working with the moms and kids of the MAC Program. Congratulations to Maya on her recent graduation from SSU, and on becoming an official TLR Staff Member!

Play It Forward: Music Mondays w/ Dave Silva!

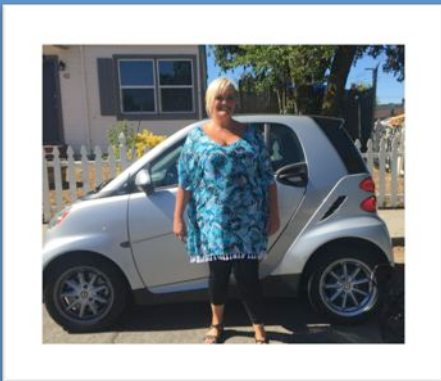
Every Monday from 10:30-11:30 you can hear the beautiful sound of voices joined in song coming from the Dining Deck. Dave Silva, co-founder and Assistant Director of local nonprofit Play It Forward Music School, has been coming to TLR for the past year with his guitar in tow to lead this fun and enriching group. In addition, Dave brings professional female guest musicians to share their songs and voices. Play It Forward has also provided instruments and lesson scholarships to both women and kids of The Living Room. Music is scientifically proven to help ease the effects of trauma and even some chronic illnesses! We are so thankful to have this special program here at TLR! Volunteers are welcome to join in the fun, too!



A Mother's Journey Towards a New Life



Mother & Child Coordinator
Jen Parr and Chris



Chris with her new Smart Car
from CPI

*Keep up the
great work,
Chris!*

In the winter of 2017, about a month after Participant Chris and her 10 year-old son came to The Living Room, Chris' son was removed from her custody due to her drug use. Her son has been with a foster family since then, with regular weekly visits and contact with Chris as she continues to work to complete the needed steps to reunify.

Her journey, as she will openly tell, has not been without stumbles and roadblocks. Chris reflects on a pivotal moment in her recovery, describing a conversation between her and MAC Program Coordinator Jen Parr the day after her son was removed:

“I wanted to stop using, but just didn't know how. I was in a spiral of denial and shame that was overwhelming. And being high on meth, you guys [TLR Staff] were all cops as far as I was concerned! But I'll never forget when Jen said, 'Just because a parent uses drugs, doesn't mean they don't love their kids'. It was the first time that I felt seen in a very long time, and the first time I was able to be honest about my behavior without feeling judged. That was the moment I knew The Living Room was a safe place for me to be, and that there were people who I could count on to give me the unconditional love and support I needed to make a real change. I was able to come to terms with my role in my struggles and take responsibility for my choices. The Living Room was the first opportunity I had to get real and embrace change.”

Chris has had the support of several other agencies and individuals, including her case manager, Cesily, at Mary Isaak Center who was able to get Chris counseling and a bed at a sober living house. Currently Chris is working to secure permanent housing through Interfaith.

Chris recently received news from her CPS caseworkers that if all continues to go well she can expect to regain custody by fall of this year. She was also gifted a Smart Car with a year's worth of gas and maintenance from CPI (Child Parent Institute) for all of her hard work.

Chris hopes to someday work as a Parent Mentor and Advocate to help families become stable and healthy.

On behalf of all TLR Staff and Volunteers, we are so proud of Chris for her dedication to her recovery and to her son!

TLR HOUSING UPDATE



Both Carrillo houses are now fully occupied with TLR Participants! 62 is providing Permanent Supportive Housing for a MAC family, and 69 is operating as a year-long Transitional Housing Program for 4 individual Women's Program Participants. Both houses are connected to regular support from TLR Staff and continue to have access to TLR Day Services.

Getting both houses up and running has been a huge group effort between Staff, Board Members and Volunteers. We are very excited and hopeful to see how our Supportive and Transitional Housing Programs will continue to grow and evolve!



On May 3rd a wonderful and enthusiastic team of Levi Straus employees, in partnership with Hands on Bay Area, spent the day working in the yards of both homes building planter boxes, a picnic bench, weeding and planting beautiful new plants! Thank you, Levi's!





Natalie Butler

Joanna Moreno

Interns Lend a Helping Hand By Christine Bitonti

Since January, the Women’s Program has been fortunate to have two college students placed in our program and supervised by Celeste Austin, Director of Special Programs. Natalie Butler is a Sociology Major at CSU Sonoma, and Joanna Moreno Espinoza is a Social Work Major (undergraduate program) at CSU Sacramento. Both young women graduated this June. While field placements of this sort are learning experiences for the students, the interns have been very helpful to Staff and Participants during their months in placement here.

Beyond helping with office tasks related to the operation of the Resource Room, both students have developed their interviewing, counseling and writing skills as they participated in client intakes, on-the-spot counseling sessions and various other supervised service activities. They have taken field trips to local programs serving the homeless and have done independent literature research on issues related to homelessness.

We applaud their enthusiasm, cheerfulness, and willingness to learn and interact with Participants, and we look forward to having both Joanna and Natalie as summer Volunteers in the regular TLR Program!

Loving The Living Room!

LOVING THE LIVING ROOM 2018
FUNDRAISER

THURSDAY, JULY 12TH 5-7 PM

WILD OAK SADDLE CLUB

550 WHITE OAK DR, SANTA ROSA

LIVE + SILENT AUCTION

WINE & APPETIZERS

LIVE MUSIC



FOR TICKETS CALL
(707) 579-0138 x 0

Volunteers Needed!

Friday Cooks 7am-12pm

Breakfast & Lunch Cooks & Server Subs M-F (flexible shifts available)

Mother & Child Program: Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri 12-3pm

Women's Program: Thurs & Fri
8:30am-11:30pm & 11:30-3pm

Donations: Tue & Thurs
9am-12pm, 12pm-3pm

Contact Katie Phillips, Volunteer Coordinator at
kphillips@thelivingroomsc.org



Summer Urgent Needs!

Children's Needs:

Spring/Summer Clothing - Sizes 12-
24 mo, 2-5T, 6-12

Swimsuits & Underwear (NEW)

Shoes – All Sizes

Sunscreen & Sun Hats

Diapers - sizes 4, 5, 6 & Pullups
2T-5T

Women's Needs:

Sunscreen, Sun Hats, Lip Balm

Swimsuits & Underwear (NEW)

Reusable Water Bottles

Stretch Pants – All Sizes

Reading Glasses, Eye Masks

Phone Plugs

Deodorant, Hair Ties, Razors, Q-tips

Bike Helmets, Locks & Chains

Flashlights, Batteries (AA, AAA)

Dog & Cat Food