

Conard Bulletin

Our mission is to build welcoming communities and caring relationships that empower people and restore hope. We are a nonprofit organization that specializes in Supportive Housing and Mental Health Services in San Francisco.

A MESSAGE FROM CONARD HOUSE CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Anne Quaintance
CEO/Executive Director

The Conard Bulletin Summer 2021 Edition is here! This quarterly publication is for *the community* of Conard House and includes feature interviews, legislative action items, and what's on the horizon. Readers can find and share the Conard Bulletin on-line, with a printable version on the Conard House website, and displayed at Conard House community spaces, bulletin boards, and offices.

Staff, residents, and clients are working together to reopen safely and increase access to vaccines with updated protocols and guidance from the San Francisco Department of Public Health. Staff have been successful at working with health professionals to provide vaccinations on-site and nearby for residents and clients. An estimated 82% of staff have been fully vaccinated.

EMPOWERING
PEOPLE
RESTORING
HOPE

It's a forward-thinking summer for Conard House as we launch the development of a three year Strategic/Business Plan to evaluate the impact and primary goals of Conard House programs and services. Expansion and sustainability are critical as Conard House stands united for a San Francisco where housing and healthcare are human rights.

Conard House has a new advocacy focused website page – please visit "Join the Cause" to stay involved and take action on city, state and national legislation.

CONARD HOUSE PILOTS A PROGRAM FOR ITS FURRIEST RESIDENTS

For four years, Tom Tom, a cute and lovable dachshund, has been a loyal companion to Cheree, a long-time resident of the Conard House Aranda Hotel. Pete, a playful tuxedo cat and companion animal to April, also a resident of the Aranda Hotel, loves to play fetch with April's hair ties. At Conard House, over 80 companion animals live with our residents. Cheree shared that one of her favorite memories with Tom Tom was when, after accidentally dropping her wallet on the street without noticing, Tom Tom immediately picked it up and carried it over to her. For April, Cheree, and many of our residents, companion animals provide unconditional companionship and love.

Conard House residents face daunting challenges every day; we believe providing proper care to their companion animals should not be one of them. Taking care of an animal can be difficult and expensive. Many of our residents with companion animals don't have easy access to dog parks, pet food, veterinary services, and other supplies to take care of their furry friends. To help

address this need, there are some great local organizations working to keep every pet owner with their pet, regardless of income and resources. In October 2020, our Development Office Intern, Mira, found Full Belly Bus. Full Belly Bus is a mobile pet care team that provides free veterinary care, behavior training, food, and much-needed supplies to pet owners experiencing homelessness, unstable housing, and income and job loss in San Francisco. Mira noticed Full Belly Bus (FBB) was offering pet food drives at a local church every month and thought they would be a great opportunity for Conard House pet owners to get the support they needed.

Founder Paula Benton started Full Belly Bus after seeing firsthand how expensive it can be to own a pet—her own dog, Sugar, needed emergency medical care that came with a very large price tag. She started Full Belly Bus in 2015 after San Francisco's first navigation center opened; filling a gap in support for pet owners who were temporarily housed there. As a pet owner herself, utilizing her experience working with SF Animal Care & Control, and leaning on her skills as a multi-certified professional dog trainer, she launched FBB as a service that could be delivered directly to pet owners providing free veterinary care, behavior training, food and much-needed supplies. "Our goal was to go to the pet owners, which eliminated one of the barriers which a lot of them felt—even if

they had financial support, there was a barrier to get to the services they needed." Since 2015, Paula and the FBB team have worked tirelessly to keep owners and pets together, no matter the obstacles!



In addition to working with SF's 5 Navigation Centers, Full Belly Bus partners with organizations like Conard House to expand their reach to in an effort to meet the needs of more pet owners and their pets. Despite the chal-

lenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, FBB was still able to quadruple their pet food outreach to people in need—we immediately reached out to Paula to see if FBB could accommodate more pet owners. In classic FBB fashion, Paula offered to bring both pet food and supplies directly to us!! As Paula says, FBB's mission is "to offer care without conditions;" this mission was apparent every step of the way as we began to work together.

Conard House launched this partnership with FBB in March 2021 by bringing free pet food to the Aranda Hotel Supportive Housing Program. As part of the Conard House Pilot Pet Support Project, resident pet owners were also offered a fun and easy way to get the pet supplies they needed by going shopping virtually! Using the Zoom platform, FBB started Zoom Pet Shopping Sprees during the pandemic as a way to safely provide pet owners with the individualized supplies they needed.

The Pilot Pet Support Project has been hugely successful! Paula, who helps run the Zoom shopping program, noticed, "Conard pet owners take great pride in their



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CONARD HOUSE VOLUNTEERS ROCK!!

Conard House recently piloted a volunteer program to involve high school and college students in our work! Last summer, we recruited a high school volunteer, Annika, to help in the Finance Department. Annika came to us from University High School. Now, as the 2020-21 school year comes to a close, we bid her a fond farewell as she prepares to go to college. Read below to hear a little bit from Annika about her experience!

"Volunteering at Conard was an incredible experience. After seeing how much worse SF's houselessness epidemic got during the pandemic, I wanted to learn more about what local organizations were doing to help. I had the opportunity to work closely with people who dedicate their lives to this

cause, and it was inspiring to see people working so hard to improve the conditions of some of our city's most vulnerable. I learned a lot about the admirable work that Conard does while improving my personal and organizational skills."

We are excited to announce we have been able to place a new volunteer in the Conard House Finance Department. Nadia will be the department's second high school volunteer and will be starting this summer. Nadia wanted to work here because the positive



impact Conard House has on the unhoused community in SF. "I look forward to hearing the amazing stories of all those involved at the

Conard House, and I hope to learn from them how to take action in a meaningful and impactful way."

Thank you, Annika and Nadia, for giving Conard House your time and energy! We are so appreciative. 📧

If you are interested in volunteering or interning with Conard House, email

Angie Brown, Development Director, at brown@conard.org or visit: www.conardhouse.org/volunteer

CONARD HOUSE ENVISIONS A SAN FRANCISCO WHERE...

- » Affordable and comfortable community living is available to all people without question.
- » Mental health challenges are not stigmatized or criminalized by society, and where those with serious mental health challenges are not forced into isolation or stripped of their independence.
- » Community and peer mental health services are affordable and accessible to all, especially to members of color and low-income communities.
- » All people are treated with dignity and respect.
- » Not having a home, having a chronic illness or facing substance use challenges are addressed with compassion and understood as the symptoms of systemic inequality.
- » Housing and healthcare are human rights and are the foundations for healing and recovery.

BRING CALIFORNIA HOME ACT— AB 71 UPDATE

In June, and after passing three different assembly committees, Assembly Bill 71 was held for the remainder of this year. Sponsored by Assembly Member Luz Rivas, AB 71 calls for CA to invest \$2.4 billion annually in new funding for homelessness solutions.



Rather than continuing through the legislative process, AB 71 was incorporated into the new state budget. CA's 2021-22 State Budget's \$12 billion homelessness package is a great first step in addressing the homelessness crisis in CA; however, ongoing funding provided to local governments to directly address the needs of their own communities is essential. This is what AB 71 proposed: establishing a statewide approach and permanent source of funding to counteract the systemic pattern of homelessness in California.

Assembly Member Luz Rivas is still working on incorporating aspects of AB 71 into the state budget through trailer bills. We still need to ensure that the AB 71 framework and provisions are incorporated into our state budget.

LOVE, KINDNESS, PEACE & JOY

A CLIENT'S STORY

Catherine is a native San Franciscan who receives mental health services from Conard House. About 12 years ago, through her medical counselor, Catherine was connected to Conard House, where she receives mental health services. Through Conard House, Catherine sees her therapist and gets the help she needs. "I am working on having a peaceful life and being at peace with myself. I want to be a part of a reality where there is love and kindness and where I can try and be as good of a person I can be." Catherine is extremely grateful for the help she receives. "Conard House has helped me a lot. My doctor has helped me stay grounded," she said. "I didn't go from the experiences I had to where I am now if it weren't for therapy. I continue to go to therapy because I know that the things that happened to me continue to affect me and my life."

Catherine was physically abused by her father from a very young age, and decided early on that she needed to escape. "[He] couldn't stand for anyone to stand up to him or have a single thought other than his, and if you did, you were going to get it," Catherine recalled. It was the 60s, and intrigued by the movements going on at Haight Ashbury at the time, Catherine dreamt of a life of freedom and independence. Catherine fought for her freedom and attempted to escape many


times throughout her childhood. At 18, she was free to "do her own thing," and moved to a commune in Southern Oregon that she had discovered the year before. She had many temporary jobs, including working at a nursing home, and realized that she wanted to go to nursing school but had no means of paying for it.

After living in Oregon for three years and making some money, Catherine, pregnant for the second time, hitch-hiked back down to San Francisco. She had given up her first baby for adoption and now was determined to make a good and safe life for her second child.

Back in San Francisco, Catherine lived with her aunt and then her friend. She studied and became a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) in order to support herself and her child. After the father of her child came back from the military, he moved to San Francisco to live with her. He turned out to be abusive towards her. Not knowing how to deal with it, Catherine began going to therapy for abused women. "I didn't realize how badly damaged I was by having been beaten by my father. I didn't realize I had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I didn't realize I had been affected

by what had been done to me over the years," Catherine explained. "[In therapy, I began hearing radical thoughts like 'it's not your fault' and 'you don't have to put up with this' and I eventually became strong enough to leave him."

Catherine had a long career as an LVN and through the Nurses Registry, she worked at most hospitals around San Francisco. Currently, Catherine suffers from chronic pain and spinal stenosis. With help from Conard House, she has been able to stay in her apartment and receive Social Security Disability benefits. "My life has changed. I am all about taking care of me on a basic level."

"If there is anything I would want people to get from my story it is that if you need help, get it. Even if you are scared or don't think you're worthy." 



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CONARD HOUSE EXPANDS ITS PRIVATE APARTMENT PROGRAM

On July 13th, Conard House acquired a beautiful new cooperative apartment/property in San Francisco's Mission neighborhood! Eight new residents will soon live in the 2-flat apartment building with access to a backyard, garage, and storage area. Thanks to the generosity and work of Mayor Breed, District 9 Board of Supervisor Hillary Ronen, and the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), Conard House is able to expand its coop housing/shared apartments model as a humanizing and systemic solution to expand supportive housing for people with mental health conditions in San Francisco.

What is the Conard House Private Cooperative Housing Program? The Private Cooperative Housing Program is a network of private cooperative apartments, or "coops," and is an alternative method of supportive housing. Unlike Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, Conard House coops are scattered-site, multi-unit apartment buildings located throughout San Francisco, where residents live together in shared apartments while receiving support services. The new Mission neighborhood coop provides permanent supportive housing for individuals with mental health conditions, an essential alternative to inpatient treatment, incarceration, and homelessness.

Unfortunately, there is a striking lack of resources, opportunities, and access to appropriate treatment for people struggling with mental health challenges. Increasingly, prisons and emergency rooms across the country, and in San Francisco, are used to board people with mental illnesses. These individuals may be incarcerated or boarded without



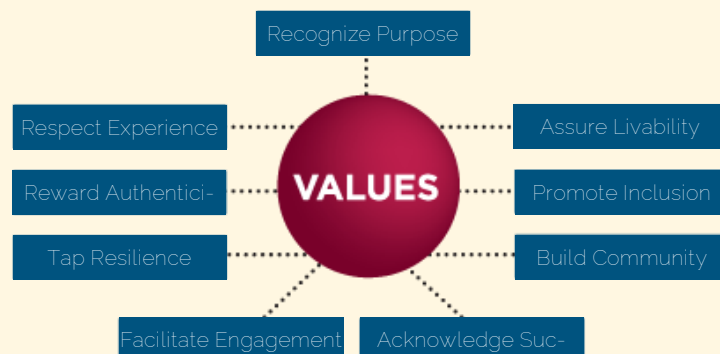
receiving the proper care and treatment needed to help rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community. Additionally, people who are able to get residential treatment often times cannot find the resources they need to transition back into their daily lives.

According to the San Francisco Department of Public Health, 44% of homeless clients who finish a residential treatment program have nowhere to go upon completion of the program, and ultimately, end up hospitalized or unhoused (or a combination of both). To address this

crisis, the ongoing expansion of non-institutional, community-based care options that are affordable, accessible, and recognize housing as a key component in mental wellbeing and recovery are essential. As Sup. Ronen wrote in her May 2019 newsletter, "Cooperative living can open the door to stability and serenity in [people's] lives." At Conard House, we also believe scattered-site, affordable housing is a crucial step in reconstructing the fabric of San Francisco to be more economically inclusive and diverse. Coops deconcentrate poverty, help appropriately spread-out supportive resources, and creates vibrant, stable communities.

The previous owner of the apartment is the son of two mental health professionals, and chose to work with Conard House because he understands the positive impact secure housing can have on a person's mental health. Working with the owner, Sup. Ronen, and MOHCD to offer 8 new residents a home helps us change the practice of shunning and isolating individuals into certain institutions and sectors of our city. Coops push us toward our goal of destigmatizing and decriminalizing homelessness and mental illness. At Conard House, we hope to one day see the entire city accessible to everyone and accepting of everyone. 🏠

CONARD HOUSE VALUES



(Continued from page 2)

abilities to love and care for their beloved animal companions," and that going Zoom shopping to care for their pets was both "simple and hugely rewarding." Five Aranda residents participated in the Zoom shopping spree, including Cheree and April. When asked about the shopping spree, Cheree remarked that it was "easy and convenient" and the one-on-one assistance was really helpful. She was grateful for Paula's patience throughout the process and the support from Conard House. Cheree, April, and other residents who participated received supplies including harnesses, leashes, toys, blankets, and yummy treats. Conard House plans to continue virtual shopping sprees with FBB even after the pandemic restrictions lift: this virtual model works great for our pet owners who are not comfortable being social outside, but still provides human connection even in moments of isolation. Conard House looks forward to bringing the FBB partnership to more supportive housing sites in the coming year.

Paula shared, "I think we all love and need our pets identically. They make us human. Caring for them and their needs is part of our own wellbeing and health. The companionship and the love and the safety that we feel with each other is universal, and it doesn't matter what your sleeping scenario is." For Paula, FBB, and Conard House, keeping our residents with their companion animals is essential.



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DIVE INTO FOOD SECURITY-UPDATE

Last year, Conard House Senior Case Manager Emily Pope embarked on a Food Security Project to assess food access for Supportive Housing residents. Pope, who works at the Plaza Apartments, has been interested in food security and access since she began volunteering at soup kitchens in middle school.

The project set out to conduct a community needs assessment to understand the gaps in services and food access among Conard House residents, hearing about residents' experiences directly from them. The goal was to cultivate concrete steps to make sure all residents have access to affordable, safe, and healthy food options.

Continue reading to hear about the state of the Food Security Project directly from Emily Pope!

“The Food Security project has completed its data collection and analysis phases, and we're wrapping up a report on findings and recommended solutions to eliminate food insecurity in the Conard House Supportive Housing (SH) resident community. We learned that residents across all Conard House SH sites experience food insecurity at some point during each month, and that despite available food resources, residents are not always able to meet their nutritional needs. We believe that food security is a basic right and that residents in SH settings should never have to worry about where their next meal is com-

ing from, or if it will be nourishing and safe to eat.

The solutions that we've come up with will address residents' need for meals and groceries that are accessible, fresh, and that match their dietary or cultural preferences.

One first recommendation is to create a secure communal space at each SH site, accessible 24 hours a day, to store prepared meals, groceries, and other pantry items. We envision a large vending machine

where residents can swipe a key fob or card to access what they need, when they need it. This food will be for any and all SH residents because anyone can experience

food insecurity at any time regardless of age, income level, or abilities.

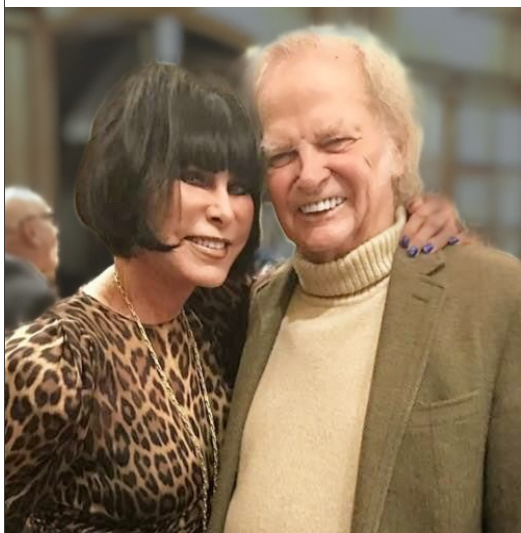
Another recommendation is to ensure all residents have a refrigerator, microwave or cooktop, and kitchen utensils like pots, pans, and plates. These basic meal prep and kitchen items will allow residents to make home-cooked meals if they like, or to store refrigerated and frozen food safely in their homes. We know that every Conard House resident has unique needs and preferences when it comes to cooking and eating. These two solutions are designed to support residents in accessing and eating healthy meals in whatever way works best for them. 

This story first appeared in our inaugural issue of the Conard Bulletin. To read the original story visit www.conardhouse.org/impact.



The Communal Food Sharing Table at the Plaza Hotels where residents share leftover pantry items and delivered meals with their neighbors.

LEAVING A LEGACY OF EMPOWERMENT AND HOPE




Marilyn & Michael Cabak
—named Conard House as a beneficiary of the
Marilyn & Michael Charitable Trust

Marilyn & Michael Cabak, longtime friends of Conard House, recently named Conard House as

a beneficiary of the Marilyn & Michael Cabak Charitable Trust. They expect their gift to Conard House will be in excess of \$1,000,000 when the trust terminates.

Marilyn and Michael, a lively and fun-loving couple, have a true passion for giving. They share their resources and time with many nonprofit organizations in San Francisco, but Conard House holds a very special place in their hearts. In a recent conversation, they shared, "We so respect and appreciate the residential and navigation services that you provide to those in need. This is our way of showing our appreciation and giving something to help perpetuate your efforts for years to come."

Planned Giving is a smart way for you to leave a lasting legacy, your indelible stamp, on the future, by helping to sustain and preserve your favorite nonprofit organization. The Cabaks chose to give to Conard House using a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT), one of many planned giving estate planning tools available. CRT's benefit the grantor by generating income from the assets in the trust while it's active. Once the trust terminates or expires the remaining funds in the trust are distributed to the named charitable organization.

We are so grateful to the Cabaks for helping to sustain Conard House in this way. The Cabaks truly hope their gift will inspire others to give generously to Conard House. 

A PARTNERSHIP TO DEVELOP 100 HOMES FOR 100 NEW RESIDENTS

Since our founding, Conard House has championed Supportive Housing (SH) as a humanizing solution to chronic homelessness, and as a vital tool in addressing mental health conditions. We are excited to announce that Mayor Breed and the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) has selected Conard House to develop a 100 unit building of supportive housing with The John Stewart Company in the SOMA neighborhood of San Francisco.

As a part of their Covid-19 recovery

strategy, the Mayor's Office approved the development of nearly 900 units of affordable housing this year. These new homes will serve seniors, formerly unhoused individuals and families, and HIV+ households among other groups; these homes will address the growing need for housing in San Francisco (especially in response to the pandemic) as well as help revitalize our city's economy.

Conard House's new site will provide permanent supportive housing to formerly unhoused individuals who experienced chronic homeless-

ness. All 100 units will have private bathrooms and kitchenettes, and all residents will have access to our support services on-site, as well as resources to connect to services in the broader community. The ground floor of the site will host support services and property management offices, a community room, a full kitchen, and a small conference room. Construction on this site will begin in 2023.

We are so thankful again to the MOHCD for choosing to work with Conard House to increase housing affordability and access in SF.

To join Conard House as a supporter, advocate, or volunteer, please contact us, and follow us on social media to receive updates!



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