

Contra Costa Council on Homelessness

Homelessness Awareness Month 2024 Recognitions for “Outstanding Landlord”

The Contra Costa Council on Homelessness wants to recognize landlords, property management companies and/or house managers that have enriched the lives of people facing homelessness in Contra Costa County by providing permanent housing opportunities. Outstanding efforts can be demonstrated in a number of ways including length of time involved in housing people affected by homelessness, number of units/rooms rented to individuals and/or families facing homelessness, quality of units/rooms rented, etc. Landlord, property management company or house managers must rent units/rooms in Contra Costa County to people individuals and/or families facing homelessness.

Nominees

1. Joseline Medina, The John Stewart Company
2. Stephanie Bergin & John O’Keefe, John O’Keefe Properties
3. Tiffany Powell, GLO’s Independent Living #1
4. Tiffany Powell, GLO’s Independent Living #2
5. Tiffany Powell, GLO’s Independent Living # 3
6. Tiffany Powell, GLO’s Independent Living # 4
7. Tiffany Powell, GLO’s Independent Living # 5
8. Verna Cruz, Bay Area Community Services

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

Joseline Medina, Via Vasconcellos

Nominated by: Adrian Caulboy, Case Manager

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *Joseline is the Property Manager for people with Project Based Voucher in 5 units at Villa Vasconcellos. She's worked there for over a year.*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *Joseline goes above and beyond to best support our clients. Joseline is caring compassionate.*

Supervisory District: District 2 (San Ramon, Danville, Alamo, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Canyon, Rossmoor, Parkmead, Saranap and a portion of Walnut Creek))

Stephanie & John Bergin/O'Keffe, John O'Keffe properties

Nominated by: La Tanya Johnson, case manager for families they rent to

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *John and Stephanie, our outstanding landlords and managers, took a significant chance on our program when it was in its infancy. Not only did they believe in our mission, but they also extended their compassion to homeless families in desperate need of stable housing. They understood the importance of housing stability for families to reunify with their children, secure employment, and rebuild their lives. John and Stephanie housed three families who were either unemployed, couch-surfing, in shelters, or fleeing domestic violence. They created a custom arrangement tailored to our clients' unique needs, especially since our program couldn't master lease the units. These three families were provided apartments despite lacking income and, in some cases, facing credit challenges. John and Stephanie generously offered six-month leases, with an agreement that the families could vacate without facing eviction if they hadn't secured income by the end of the term. Their trust and support have made a profound impact, giving these families a real chance to rebuild their lives with dignity.*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *Caminar's Rapid Rehousing program works closely with Child and Family Services to house homeless families, allowing them to reunify with their children while receiving essential case management services. This collaborative effort is highly valued by the clients, child welfare workers, and the program itself, especially given the significant risks that John and Stephanie have been willing to take. Their decision to provide safe housing, a second chance, and a foundation for families to regain stability is nothing short of remarkable. John and Stephanie have given families the confidence to take pride in their homes and this second opportunity. Their ongoing communication with the Bringing Families Home staff ensures that any challenges or hiccups along the way are addressed and managed efficiently. Their kindness and compassion in an increasingly difficult housing market have had a profound and lasting impact, demonstrating their commitment to making a difference in the lives of these vulnerable families.*

John and Stephanie consistently seek out unconventional ways to help tenants qualify for housing when they might not meet traditional standards. One key solution they implemented is the use of a guarantor program, which allows clients to qualify for housing without the need to find a cosigner themselves. This innovative approach reduces the burden on tenants while still providing security to the landlord.

Additionally, the guarantor program they use accepts payment from third parties, which streamlines the process for our program to make payments on behalf of clients. This flexibility has been instrumental in ensuring that the financial aspects are handled smoothly, making it easier for families to maintain stable housing while focusing on rebuilding their lives.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Tiffany Powell, GLO's Independent Living

Nominated by: KJ Baldwin, Community member

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *GLO's independent has been a leader in Richmond in housing those in crisis or critical housing needs. GLO's Independent has been in service to Contra Costa County for over 20 years. Currently (I believe) there are over 5+ Care homes under GLO's.*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *I have heard testimonies from those who called and were literally picked up by owner Tiffany. I am an active Chaplain and Nurse in the community, and have heard much praise about the owner and the length she will go to assist in placing unhoused recipients.*

I often see and hear about the bigger or more well known facilities here in Richmond and they do great work. But at GLO's, I understand the facility has classes that teach how to get and STAY on your feet. Owner Tiffany is a huge help to the unhoused community with not only compassion, but also treating her residents like they belong. To hear "You belong" at your lowest and most critical state is the first step to believing in yourself.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Tiffany Powell, Glos Independance Living

Nominated by: Eddie Morris, Friend

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *Great compassion and leadership qualities in housing the homeless with multiple houses that are consistently at capacity*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *Will go out her way, in any weather, to pick up and house people.*

She has lived experience from being homeless and is a quality provider

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, GLO's Independent Living LLC

Nominated by: Community Villages, Community Partner

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *GLO's Independent Services has been committed to providing resources to individuals and securing them with holistic range of resources. They ensure people are informed and are inclusive throughout the process.*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *The individuals with children and the individuals who have been registered as a sex offender have the opportunity for equal housing. Many agencies or companies would reject providing housing but not GLO's. They ensure all people have a right to housing opportunities. The people value the work that is being done.*

Residents have the ability to share their own experiences and what their needs are. They are a part of the process.

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county

Tiffany Powell, GLO's Independent Living

Nominated by: Awura Dzidzornu, Friend/tenant

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *I would like to nominate Tiffany Powell for landlord nominee work based on her soul, her devotion to helping end homelessness and her passion to see people's better selves. We need more people like her, with the heart and the devotion to want to help.*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *Tiffany helped get my mother off the streets when she was down on her luck, and it has helped her. She has been housed in her house for over 8 years. I'm getting some stability from being homeless too.*

I support Tiffany Powell 100%, based on her core values of wanting to help in homelessness and to see people for a better life. She has a true devotion for helping people and the genuine care and interest in doing her job. Even though it doesn't pay much, she does it for the because she do has a passion for helping people.

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, GLO's Independent Living

Nominated by: Vernon Trent, Friend

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *Tiffany Powell is great*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *She is very nice and helpful. This place offers support and services. My friends and housemates are very respectful.*

Supervisorial 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)

Verna Cruz, BACS

Nominated by: Toni Jackson, I was a care coordinator, she housed two partners.

Nominee's outstanding contribution to ending homelessness: *Verna Cruz*

The difference that the Nominee's service makes to individuals facing homelessness: *Verna cares about our partners. She is the meaning of it takes a Village! She has stepped in a lot of times- she fees people three meals a day, will also support the partner with doctor visits and trips to grocery store. Verna is on-site at the house. She has supported partners on many occasions. If I were homeless I would love to stay where I am cared about! She is a shared housing community.*

Supervisory District: They serve the entire county