



DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELESSNESS AND
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



Catholic Charities

MARIN ♦ SAN FRANCISCO ♦ SAN MATEO

Project Room Key Case Study

Agency – San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

Nonprofit Provider – Catholic Charities

Overview

In mid-April, San Francisco opened the largest Shelter in Place hotel for families experiencing homelessness in partnership with Catholic Charities in response to the perils of the coronavirus pandemic. At 63-rooms, the hotel is a vital place of respite, care, and safety for families during COVID-19. Chosen by the City's Department of Homelessness & Supporting Housing for its deep experience with and expertise helping families prevent homelessness, work to end generational poverty, and commitment to helping build community resilience, Catholic Charities brings to bear decades of on the ground, innovative, and transformative work with the most vulnerable in our community.

Services

Catholic Charities plays a pivotal role keeping our neighborhoods diverse, productive, safe and healthy through more than 30 programs (14 dedicated to the prevention of homelessness), comprehensive services, and social justice advocacy. Our clients represent all of us: individuals, families, children, youth, adults, and seniors. We welcome everyone with compassion, understanding, and respect. Our results change lives.

Pregnant women find shelter and care

Being homeless under any circumstance is challenging, stressful, and dangerous. For pregnant individuals, the pressures of living without housing stability can also have negative impacts on the health of the mothers and their babies. With the City of San Francisco's recently changed definition of a family to include pregnant people, this vulnerable population now has expanded access to vital services – a welcome change, especially during COVID-19.

Opened in mid-May in partnership with San Francisco's Department of Homelessness & Supporting Housing, the Catholic Charities hotel for families experiencing homelessness is now a temporary home to 10 pregnant people and a refuge from the street and the pandemic. It is a place for respite, safety, care, understanding – and hope.

Rather than being on the street, moving from shelter-to-shelter, or bouncing between relatives and friends, each expectant mom has her own room and bathroom, receives three healthy meals a day thanks to generous donors like Foodism, and has onsite access to prenatal care, so imperative to their health and that of their unborn baby. Catholic Charities experts in homelessness provide case management, daily check-ins with the moms, and compassion, helping them feel cared for, seen, and valued. Within the next two months, there will be a wealth of newborns at the Catholic Charities hotel for families experiencing homelessness.

New vulnerable families that will continue to need care, shelter, and safety through the pandemic and beyond.

A family finds shelter, safety, and a home

Marley and her two children, Zoe and Alexa, (not their real names) ages three and seven respectively, had been living at a congregate family shelter in the San Francisco Mission District since July 2019 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. In an effort to ensure social distancing and avoid the spread of the disease, shelters across San Francisco were cutting their shelter beds substantially. Marley and her little ones needed a new place to call home.

Fortunately, San Francisco's Department of Homelessness & Supporting Housing had just opened a hotel for families experiencing homelessness during COVID-19. Run by Catholic Charities with their deep expertise and experience helping families prevent and move beyond homelessness, the facility is the largest hotel in the city dedicated to parents and their children. To date, there have been no positive cases of coronavirus and many relieved families.

Guest Story & Impacts

One of the first families at the hotel, Marley, Zoe, and Alexa were happy to have a safe, comfortable, and secure room and bathroom of their own with three meals a day and access to health care every week. Marley was especially pleased to be in a place where adherence to social distancing and safety measures are extremely high. As fortunate as Marley felt to be at the hotel, things were about to get even better for this trio.

Engaged with the problem-solving guidance of the Catholic Charities Mission Access Point employees for many months through the Coordinated Entry System of Care operated by Catholic Charities for the San Francisco Department of Homelessness & Supportive Housing, Marley had been working toward self-sufficiency and sustainability. The energy and effort Marley put in, paid off.

The little family moved from the hotel on June 1, to a subsidized apartment in San Francisco. From extended, persistent homelessness, the family will be able to focus on school and the healthy, happy growth of the girls in their own home. The hotel is an effective extension of Catholic Charities solution to homeless through continuity of care from homelessness to the hotel to housing. This is indeed a success story of city and community-based social services ending homelessness together.