

Alexis -

"I'm pretty loud. Okay so, I'm sorry, I'm a little nervous but nice. Thank you guys for having me here. Um I just wanna get started on my journey with Winter Nights. When I came to Winter Nights I was very broken, I was scared, I was very confused. I came from West Oakland, living on the streets in my car. Um it was me and my son. And then um, I just lost everything. I didn't have no mother. My mother - not really in my life and never was. Um coming from just all that was very toxic, dysfunctional, um being bullied and stuff like that so I think I was trying to find help. I was calling around. I came across Winter Nights. So once I came into Winter Nights, I was like - *Ugh they're telling me what to do or...* you know you're scared, you don't know what to do, you know you're embarrassed and stuff like that. So I can say that um Winter Nights has been a family to me. I speak on it everyday. I share it. It has been a big help to me, 'cause I used to cry every night like - *what am I gonna do?*, but that help of um meeting good people and you guys helping us and helping my son play with other kids even um getting my mind back into activities, like the bean bag. Once I left Winter Nights; doing the activities with Winter Nights and kids. ... sorry for talking with my hands.. *laughter...* but um you know, just interacting with people; positive people, and eating good home cooked food and stuff like that. It was like WOW, you know what i mean, this can't be true. Cause i was coming from Alameda county and it's totally different. So um they gave me the opportunity; Teri, I thank you...Bill...Stephanie and everyone. You know they were on me cause you know i'm a little attitude and so from there when I left I just left because you know you couldn't watch TV but you know what I stayed but i was like you know something came over me, i said you know what I have to do something to get myself together. I can't cry about it and be mad about it and i was like *why are you guys not helping me move and badadadada* you know but they were like look you have to have more income you know what i mean so i had to like go back and really redirect myself and that's what i did so um being here has made me have more stability in my life better, more patience, um more understanding. It made me a better worker for the work that I do. I'm a med tech and also a caregiver, so I give medication to elderly and then I take care of them too at times. So um just Winter Nights has been a big help; the turkey, like just helping families its very thankful it means alot and i just want to say thank you that means a lot 'cause we don't have that like other places like shelter that they give you like a hotel voucher and then that's it. you know what i mean, that's it. That's what they do; *we don't have any help, everyone is waiting and it's like huh?* So you guys are a good organization from the cake4kids to everything. You guys like I get excited so that's why i did greet yall under dressed but i was like OMG i got to go there and i just threw on (this). So I'm thankful to be here and i'm thankful for all the church members and everyone who cooked for us and stayed on me and you know check me when I'm wrong and still even when I left they continued to call, *Alexis, do you need a target...* like OMG They didn't forget about me even though I left! You know, so um yeah. And from there I had cancer, I had a little cancer so um I got it out or whatever so yeah i'm getting back. I moved to American Canyon so I'm getting back to myself. Thank you guys and everyone in the whole Winter Nights; you guys are wonderful and I think you guys are the best shelter ever in the bay area!"

Judith -

“Hi, my name is Judith. I’m sorry that I’m a little nervous. I’m a client from 2015. When i... when I came in, my son was 19 months old and my daughter was 3 yrs old. I was blessed to come across Winter Nights. They provided many resources, help and aid. They referred me to sparkpoint; which gave me financial knowledge. They provided a lot of activities for my kids to keep them you know busy. We built memories, we made friends that have lasted this long. I was treated with dignity, respect and I felt like I was never judged that i was in that situation and I’m thankful for that. A couple years ago, I asked my daughter if she remembers Wn and all that she remembers was that we would set up camp-tents and she said that was like camping. And she remembers that she would play a lot at different parks and she had lots of toys. She had Peggy who would read books to her. She made her best friend Teri; who, she also cut her hair with bangs and short hair because she wanted to be like her. And as a mother i felt like i had failed my children cuz they were in this situation. But after hearing those words, it made me understand that in her memories it’s only happy moments, positive moments and it took a weight off my shoulder-chest-heart knowing that i. The way that I was thinking that I put her through you know rough moments. That for her it wasn’t that bad. That for her it was making friends, having fun. And I feel like my family is an example of living proof that Winter Nights gave us a positive outcome. And um I am very thankful for those front line workers at Winter Nights. And the people behind the scenes that we never get to know, never get to see. And all the people that make it possible to continue making this possible. To this day I-we still have communication with Winter Nights because, for success stories. I was in Winter Nights for 6 months and then I eventually moved to a rental for 6 months and then another rental and then I was able to buy my mobile home. I also work at UCSF. I’m a pharmacist technician where I am working in an outpatient cancer center. I make chemo for patients with cancer. Thank you very much for everything that you guys do for us.”