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Archives

Families no longer homeless

By [John Dickey](#)/Appeal-Democrat

Five families got a break from homelessness in a program put together by social services and government agencies.

Several agencies put together the Cold Weather Shelter Project, to fight what is seen as a growing homeless problem in the Yuba-Sutter area.



By [Jesse Drury](#)/Appeal-Democrat
Patricia Brown, 18, locks the door to her old, temporary home while holding her 15-month-old son, Juan Torres Jr., on Tuesday morning as she and Juan get ready to move into a new home on Melton Drive in Yuba City.

On Tuesday, the program's first season ended, with three of the five families lining up housing.

"It gave me time to start a life," Patricia Brown, a participant, said.

Brown, 18, found housing for her and her young son.

Housing for two more families is a work in progress. They're going to stay with family members while they keep looking.

While the housing temporarily eased the strain of being without a place to call home, families

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*By Jesse Drury/Appeal-Democrat
 Mike Mannshardt of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Yuba City helps Patricia Brown move into her new Melton Drive home in Yuba City on Tuesday.*

something, but it's a lot of stress on us," Tez Woods, a participant, said.

"But it's a good program," she added.

Some also found jobs, but the first task was to find a place to live, said Vickie Davis, director of social services and public relations for the Salvation Army's Yuba/Sutter Corps.

The Salvation Army combined its resources with the Consolidated Area Housing Authority of Sutter County, the city of Yuba City, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and Sutter and Yuba County One Stops and Human Services departments. Representatives from Yuba-Sutter agencies have met regularly to talk about the area's homeless problem in the Working Group for Permanent Housing.

"One of the amazing things is that something was accomplished by committee," Will Caplinger, Yuba City's associate housing planner, said.

Yuba City provided \$16,000 for wall heaters and gave \$5,000 to the Salvation Army's Homeless Prevention program. The money came from block grant funds the city gets from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Total costs of the program were \$8,000.

From January through March, families were housed in the Richland Housing Center, on Garden Highway in Yuba City, in migrant farmworker housing that had previously been unoccupied during the winter.

Families got a roof over their head. They also got training in looking for work, living skills, and leads on potential landlords.

The project came about when people realized there was a gap in the area social services net when it came to homeless shelter space for families. There is only one facility in the area that provides shelter for families, the Depot. But there is a growing number of homeless families.

There were 75 families that applied, demonstrating the extent of homelessness in the Yuba-Sutter area.

"There's just so many homeless in this area," Davis said.

With Salvation Army funding at its low point during cold weather, the organization has had to turn people away for motel vouchers, Davis said.

faced a different kind of pressure.

Brown and others were under a lot of time pressure to search for housing and for work because the program came together later than expected. Next year's shelter project is expected to start earlier.

"I think what they're doing is going to accomplish

"It's a hard thing to do when you have a mother and children, and its raining," Davis said.

The shelter's trial run started in January when five families moved into the Richland Housing Center.

The idea grew beyond shelter to include training and services that would help people break free of homelessness. Many people get trapped in a cycle that is often difficult to overcome, when motel costs eat up money that could be used for a down payment on an apartment.

"It's not just shelter to get them out of the cold, it's to get them stabilized, on their feet, working," Davis said.

They attended life skills workshops taught by members of the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, and received job search training. Church members contributed some housewares.

Appeal-Democrat reporter John Dickey can be reached at 749-4711. You may e-mail him at john_dickey@link.freedom.com.



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