



Contra Costa Council on Homelessness

Homelessness Awareness Month 2025 Recognitions for “Outstanding Housing Provider”

As part of Homelessness Awareness Month (November), the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness wants to recognize **those landlords, property management companies, and other housing operators that create permanent housing opportunities for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness** in Contra Costa County through the Outstanding Housing Provider category.

Outstanding efforts towards providing permanent housing opportunities for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness can be demonstrated in a number of ways including length of time involved in providing units/rooms; Number of units/rooms; and/or; quality of units/rooms rented

Person or company must rent units/rooms in Contra Costa County to people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. This may include shared housing, sober living environments, recovery housing, board and cares, halfway houses and transitional housing.

Nominees

- Joyce Lao
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- Joyce Jingjing Lao
- Jyoti & Sumer Desai
- Mei Lei and John Sommer
- Robert Linhart
- Ryan Domingue (all Oxford House House Managers) and Rachel Domingue
- Shah (Shahrooz) Wadpey
- Stephanie Bergin
- Tiffany Powell

The following pages contain descriptions of each nominee as provided by the person (s) who nominated them.

Supervisory District: District 1 (Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, part of Pinole, and the unincorporated communities of Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, North Richmond, and Rollingwood)

Tiffany Powell

Nominated by: Tanya Jacobs, Collaborating Agency

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Glo's Independent Living, LLC continues to bridge the gap with the underserved communities who experience minimal supports while in their needs of transitions. They have provided affordable and supportive housing resources to community members to ensure they have a safe and stable housing environment.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

Glo's leadership team is passionate, patient and consistent with providing care to their community members. Their residents value their work and support the efforts to continue to maintain a safe, living environment.

The leadership team has resilient and lived experience of providing care to their community.

Supervisory District: District 1 (Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, part of Pinole, and the unincorporated communities of Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, North Richmond, and Rollingwood)

Joyce Lao

Nominated by: Kevin Keow, Renter

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: I have been in this program twice now and I have got to say that programs like this does help out a lot to homeless people.me as for myself it has lifted my spirit and hope up in many ways and I'm a second affender to this program.from the streets that I came from it took me time to adjust my way back to a normal living environment I wasn't used to having a room nor to mention a roof over my head with out no supervision watch.i have to thank God for making this happen and my landlord for given me a second chance to start a new life sober.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

There's a big difference from the time that I was homeless I felt like I was worthless and couldn't fit in with society like a normal person could that people wouldn't talk to or approach me and the feeling of being single out because it I was homeless in the streets label as the dirty filthy bad guy straggling around lost in the streets but when I seemed for help I Started to see the light and cleaned myself up ate better, slept better, dressed better and start to self a different person in the mirror and fitted right back into society and a normal person and meet new people and got hired for a job and got my life back on track

I appreciate these programs very much and I hope that they would expand and have more program for us it also help us from staying off the streets.we all have good in us but some time when the tough times come up some tend to fall down and just give up and never get back up again.so I thank u guy so very much and God bless u all in the organization

Supervisory District: District 1 (Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, part of Pinole, and the unincorporated communities of Bayview, East Richmond Heights, El Sobrante, Kensington, Montalvin Manor, Tara Hills, North Richmond, and Rollingwood)

Joyce Lao

Nominated by: joyce jingjing lao, self

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Since November 2024, Joyce Jingjing Lao, through Nova Vita LLC, has provided a safe and supportive housing environment for nearly 70 individuals seeking stability and change. Over the past 9 months, her program has offered 22 clean, stable, and well-managed rooms to individuals and families facing homelessness in Contra Costa County. While her organization is still less than a year old, Joyce's impact has been substantial. She not only provides physical shelter but also creates a supportive, structured community where people can rebuild their lives. Her emphasis on quality housing, clear rules, and a respectful, person-centered approach ensures that residents feel both supported and accountable. Even during late pregnancy and shortly after giving birth, Joyce continued to personally visit the houses at least three times per week, speaking with residents, listening to their concerns, and offering encouragement.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

Joyce's work goes beyond simply providing rooms—she builds a community where residents can experience dignity, accountability, and belonging. She often tells them: "This is my house, but it is your home. I want you to feel at home here. At the same time, because this is my house, everyone needs to follow the rules." She also reminds residents that making mistakes is understandable, as long as they are willing to learn and change. What she encourages them to avoid is repeating the same mistake over and over—"Don't keep falling in the same place," she often tells them. This message has given many residents the courage to keep trying, to take responsibility, and to believe that change is possible. Since November 2024, nearly 70 residents have lived at Nova Vita homes. Some have moved on to higher levels of care, others have successfully found employment and moved out, and some, after finding work, have chosen to stay because they value the supportive family-like environment. Today, about 30 residents continue to live in Nova Vita housing, actively working on personal change and stability.

Joyce Jingjing Lao demonstrates extraordinary commitment to her residents and to the community. She creates housing that is not just shelter but a true home—a place where individuals can recover, grow, and prepare for long-term stability.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Joyce Lao

Nominated by: Kelly Deegan, Tenant

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Joyce Lao

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

Joyce has a special way about her, she not only connects with each of her tenants personally, she provides a safe and secure home for her tenants. By doing so it creates positive foundations for successful futures! I was able to LOVE myself again! There are not enough hours in a day for me now where as before there were too many! Thank you Joyce for providing what I needed to become the woman I so longed to be!

What separates Joyce blouse homes from the rest of Contra Costas program housing is that she genuinely cares about the homeless community

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Joyce Lao

Nominated by: Maria V Cortes, Tenant

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: she goes above and beyond to help and make sure people who meet the criteria are able to be helped in her units or houses in a safe manner.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

I feel speaking for myself and family that is very grateful for opening her doors to her sober living homes. For being able to feel safe and living clean and sober having a place of my own to utilize and stay positive it's a Blessing

I 'am thankful today for making the right choices in life and staying focused and motivated to achieve my goals and dreams. With the Grace of my higher power having a place of my own couldn't do it with a second chance thanks to Joyce Lao

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Joyce Lao

Nominated by: Lance Johnson, Tenant

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Joyce is quick to respond to requests and is a pleasure to engage with.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

In our household we all highly value Joyce as she is considerate of each of our needs and able to take that information and have us all work together.

I highly recommend Joyce to anyone that is in need of housing placement. Her housing environment is safe, clean and nurturing.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Shah (Shahrooz) Wadpey

Nominated by: Bill Jones, Tenant (Hope Solutions) in master leased PSH units

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Shah Wadpey has master leased units to Hope Solutions' permanent supportive housing programs since 2016. He leases a total of 10 units that house 17 Hope Solutions clients who were chronically homeless and face a range of disabling conditions. Shah is a landlord who provides high quality, well-maintained units to his tenants/subtenants. He also treats Hope Solutions clients and staff with consistent kindness and respect, maintaining a willingness and openness to all clients that is commendable. When he has had work opportunities for which Hope Solutions clients may be eligible, he has also freely offered those opportunities.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

Shah has maintained a steady partnership with Hope Solutions through a range of challenges our clients have faced while living in his units. He is consistently willing to roll up his own sleeves to partner with us when maintenance issues arise, and he demonstrates a responsiveness to Hope Solutions clients that shows he understands their challenges while respecting their strengths. Our clients who have had occasion to interact with him have told us they view him as a good and kind person, and they like the units in which they make their homes. For clients in permanent housing situations, being able to live long-term in a quality unit has a direct positive impact on their quality of life and stability.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Mei Lei and John Sommer

Nominated by: Brittany Grenier, Work with this provider in the community!

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: The JMS recovery homes provides our reentry parolees a place to come home. They are treated with dignity and respect. It's a beautiful home where the men feel confident.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

They understand through their own lived experience what it feels like to come home from being in prison and allow the men to make this place a home, not just a halfway house.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Robert Linhart

Nominated by: Jim Becker, Colleague

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: RCF Connects would like to recognize landlord Robert Linhart for his partnership with our Housing First and ERF2 programs. He has provided housing for formerly unhoused residents since 2023. The housing units are of good quality, and he rents one two and three bedroom apartments and single family homes. He currently provides 27 housing units for individuals and families.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

Robert Linhart actively works with us to make sure that residents take up key services to help them move forward. He maintains strong communication with us so that we can address issues and celebrate successes. He also participates in our Stand on Your Feet and other events with his residents to help them feel supported.

He continues to add the housing units to the available pool so that more people can be served.

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Joyce Jingjing Lao

Nominated by: Wilanda Hughes, none

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Nova Vista LLC - has provided 14 transitional housing beds and 3 permanent housing for justice-impacted individuals since February 2025, who were facing homelessness. The individual participant values the work of the nominee by having a safe residence to call home.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

Nova Vista LLC's commitment to accessibility is one of the cornerstones of our housing programs. Nova Vista has established a network of housing locations throughout Contra Costa and Solano counties, enabling us to offer immediate and same-day placement for those in need. At times, being able to secure transitional housing within 24 hours of release is highly valued by justice-impacted individuals, as it provides a critical bridge to stability and safety.

Clients have expressed a strong sense of security and belonging while residing at Nova Vista LLC.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Ryan Domingue (all Oxford House House Managers) and Rachel Domingue

Nominated by: Wilanda Hughes, none

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Oxford House has provided transitional and permanent housing to participants to decrease homelessness affecting participants battling substance abuse through recovery. The last three years we have worked with several Oxford Houses such as - Summer, The Pond, Remedy, and Cinelli providing transitional and permanent housing to about 10-12 participants on average in a calendar year.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

The Oxford House program goes beyond simply treating addiction by recognizing that a stable living environment is essential for long-term recovery. Their work to provides a safe, sober, and supportive residential setting to help remove barriers to recovery and provide a foundation in which other issues can be addressed.

By creating an environment where participants can connect with others on a similar journey, they have helped to reduce the isolation and stigma often associated with both homelessness and addiction.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Jyoti & Sumer Desai

Nominated by: Marjorie Oliver, Partner

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Jyoti and Sumer Desai, owners of the Executive Inn, have made an extraordinary contribution to ending homelessness in Antioch by offering their property to house unhoused residents through the City's Opportunity Village program. Their current commitment provides temporary housing for 37 individuals and 23 canine companions from the Devpar Encampment for a two-year period.

This marks their second time partnering with the City. Their first effort lasted three years and led to remarkable outcomes—many residents transitioned into permanent housing, employment, and greater stability. The Executive Inn is not only functional but welcoming, with its vibrant bougainvillea and inviting atmosphere offering a true sense of home.

The Desais' sustained generosity and commitment have created a vital bridge from homelessness to hope, making them invaluable partners in the region's housing solutions.

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness:

The Executive Inn, through the Opportunity Village program, has transformed the lives of unhoused residents from the Antioch Devpar Encampment by offering safe, dignified temporary housing and a pathway to permanent stability. Residents now have a beautiful space to call home—where they can sleep, shower, and live with their pets—while receiving meals, laundry access, transportation to medical appointments, and critical support services.

Thanks to the generosity of Jyoti and Sumer Desai, owners of the Executive Inn, and the collaboration of partners like the Housing Consortium of the East Bay (HCEB), Hope Solutions, Loaves and Fishes, White Pony Express, and the CORE Team, residents are connected to case management, rapid rehousing, and daily nourishment. This collective effort has restored hope not only to the individuals served but also to the broader community, who see this as a model of compassion and impact.

The Desais' commitment is deeply valued by service providers, city leaders, and community members alike, who recognize that their work is not just about shelter—it's about dignity, opportunity, and lasting change.

Supervisory District: District 3 (Bethel Island, Blackhawk, Byron, Diablo, Discovery Bay and Knightsen, as well as the cities of Antioch, Brentwood, and Oakley)

Stephanie Bergin

Nominated by: Latanya Johnson, Housing provider who has and continues to work with Caminar clients

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: Stephanie, a landlord in Contra Costa, has provided housing to 4 families through the county's Bringing Families Home program run by Caminar and is committed to working with the program to house more clients. She also works with the City of Concord Rapid Rehousing program and clients working with GROW Concord.

Supervisory District: District 4 (Clayton, Concord, Pleasant Hill, part of Walnut Creek, and the unincorporated Contra Costa Centre)