

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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SUPERVISOR WILMA CHAN THANKS COMMUNITY PARTNERS AT THE OPENING OF CITY OF ALAMEDA WINTER WARMING SHELTER

Wednesday, December 19 at 10:30 AM

Alameda, CA – Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan will join with Alameda city officials, homeless providers, and community faith leaders to commemorate the opening of the Alameda Warming Shelter – a program that is designed to provide refuge for the City’s homeless population during the cold and rainy winter months. The event will include remarks by stakeholders instrumental in the shelter’s creation, as well as a brief site tour.

The result of a year-long collaboration between a diverse coalition of stakeholders, the shelter is operated by nonprofit homeless provider Building Futures and hosted by Christ Episcopal Church. It is funded by Alameda County and the City of Alameda with in-kind support from Building Futures. The shelter’s services are also supported by Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan and Alameda’s faith and business communities.

“As we enter the coldest months of the year, ensuring the safety and comfort of our most vulnerable citizens remains critically important throughout Alameda County,” said Supervisor Chan. “The creation of this Warming Shelter is a perfect example of the City, County and community coming together to give homeless citizens the respect and compassion they deserve.”

WHO: Wilma Chan, President, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Marilyn Ezy Ashcraft, City of Alameda, Mayor-Elect
Liz Varela, Building Futures, Executive Director
Rev. Stephen McHale, Rector, Christ Episcopal Church
Gaylon Parsons, Senior Warden, Christ Episcopal Church

WHAT: Community Commemoration of the Alameda Warming Shelter and Site Tour

WHEN: Wednesday, December 19, 2018 at 10:30 AM

WHERE: Christ Episcopal Church – Parish Hall Guild Room
1700 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda

Located at Christ Episcopal Church on Santa Clara Avenue, the Alameda Warming Shelter will be open from December 6, 2018 through April 14, 2019 on evenings when the temperature is predicted to be below 40 degrees or there is a 50% or greater chance of rain. The shelter can

house up to 25 individuals on a given night. Homeless residents may enter the facility starting at 6:00 PM and will be provided a full dinner, a place to sleep, and a grab-and-go breakfast the following morning. Residents will also be provided assistance with locating housing and other essential services.

Homeless residents in Alameda are notified when the shelter will be open through street outreach conducted by Building Futures. The City of Alameda and the community also play vital roles, as agencies such as the Police Department, Housing Authority, Alameda Food Bank, and other organizations contribute to outreach efforts.

“I am delighted that the Alameda Warming Center is now open, and will serve as a warm, safe, and respectful place for homeless people to get out of the cold and rainy weather,” said Alameda Mayor-Elect Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft. “Addressing homelessness is a top priority of the City Council and through this effort we can provide needed resources and dignity to our most vulnerable. And to no one’s surprise, our compassionate community has lined up to offer its support.”

The Alameda Warming Shelter was created in response to the growing homeless crisis in the City of Alameda and throughout Alameda County. According to the 2017 Alameda County Point-In-Time Count – a countywide volunteer canvass conducted every two years – over 200 homeless residents were identified in Alameda, with 110 of these residents living on the streets. And countywide, the number of homeless residents has increased by over 40% since 2015.

Earlier this year, Christ Episcopal Church volunteered to serve as the Warming Shelter site in an effort to mitigate these increasing levels of homelessness. An institution that will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2019, Christ Church has prioritized the use of their facility on behalf of the homeless due to their long tradition of community advocacy on behalf of vulnerable citizens.

“At Christ Church, we've watched with dismay as the housing and homelessness crises have deepened, and because we have flexible space and wonderful volunteers, it makes sense to share with people who need a warm place to sleep and a hot meal to eat,” said the Reverend Stephen McHale. “We're delighted to work alongside Building Futures, the City of Alameda and the County to do what we can.”

Alameda homeless residents seeking to access the Warming Shelter should contact Building Futures at 510-201-0203 to make an intake appointment. Individuals or groups interested in contributing meals to the shelter should contact Alisa Rasera, Dinner Cook Coordinator, at 510-381-5483 or at frolikdance@gmail.com. Donations are also needed to operate the shelter, including sweatshirts and sweatpants, toiletries, plastic utensils, and mats for guests to sleep on. To donate, please visit <http://christchurchalameda.org/seasonal-warming-center/>.

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About Supervisor Wilma Chan

Alameda County Supervisor Chan represents District 3, which includes the cities of Alameda, San Leandro, parts of Oakland including Chinatown, Jack London, Fruitvale and San Antonio neighborhoods, and the unincorporated community of San Lorenzo. She is currently President of the Board of Supervisors, Chair of the Health Committee, and a member of the County's Personnel, Administrative, and Legislative Committee, the Budget Committee, the Unincorporated Services Committee, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Immigrant Rights. For more on Supervisor Chan's accomplishments and current initiatives, please visit www.acgov.gov/board/district3 or connect on Facebook with "Supervisor Wilma Chan."

About Building Futures

Building Futures, a nonprofit organization founded in 1988, is based in San Leandro with programs throughout Alameda County. Through our continuum of care, we provide resources, programs and services to help County residents build futures free from homelessness and family violence. Our residential programs include the San Leandro and Midway Shelters; Sister Me Home domestic violence safe house; and Bessie Coleman Court. We also provide a 24-hour crisis line and a domestic violence outreach program. In addition, our Housing Resource Center and Oakland Family Front Door provide case management and housing assistance to help individuals and families avert homelessness or become quickly rehoused after becoming homeless.

About Christ Episcopal Church

Christ Church's vision statement says everyone is welcome to be part of our community, and that people can come as they are. It also encourages the people who have come to love their neighbor, feed those who hunger, and to advocate for justice. As Christ Church celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2019, we're trying to live further into that vision. A church is not a place where people all believe the same thing; a church is a community that tries to follow Jesus' example of service. At the heart of our thinking is the idea that while God has blessed us with so much, those blessings aren't ours to keep. God's blessings are meant to be shared.