The past 12 months have been a watershed year for many reasons. The best of these is that your support helped us find homes for 151 households, made up of 296 individuals. That’s a 79% increase over the year before, and the 6,868 of you who donated and volunteered are a huge part of that success. You’ll meet a few of the people you helped house in the following pages and get a more in-depth look at the numbers.

It seems that we’ve reached a turning point in our collective resolve as a community to address the homelessness crisis. I see this in media coverage, in my discussions with donors and other community members, and I see it in our local and state government’s efforts to fund and build new infrastructure to help our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness. This is a critical time.

HOUSING FIRST
We’ve doubled down on our commitment to the internationally successful approach to ending homelessness: Housing First. All of our programs focus on this simple, yet purposeful method: we first provide housing to people in crisis, then we work directly with them (sometimes for up to two years) to help resolve the issues that brought them to homelessness in the first place.

Following the best practice of focusing first on the hardest to house, we use a standardized assessment tool to identify those who are most at risk of not surviving life on the streets. This approach is used across all local agencies, resulting in a coordinated effort with profound impact on the community as a whole. Through careful resource management we are able to continue to serve people experiencing a wide variety of situations, with a wide variety of needs, always implementing the Housing First best practices.

THE FUTURE
We’re also working closely with both the city and the county to explore new ways to address this crisis in a lasting way. While concrete plans are still in the works, we feel the momentum building. We invite you to join us in our efforts toward lasting change.

In his bestselling book “Evicted,” Matthew Desmond said: “It is hard to argue that housing is not a fundamental human need. Decent, affordable housing should be a basic right for everybody in this country. The reason is simple: without stable shelter, everything else falls apart.” I couldn’t agree more.

Phil Kramer, Executive Director
**HOME AT LAST: Success Stories**

With so many individuals and families housed and supported last year, we had a lot to celebrate. Here are just a few of the success stories you made possible.

**MIKE, AMI, AND THEIR KIDS**
Mike, a veteran, Ami, and their three children were homeless for two years, sleeping in hotels and, finally, their car.

HSC helped them get the benefits they deserved and a new home.

“The staff is very helpful and supportive when we needed it most,” says Ami.

**ROYCE**
Royce grew up in Santa Cruz with alcoholic parents. His own substance issues led him to homelessness and crisis.

After many years on the street he was suffering from such intense paranoia he could barely interact.

His case manager stuck with him and helped Royce find a home, where he still lives.

**KELLIE AND HER SONS**
Fleeing an abusive relationship, Kellie and her two skateboard-loving sons found themselves without a place to live.

Kellie, struggling with substance issues, didn’t know where to turn.

After a stay at the Rebele Family Shelter and a commitment to a clean living program they were able to find a new home.

Kellie now works in the same substance use program she completed and is thrilled to be helping others.

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**FISCAL YEAR 2018**

**By the Numbers**

In FY2018, you helped house more people than ever before, and we’ve witnessed a strengthening in the entire community’s resolve to address homelessness. Here’s a look at some of the numbers.

**Permanent Housing Placements**
- 151 HOUSEHOLDS
- 296 INDIVIDUALS

**On-Campus Services**
- 99,160 MEALS SERVED
- 15,000 SHOWERS PROVIDED
- 63,410 BED NIGHTS PROVIDED

**Community Engagement**
- 1,179 DONORS
- 5,689 VOLUNTEER HOURS
- OVER $1.2 MILLION IN INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

**Veteran Support**
- 44 VETERANS HOUSED
- 133 VETERANS SUPPORTED

*Note: numbers include veterans and their household members

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**What’s Next**
FY2019 is already off to a great start. The success stories you’ve read are not possible without community support. Help us house the next individual, veteran or family experiencing homelessness by returning the enclosed envelope with your gift.
Talking About Homelessness

It’s an issue that affects our entire community, yet many of us struggle with how to discuss homelessness. Here are some commonly asked questions, and some thoughtful responses.

Q: Don’t homeless people come from all around the country for our services?
A: Santa Cruz County’s annual census shows that year after year about 70% of people experiencing homelessness had a home here immediately prior to becoming homeless, and 59% have lived here for 10 years or more.

Q: So, why are there so many homeless people here?
A: In 2017 California had 134,000 people experiencing homeless — that’s 22% of the entire country’s homeless population — and up 14% since 2016. On top of that, 80% of people who are homeless in Santa Cruz County are unsheltered. Our county’s rent-to-income ratio is among the highest in the country. Fully 25% of people experiencing homelessness here in 2017 report job loss as the cause, while 14% report eviction and another 9% illness/medical problems.

Q: Don’t most homeless people have substance use issues?
A: 55% of people experiencing homelessness here report a serious disabling condition, 39% with mental health issues. On top of that, the experience of becoming homeless is incredibly traumatic. Many people turn to drugs or alcohol after the fact as self-medication to deal with the constant stress. How many of us have a drink after a stressful day? Imagine if you didn’t know where you’d sleep or how you’d secure your few remaining possessions?

Q: Why don’t they just get a job?
A: Again, the level of daily trauma experienced by people living without a home is immense. Expecting them to try to deal with health or substance issues or even just find a job and housing while homeless is unrealistic. Think of the most traumatic thing that’s happened to you, then imagine compounding that experience with no home.

Q: How is it fair that we help homeless people get housed when the market is so competitive for us?
A: We pay far more when people are homeless. It’s estimated that in Santa Cruz County it costs the community over $70,000 – $80,000 a year in emergency services, jail, court and other fees for a single unhoused person. In contrast, it costs only $17,000 – $22,000 per year to house that same person.

Q: So, what can we do?
A: Housing First is a proven, data-driven approach to helping end homelessness. The concept is simple: first get people into stable housing, then provide supportive services to get them back to independent living. Finland and Salt Lake City are widely regarded models of success, and so is Santa Cruz — in the last 5 years we’ve housed over 700 people who were chronically homeless. Support affordable housing in your neighborhood; come to one of our campus tours! For more, visit www.santacruzhsc.org/learn-more