

Neighbors

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100+ Women supports House of Refuge

BY ANGELA RAMIREZ
Guest Writer

The latest Homelessness Trends Report by the Maricopa Association of Governments documents that there are more people entering homelessness than leaving it.

Last year, there were 19 new people experiencing homelessness for every 10 people finding housing. Last June, 1,019 households experienced homelessness for the first time.

With these statistics, it is not surprising that the Valley has an ongoing shortage of emergency shelter beds.

For families with children, homelessness is especially devastating. The children often experience hunger, health issues, and disrupted school attendance causing them to struggle emotionally, socially and academically.

House of Refuge, located on the former Williams Air Force Base in Mesa,

provides transitional housing and support programs to families experiencing homelessness.

Staffers offer safe, stable housing and professional staff that work with families on regaining dignity, healing from trauma, and ultimately obtaining permanent housing.

Every resident is assigned a case manager who helps them create an individualized plan that may include life skills, employment, childcare and transitioning into sustainable housing.

In addition to housing, House of Refuge provides home furnishings, clothing, food boxes, and employment and education support.

The House of Refuge community includes 88 two-bedroom homes, separate centers are devoted to employment and education, children, a garden and donations.

The Employment and Education Cen-



Celebrating the gift that 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun gave to House of Refuge are, from left, Crissy Haidos, Michelle Francis, Erica Vigil. (Special to *SanTan Sun News*)

ter offers access to a computer lab, internet connection, copier and fax machine, and staff and volunteers who assist residents with resumes, job searches, job applications, and creating employment and education goals.

The Community Center offers school-aged children a safe after-school environment with nutritional snacks, tutoring, art and pet therapy, mentoring, and more.

Staffers also offer special events and a summer day program with structured

activities, meals, and plenty of play time.

The Donation Center is a busy hub in their community.

Many residents arrive with little to no personal belongings. When residents move in, they can shop for clothing, furniture, food, and other household items at the Donation Center.

Every item that a family acquires from the Donation Center is theirs to keep and take with them when they leave House

of Refuge. It is also a great place for the surrounding community to donate their gently used items.

House of Refuge operates on offering a hand up, not a handout.

Eligibility for the program requires a verifiable income of \$1,170 per month minimum or an agreement to gain employment within 45 days of move in. Residents sign a lease and pay \$400 per month, including utilities.

Eligible residents must have at least one minor child living with the parent (or a woman must be in the third trimester of pregnancy) and be drug and alcohol free.

In 2022, House of Refuge helped 403 individuals and 62% were children. House of Refuge has a 90% success rate of moving families on to self-sufficiency.

In October, House of Refuge was chosen to receive a quarterly donation from the East Valley members of 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun. They donated \$10,950 to this local nonprofit.

House of Refuge President/CEO Kayla Kolar said, "These funds will enable us to provide such services as education and

employment services, a community center and teen center, and a donation center for our families to receive basics such as food and clothing.

"All of this will give our families the hand UP they need on their journey to self-sufficiency. We are forever grateful to 100+ Women Who Care for their support of our families."

100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun meets at the Forum Event Complex at 2301 S Stearman Drive, Chandler, each quarter. The first quarter meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 30.

Visit 100wwcvalleyofthesun.org for more information. 

100+ Women Who Care

has donated over \$1.2 million to charities since their inception in 2015. The chapter is a group of women that meets quarterly to learn about local nonprofit organizations, then votes on which charity will receive their quarterly donation. Each member donates \$100 to the chosen charity.

It's that simple!