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## **RAPHAEL HOUSE TO CELEBRATE 45TH YEAR HELPING FAMILIES WHO ARE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS BUILD BRIGHTER FUTURES—June 2016 to June 2017**

San Francisco, Calif., June 8, 2016—[Raphael House](#), San Francisco's oldest and only privately funded shelter and services program for families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, announced today the kick-off of a year-long celebration as it begins its 45th year of helping Bay Area families in need achieve long-term stability and financial independence. Raphael House will host a series of fundraising, community, and educational events to increase awareness of family homelessness and grow its community of donors, volunteers, and advocates as it continues to increase services provided by its Bridge Program following the successful expansion of its Residential Shelter Program in 2015. The culminating event for the year-long celebration will be the *20th Annual One Home, Many Hearts Gala: Celebrating 45 Years of Building Brighter Futures for Families in Need*, to take place in late spring of 2017.

Since 1971, Raphael House has served approximately 20,000 parents and children. Its approach of helping each family uniquely move beyond homelessness and generational poverty with a structured program that provides wrap-around services, with an emphasis on strengthening family bonds and personal dignity, consistently sees results that are unmatched. Over the past 10 years an average of 85 percent of the families Raphael House has served in its Residential Shelter Program have achieved long-term stable housing and financial independence.

"It's an honor to serve on the Board of such an incredible organization as it celebrates this important milestone," says Raphael House Board Chair Kate Smith. "As housing costs in our community continue to be prohibitive for low-income families, and as the need for job skills enhancement or re-training for workers continues to increase, the support Raphael House provides for families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness could not be more critical than it is today. We look forward to continuing our expansion this year in order to provide more families with the resources and support they need to move beyond poverty and build brighter futures."

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## **History of Raphael House**

In June of 1971, Raphael House opened at Gough and McAllister Streets as a temporary shelter run by a small group of Christian volunteers dedicated to helping San Francisco women and children experiencing homelessness. Among them was Mrs. Ella Rigney, a former public relations professional for the American Cancer Society (the organization founded by her father), who had made the commitment in her retirement years to helping families who were homeless. Mrs. Rigney, who would eventually become Raphael House's first Executive Director, recognized that San Francisco did not have any programs to help intact families who were homeless. At the time, families needing shelter were often separated and assigned respectively to agencies that provided support for either women and children or just men. Under Mrs. Rigney's leadership, Raphael House moved to its current location at 1065 Sutter Street. During Thanksgiving week, 1977, Raphael House reopened its doors as the first shelter in the city for entire families.

In 1981 Raphael house began offering support beyond shelter by creating the program now called the Raphael House Bridge Program. In 2015, Raphael House successfully completed the expansion of its Residential Shelter to be able to provide services annually to an additional 200 families. Raphael House continues to focus on increasing the number of families served by its Bridge Program, which provides ongoing resources and support to help families who have moved on from the Residential Shelter Program sustain their stability as well as services that prevent at-risk families from becoming homeless.

### **During its 2015 fiscal year, Raphael House:**

- Served 60 families (81 adults, 115 children) in its Residential Shelter Program; 91 percent moved on to stable housing upon departing shelter.
- Served 336 families (564 adults, 632 children) in its Bridge Program; 90 percent maintained stable housing.
- Provided 27 families with short-term rental subsidies; 26 are now paying their own rent.
- Provided 75 children with academic enrichment services (as direct onsite tutoring or financial support for offsite tutoring) and 134 children with scholarships for extracurricular activities or summer camp. Of those who received tutoring services, 97% showed improved academic performance.

(For additional 2015 stats, please visit [raphaelhouse.org/annualreport2015](http://raphaelhouse.org/annualreport2015).)

### **About Raphael House**

June 2016 marks the start of Raphael House's 45th year at the forefront of providing Bay Area families experiencing or at risk of homelessness the personalized family-centered solutions to build brighter futures. A 100% privately funded and community-supported organization, Raphael House consistently delivers unmatched results: more than 85% of all Raphael House families go on to achieve long-term stable housing and financial independence. With a spirit of warmth, compassion, and kindness at its core, Raphael House serves each family uniquely with programs including residential shelter, career building and job placement, K-12 academic tutoring and mentoring, financial literacy workshops, and social activities aimed at strengthening the family bond. Raphael House has served at least 20,000 children and parents since opening its doors in 1971. For more information about Raphael House, please visit [www.raphaelhouse.org](http://www.raphaelhouse.org).