“Coach” Patches Garments of Life

It’s been 4 years since I’ve put a tie, sport coat, and loafers on. I am looking forward to getting back on track, patching the holes that have appeared in the garment of life,” says Tim H., a proud gentleman known to most as “Coach.”

After three years of living on the street, Tim came to Homeward Bound through the Transition to Wellness partnership with Ritter Center and local hospitals. Having a place to stay with ongoing nursing care, he’s begun to rebuild his health and life after suffering serious complications of diabetes.

Things looked different for Tim when he graduated in 1965 from San Rafael High School, where he was a football star. “We didn’t have homelessness in 1965,” he says. “There were some surfers and hippies who lived on the beach, but that was a lifestyle choice:” He continued playing football at University of California at Davis before signing with the San Francisco 49ers. A glittering career looked set to open, but tragedy struck when he blew out his knee in training. Tim’s pro career ended before the first whistle.

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Cheffa F. Finally Finds Home in Her Hometown

Though raised and schooled in Marin County, Cheffa H. passed a lot of time in her hometown without feeling like it was a place where she belonged. She attended Davidson Middle School and San Rafael High School, but spent years struggling to hold down a job while battling persistent mental health issues. Turning to drugs and alcohol, Cheffa ended up on the streets. That period became “very sad and confusing,” she says, but Cheffa determined to change her circumstances and now has several years of sobriety. Yet her struggle to maintain employment continued and, as a result, so did her episodes without stable housing.

Two years ago, however, Cheffa found a home at our Voyager Carmel Center in San Rafael and now works with Buckelew Programs, Homeward Bound’s primary partner in serving homeless people facing severe mental health issues in Marin. At Voyager Carmel Center, Cheffa has long-term housing and says she appreciates the support services play a key role in stability for families who often struggle to experience in providing services for people with a history of homelessness,” says Anna Gwyn Simpson, Eden’s director of resident services. Homeward Bound refers tenants for 18 of the 50 apartments.

“Eden is pleased to have a strong local partner in Homeward Bound who has longtime experience in providing services for people with a history of homelessness,” Simpson says. The successful partnership at Fireside led Eden Housing to contract with Homeward Bound for a service coordinator at another Eden property, Warner Creek Senior Housing in Novato, which opened in 2013 for 60 low-income tenants. The support services play a key role in stability for families who often struggle to make ends meet with low-wage jobs, Edith says. Without a home at Fireside, she says, “I would only be able to rent a single room for all of us to have to share somewhere, I would be scared.”

Edith B. Finds Warm Place at Fireside Apartments

Edith B. remembers clearly when she walked into the Fireside Apartments in Mill Valley. “It was my birthday,” she says. And I thought, can this really be a place for me?” Cheffa says, “and having a place to call home, to shower and to sleep, means that I can get a job.” People like Cheffa are the focus of Buckelew Employment Services, which assists adults with mental illness in Marin, Sonoma and Napa counties to find and maintain employment. The agency offers pre-employment counseling, vocational training, job development, placement, and job coaching.

“Edith was punctual and eager to work from the first time that I met with her. She has been working hard and is eager to advance in her career,” says Tamahtra McClure, Cheffa’s caseworker at Buckelew. Cheffa now has a full-time position on the clean-up crew at The Village mall in Corte Madera. “I am focused on my journey now,” Cheffa says. “I love going to work and I love spending time with my mother and my son, who both live in San Rafael. It is a great feeling to be a part of their lives and to have them be proud of me.”

DEAR FRIENDS TO THE END...OF HOMELESSNESS,

We are all connected, not just to the internet, but really and truly to each other. At Homeward Bound, we understand and appreciate that connecting is the cornerstone of working in a community to end homelessness. Just like connective tissues result in our ability to move and breathe and sustain bodily functions, so the body politic moves and breathes to function cohesively, hopefully and optimally. Some amazing and impactful stories of connection are here in these pages – quietly heroic, courageous, groundbreaking, and sometimes downright gritty. Other stories exist in each of our own lives, where we connect with others to make our time together more purposeful and complete. Together we are so much more and, therefore, can do so much more.

Homelessness is manmade. It will take all of us — men, women and children — to unmake it. We can do that without directing blame toward people for being homeless nor to organizations who are called to serve people without homes. Together we can expand our efforts and amass all our collective human forces to forge productive relationships with individuals and groups to finally end homelessness.

From a daily breakfast for a veteran or senior, to creating an entire community called Oma Village, our partners — whether nonprofits, businesses or skilled volunteers — help our residents and each other advance toward our goals.

This issue of Homeward Bound newsletter introduces just a few of our close partners to illustrate the ways that our local safety net truly is woven from strands of many varied strengths.

None of us is really home until all of us are home.

Gratefully,

Mary Kay Sweeney, Executive Director

Homeward Bound of Marin

PAYING HOMAGE TO PARTNERS

EDEN HOUSING

Fleeing domestic violence, Edith stepped onto the Fireside property six years ago after a nomadic journey that brought her to Homeward Bound of Marin by way of her sister’s home, where she expected help but found no welcome. She thrived at our Family Center and moved to transitional housing, but worried continually about the future of her sons Erik and Brandon without stable housing and a steady school. “I feel there are a lot of angels around me. If I have a problem, someone is here for me to ask,” she says.

By partnering with Homeward Bound, Eden Housing provides Fireside with a full-time coordinator for services like family counseling, a monthly food pantry, and helping residents access benefits like bus vouchers or assistance with health care.

Edith has found support for the smallest things, like replacing a lost backpack for 10-year-old Brandon, to the larger ones, like lightening her spirit through regular sessions with a trauma therapist and attending parenting workshops.

Her family now has an affordable two-bedroom apartment at Fireside, which is among 130+ properties owned and managed by Eden Housing, a nonprofit developer and manager of affordable communities throughout California (for more information – www.edenhousing.org). Through Eden’s partnership with Homeward Bound, Edith says, her family has thrived. “There are good things here for families. Sometimes you think you’re okay, but you’re not and you can get better,” Edith says. She attends a weekly yoga workshop at Fireside to help with back problems that have bothered her since she fell while working at a local flea market.

Fireside provides affordable rental apartments specifically reserved for people who have previously experienced homelessness, says Anna Gwyn Simpson, Eden’s director of resident services. Homeward Bound refers tenants for 18 of the 50 apartments.

“Eden is pleased to have a strong local partner in Homeward Bound who has longtime experience in providing services for people with a history of homelessness,” Simpson says. The successful partnership at Fireside led Eden Housing to contract with Homeward Bound for a service coordinator at another Eden property, Warner Creek Senior Housing in Novato, which opened in 2013 for 60 low-income tenants. The support services play a key role in stability for families who often struggle to make ends meet with low-wage jobs, Edith says. Without a home at Fireside, she says, “I would only be able to rent a single room for all of us to have to share somewhere, I would be scared.”
Wagster Treats Goes to Market with Kiosk Help

Wagster Treats launched this spring as our new social enterprise venture: nourishing dog biscuits made in our training kitchen from human-grade ingredients in three chef-inspired recipes.

Graduates of Fresh Starts Culinary Academy mix, bake and sell Wagster Treats at local farmer’s markets in Corte Madera, the Marin Civic Center and Mill Valley. More locations will be coming soon!

“From the very inception of Kiosk, we’ve always worked with local charities and community groups,” says Claire Knoles, co-founder and Chief Operating Officer at Kiosk.

In 2004, the Kiosk office in Liverpool, England, led creation of a training center nearby in the impoverished Kensington neighborhood. Their efforts in fundraising, branding and marketing helped open a program with a drop-in computer lab and computer skills training. Still open after 12 years, the center “has made a huge difference to the local community,” Knoles says.

Over the years, Kiosk has supported several international causes but working with local charities has always been most fruitful, she says, because “the value we can provide is greater if we have an opportunity to be hands-on.”

The result of their hands-on effort is visible at wagstertreats.com, a simple but engaging site to promote dog treats that help transform opportunities for people working their way out of poverty.

With their substantial contributions, Kiosk in Novato has been a life-changing partner for Homeward Bound of Marin online.

Food Bank Helps Anchor Mealtime

The need to plan dinner for more than 200 people at three or more locations arises regularly for Executive Chef Eric Magnani and Homeward Bound’s kitchen crew.

They prep and cook three meals daily for 80 adults at New Beginnings Center, plus up to 40 tenants at the Next Key Apartments, along with dinner for Voyager Carmel Center’s 36 residents in San Rafael. Three or four times per month, the calendar includes the 55 residents at Mill Street Center too.

Chef Eric makes regular trips to the SF-Marin Food Bank in Bel Marin Keys. “I need to move food in bulk and we haven’t got storage to stockpile, so I’m there two or three times a week. Their offerings are pretty robust,” he says.

As a nonprofit trying to stretch the budget as far as possible, Homeward Bound considers the Food Bank as a first choice for pantry supplies.

Chef Eric estimates he brings an average of 1000 pounds of produce, dairy items and non-perishable goods monthly from the Food Bank. Produce is free and Homeward Bound pays about 5 percent of the retail price for other items, with a recent trip to fetch 77 pounds of food costing just over $9.00.

“It’s significant,” he says. “We’ve eliminated the cost of instant oatmeal, prepared soup, and canned goods like tomatoes. We go through 20 to 25 gallons of milk per week, so dairy is huge for us.”

Irene Garcia, a program coordinator for the Food Bank, says Homeward Bound is among their largest North Bay partners. Forty-eight Marin nonprofits shop at the Food Bank’s Novato site.

“Each has its own distribution processes but they all have the need for fresh and nourishing food,” Garcia says. With meat, the most costly item, the Food Bank limits shoppers to 2 pounds per resident per month, but other items are offered without restrictions.
THANK YOU TO ALL WHO GAVE IN 2015!
OUR PROGRAMS: Founded in 1974, Homeward Bound began with a single family program. Since then, Homeward Bound has grown to include a wide range of housing and services from emergency shelter to permanent supportive housing.

Whether you know us by volunteering in the garden at New Beginnings Center or preparing dinner for Mill Street Center, you have the opportunity to see how our programs embody the mission of “ending homelessness through training, housing and hope.” This illustration of Homeward Bound provides a road map of the services offered as people move from the “front doors” of our Mill Street and Family Center shelters to stable homes.
Bits ‘n’ Pieces

Culinary Training Open for Summer Students
Fresh Starts Culinary Academy is accepting students now for summer job training in our kitchen under a pilot eight-week program to prepare trainees more quickly for the workplace. The condensed training at Fresh Starts, which is certified by the American Culinary Federation, will offer the option to continue learning through short-term paid internships. Students will gain skills in food preparation and service, kitchen operations and hygiene, knife skills and teamwork. Classes will be in session weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with the exception of Wednesday, when class hours are 9 a.m. to noon.

For an application and more information, contact Training Director Steve Cohen at 415-382-3363 x233 or visit hbofm.org.

Fresh Starts Team Prepares for Marin County Fair
Our Fresh Starts crew will return with a food booth this year at the Marin County Fair. Look for our menu with a global spin: Kung Pao Chicken Noodle Salad, Chicken Tikka Masala Tacos, Bao Buns with Char Siu Pork and Grilled Peach and Corn Salad.

Executive Chef Eric Magnani points out that the fair from June 10 to July 4 occurs at a perfect time in the seasonal calendar. “The peaches are beautiful and we’ll have fun things to eat with real spices and aroma,” he says.

Along with providing tasty food for fairgoers, the booth will give hands-on experience to our culinary students and graduates while earning money to support the training program – a great recipe for summer!

Mary Kay Inducted into Women’s Hall of Fame
The 2016 inductees to the Marin Women’s Hall of Fame include Executive Director Mary Kay Sweeney, honored in the category of social change.

“I am honored to be in the company of such dynamic, accomplished women who make our community more whole and vibrant,” Mary Kay says. Along with four others, she was celebrated March 31 at an event sponsored by the YWCA San Francisco & Marin. The honor came as Mary Kay marks her 23rd year at Homeward Bound of Marin, where she has overseen the opening of New Beginnings Center, the Next Key Center and construction of Oma Village, along with initiatives in culinary training and “housing first” services for chronically homeless adults and families.

In addition to Mary Kay, the honorees were: Judge Verna Adams, public affairs; former Marin County Bicycle Coalition leader Deborah Hubsmith (posthumous), environment; TMC Financing President Barbara Morrison, business; and Marin City activist Florence Williams, community service.

SUPPORT OUR NONPROFIT VENTURES

Promote and purchase Wagster Treats, the nourishing new dog biscuits made in our training kitchen from human-grade ingredients in three chef-inspired recipes. Find out more at wagstertreats.com

Plan your event at The Key Room, our full-service event venue with on-site catering by students and graduates of Fresh Starts Culinary Academy. Call our event coordinator at 415-382-3363 x214 or visit us at thekeyroom.com

Give a Halo to friends and family! Halo Truffles, along with Halo HomeMades jams and jellies, are made in our training kitchen. Call the Halo Hotline at 415-382-3363 x214 or find out more at hbofm.org

Sign up for Fresh Starts Chef Events, a series of celebrity chef evenings that include menu demonstration and dinner. Meet a culinary hero and celebrate local specialties! Call 415-382-3363 x243 or find out more at bit.ly/FSchefevents

Invest in Making a Difference
Your gift makes a difference for homeless men, women and children as they create positive change and transform their lives.

Invest in a better future when you give online at hbofm.org or by check to Homeward Bound of Marin, 1385 N. Hamilton Parkway, Novato, CA 94949.

Shop for Good with Amazon Smile
Whether you’re shopping at home or for the office, use the portal at Smile.Amazon.com lets you place orders for almost anything while supporting Homeward Bound. Through this charity portal, you can use your existing Amazon account to purchase millions of items knowing that a portion of your spending comes back to invest in the future of your community.

Learn more at Smile.Amazon.com and choose Homeward Bound from the list of eligible charities.
Gifts of Time and Resources

We have such overwhelming support from the community and, with every good intention, we try to keep track of your support. Sometimes we inadvertently overlook individuals or organizations that have helped Homeward Bound in some way. If we have forgotten to list you below, please accept our apology and know we appreciate all that you do. And let us know, so we can include you next time.

Congregations

Thank you to:
- The following congregations for bringing a monthly meal to Mill Street Center: Aldergate United Methodist Church, Village Baptist Church, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Marin and Spirit Rock Meditation Center.
- St. Luke’s Presbyterian Church, Congregation Kafed Challah, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Community Congregational Church of Tiburon, Trinity Lutheran Church, Redwood Presbyterian Church, St. Isabella’s Catholic Church, Hillside Community Church, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Marin Lutheran Church, First United Methodist Church of San Rafael, St. Aloysium’s Catholic Church, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church of Novato, Marin Covenant Church, First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael, First Presbyterian Church of San Anselmo, Cornerstone Community Church, St. John’s Episcopal Church, Congregation Kol Shofar, and Nature of Christ Greek Orthodox Church.
- Peace Lutheran Church for holiday gift cards and other support for residents of Fireside Apartments.
- St. Isabella’s Catholic Church for providing holiday gifts for residents.

Schools

Thank you to:
- San Domenico School 4th graders for cooking meals monthly, baking cookies and decorating for holidays at the Family Center.
- San Domenico School 5th graders for staffing a food pantry at Fireside Apartments.
- Sun Valley School students for donating/Halloween costumes to Family Center.
- Sun Valley School and Go Inspire Golf for organizing a community service day that produced care kits for Mill Street Center residents plus meals and cupcakes for Family Center.
- Dominican University students for volunteering in the New Beginnings Center gardens.
- Mill Valley Middle School students for helping to package Wagster Treats dog biscuits.
- Dominican University serve learning students for help with child care, gardening and office tasks.
- Alpha Gamma Sigma Honor Society at College of Marin for working in the gardens.
- Marin Academy students for assembling bag lunches for Mill Street Center residents.
- Sun Valley School students for donating 2K games for providing move-out baskets for our residents.
- Michael Basco Foundation for donating groceries, holiday gifts and Easter baskets for residents at Family Center.
- The Pajama Program for donating pajamas for our parents.
- LinkedIn Marin for donating canned food for our programs.
- Extrafood for delivering healthy, delicious food donations to our programs.

Individuals

Thank you to:
- Renata Bihun, Lisa Nishayeva, Amanda Mueller, Suzanne Caprio and Cyndie Martel for volunteering at Fresh Starts Chef Events.
- Adrie O’Dentche and Celeste Wicks for helping with childcare at Family Center.
- Theresa Iker, Sarah Abbe Taylor and Carolyn Mock for wrapping holiday gifts for our programs.
- Marty Kropenicki for providing holiday gifts to Mill Street Center residents.
- Maria Williams and friends for providing a Christmas meal at Fourth Street Center.
- Robert Shumke for helping with gift wrapping and packaging Wagster Treats dog biscuits.
- Gail Schreuder, Jennie Gill, and Audrius Aucinas for providing move-out baskets for our residents.
- Osana Sobol for helping to package Wagster Treats dog biscuits.
- Marion Weenreb for organizing donations of household items for residents moving to new homes.
- Jill Whitebook for a donation of furniture for our programs.
- Katherine Randolph for donating items from our wish list.
- Suzanne Elb for wrapping presents to benefit Homeward Bound at Barnes & Noble bookstore.
- McLaren Behrendt and Sidney Hood for personal care packages for women.
- Neely Wang for professional photo services for Homeward Bound events.
- Timmy Clyhnday and Karolin Buono for helping with Holo products sales and clean-up at Family Center.
- Michelle Ball for donating haircuts at New Beginnings Center, Mill Street Center and Warner Creek Senior Center.
- Karen Diener and family for bringing a Thanksgiving meal to Fourth Street Center.
- Gina Vuori for donating meals to Family Center.
- Fran MacDonald for supporting fundraising efforts at the Marin Human Race.
- Patti Tyrcha for organizing art workshops at Fireside Apartments.
- Kevin Breakstone and Elaine Estrada for food pantry help at Warner Creek Senior Center.
- Michael Bassou for helping with community events at Warner Creek Senior Center.
- Carol Eade and Nanci McCarthy for volunteering in New Beginnings Center kitchen.
- Culinary supernaturals John Ash, Joyce Jue, Tracey Sheppi Cammenti and Joanna Weir for donating their time to prepare at Fresh Starts Chef Events.
- Joy Nickelson for volunteering in the chaplaincy program at Warner Creek Senior Center.
- Jimmie and Olivia Thomas for making beautiful cakes for kids at Family Center.
- The Barr Family for delivering groceries to the Family Center.
- Susan Orms, Nancy Elberg, Renata Bihun, Helen Cameron, Michael Kenyon, and Julie Whitty for volunteering at the New Beginnings Center front desk.
- Carol Inquilino for donating her talents as a blogger for Fresh Starts Chef Events.
- Mary Wright for creating Fresh Starts Chef Events flyers.
- Natalie & Duric’s Flowers for donating flowers weekly to New Beginnings Center.
- Bob Tatum for his ongoing garden guidance.
- Yayoi Nagano-Lewis for teaching classes in Feldenkrais movement at Warner Creek Senior Center.
- Keith Bramstedt and Sherry Rogers for ongoing help in the gardens.
- Marin Symphony for donating tickets to performances for residents.
- Employees at 2K Games for providing move-out baskets for our residents.
- Michael Basco Foundation for donating groceries, holiday gifts and Easter baskets for residents at Family Center.
- The Pajama Program for donating pajamas for our parents.
- LinkedIn Marin for donating canned food for our programs.
- Extrafood for delivering healthy, delicious food donations to our programs.

Businesses and Organizations:

Thank you to:
- Home Away From Homelessness and Beach House for hosting kids from our programs.
- Nugget Market for donating body care products and meals for our programs.
- Gamoerth Financial employees for a volunteer day in the gardens at New Beginnings Center.
- Kiosk in Novato for major pro bono contributions to create a website for Wagster Treats.
- Anabelle’s Gifts for organizing pizza and game night as well as providing holiday gifts at Family Center.
- Stone Soup Marin for donating a monthly meal at Mill Street Center.
- National Charity League Mission Belles Chapter for gardening at New Beginnings Center.
- DD Products for donating organic personal care products to our programs.
- Planet Bee Foundation for ongoing support and guidance with beehives at New Beginnings Center.
- The Republic of Tea for donating tea for chef events as well as volunteering in the garden and packaging Holo Truffles.
- Kendall-Jackson Winery and Merry Edwards Winery for donating wine for Fresh Starts Chef Events.
- Gourmet Mushrooms, Inc., and Verlasso for donating products for Fresh Starts Chef Events.
- Winery Exchange for volunteering in the garden and offering holiday gifts to residents.
- San Rafael Pacifics for donating tickets to baseball games for residents.
- Taylor Maid Foods for donating Thanksgiving dinner for Family Center.
- Sun Valley School for donating Halloween costumes to Family Center.
- Sun Valley School and Go Inspire Golf for organizing a community service day that produced care kits for Mill Street Center residents plus meals and cupcakes for Family Center.
- Dominican University students for volunteering in the New Beginnings Center gardens.
- Mill Valley Middle School students and families for holiday gifts for Warner Creek residents.
- Marin Primary & Middle School students for helping to package Wagster Treat dog biscuits.
- Dominican University serve learning students for help with child care, gardening and office tasks.
- Alpha Gamma Sigma Honor Society at College of Marin for working in the gardens.
- Marin Academy students for assembling bag lunches for Mill Street Center residents.
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