

Elizabeth's Story - Heartbreak to a place to call home

SOUTH COUNTY OUTREACH has been helping local people in need reach self-sufficiency for 26 years. We serve the most vulnerable populations – the underemployed, the unemployed, households in crisis, the handicapped, the homeless, seniors and children.

My name is Elizabeth and I wanted to share with you my great experience with South County Outreach and the wonderful things they have done for me and my family. I am a single mother of four kids ages 16, 10, 8 and 1. The oldest are all boys and my 1-year-old is a beautiful little girl. We became homeless in September 2014. I was in an abusive relationship and my only option out of that situation was to leave with whatever I could fit in my four-door sedan. I was unemployed and did not receive any child support or government assistance. My family would only help by letting my boys sleep at my brother's place. My daughter and I had to sleep in the car.

It was heartbreaking for me. I couldn't believe what my life had come down to, so I quickly set out to find help. By October I was able to get an office job and a nighttime hostess job. Unfortunately, with all the baby sitting needs and rent I was being charged for, I could not see how to save enough for a security deposit. I heard about homeless help charities and started making calls. Being homeless and getting into a shelter or program with four kids, including a teenager, proved to be difficult. Luckily, I found South County Outreach.

On December 14 my children and I were able to move in into a wonderful two-bedroom apartment. It was a Christmas miracle. We were not going to be split apart and we now had a place to call home. However, my struggle was not over. A week later I lost my office job and was in poor health. Had I not had the backup and support of South County Outreach I don't know how I would have managed to make it through that crisis. They helped me with gas cards, food and budgeting. By February I landed a better job that offered me the stability that I needed. It has only been four months since I came into the South County Outreach Transitional Housing Program. But in that time, I managed to make it through two job transitions, pay off my car loan, save enough for first month's rent and deposit and I even managed to pay off some debt.

We lost everything when we moved and now my children and I have a safe place to live. Every Thursday we have group meetings - I have gotten help with taxes, cleaning up my credit, parenting and personal development skills. I cannot say enough about what great things South County Outreach has done for us nor can I find the words to fully express just how grateful I am. To be able to help and change someone's life the way they have helped me is something only in dreams. I plan to continue making progress in pursuing my goals in becoming financially independent enough to be sitting where you are today and then be the one volunteering and donating to South County Outreach. - Elizabeth

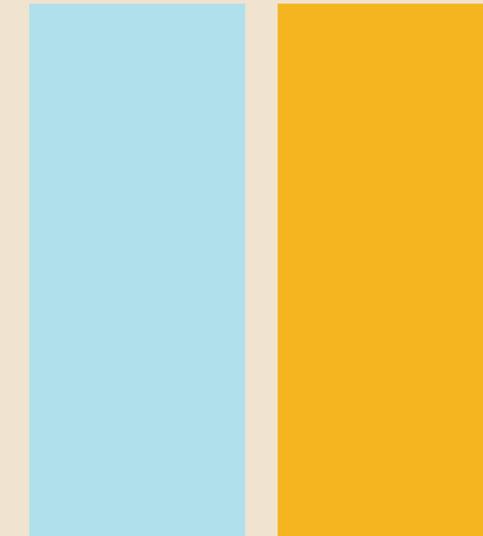


Our Mission

Preventing hunger and homelessness by helping people help themselves.

Our Vision

End hunger – house hope



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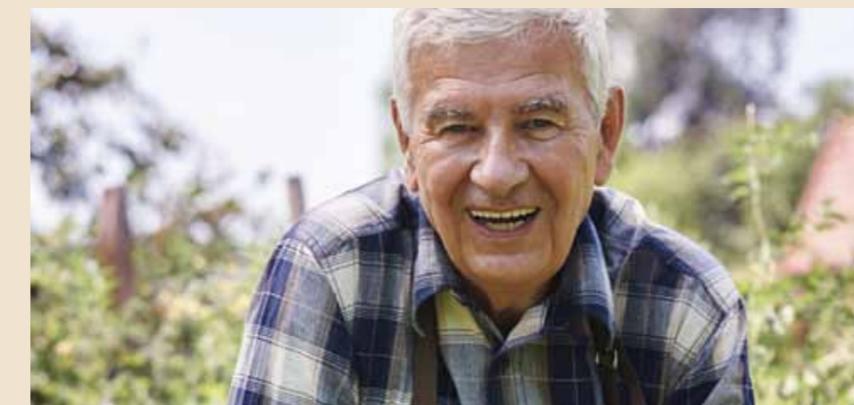
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Annual Report 2015

Preventing hunger and homelessness by helping people help themselves.



A Message From South County Outreach

Dear Friends,

We are happy to share the South County Outreach 2015 annual report and to review our accomplishments over the past 12 months. We were proud to have continued the work to prevent homelessness and hunger in Orange County - thank you for joining us in this important endeavor.

Our clients come to us in need. They may have faced a health problem, lost a loved one or been laid off or simply do not make enough to afford housing and have nowhere else to turn. Our ability to provide food, housing, utility assistance, workforce training and clothing means that we help with the most basic human necessities. And it is our goal to provide these services with compassion so our clients leave with more than food and shelter, but with dignity, too.

At the end of each year, we ask ourselves:

- Did we provide food to feed the people who came to us for help?
- Did we house families that otherwise would be living in a car?
- Did we broaden someone's employment chances through computer education?
- Did we keep a neighbor from becoming homeless by making a rent payment?

Thank you for helping us answer "yes" to those questions. You made a difference in Orange County. We look forward to working with you as we continue to be a force for positive change in the lives of those in need in 2016 and beyond.

Debby Thrailkill

Debby Thrailkill
President, Board of Directors

Lara Fisher

Lara Fisher
Executive Director

Children are vulnerable

31% of all homeless households in Orange County include children.
43% of those we serve with housing and food assistance are children.



Client Visits by City 2015

Our clients receive an average of nine services annually for a total of almost 55,000 services to Orange County residents.

Thank You

South County Outreach would like to thank the following cities for their continued support: Aliso Viejo, Irvine, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Lake Forest, Mission Viejo and Rancho Santa Margarita.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

Our housing program helped approximately 22 families; 29 adults and 49 children in 2015 reach self-sufficiency by housing them in South County Outreach-owned condos. Our masters-level case management team works with families on financial management, day care, life skills, education and employment enhancement. We also provided affordable housing to 10 families; 17 adults and 19 children.



FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry provides a variety of nonperishable food, fresh produce, bread, meat and dairy products for families and individuals to take home and prepare nourishing meals. We provide a week's worth of emergency food for up to 3,000 residents per month. We collect and distribute about 800,000 pounds of food each year. The average number of visits to the food pantry per client household is four.



HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

From time to time hard-working people experience financial hardship. Sometimes our neighbors just need a little help paying bills. This program helps families stay housed, reducing the costs of eviction and creating homelessness. In 2015, we distributed almost \$70,000 in assistance checks to property owners and utility companies on behalf of our clients.

COMPUTER LEARNING LAB

Our Computer Learning Lab offered free computer classes to promote workforce development for more than 600 students in 2015 to help them increase their skills to obtain jobs or secure better-paying jobs. As unemployed and underemployed residents work to increase their financial stability, South County Outreach remains dedicated to helping improve workforce knowledge and skills.



UPSCALE RESALE THRIFT STORE

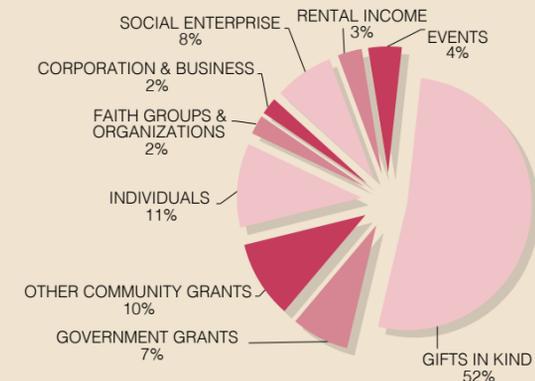
As the social enterprise of South County Outreach, Upscale Resale provides gently used clothing and household goods to the community generating \$96,147 annually in direct revenue that keeps our Food Pantry shelves stocked when donations are low and helps fund our housing programs. More than 400 clothing vouchers were distributed to clients needing clothing for themselves and their children in 2015.



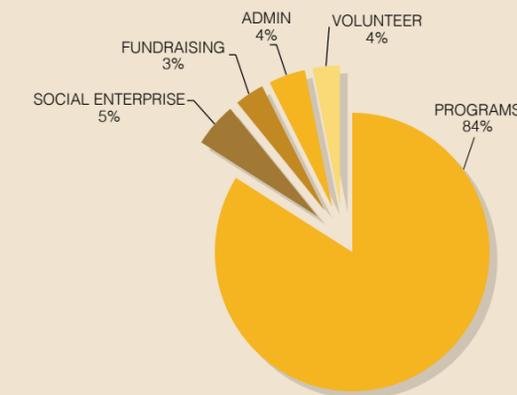
VOLUNTEERS

Individuals, families, faith communities, businesses, schools, corporations and organizations support all aspects of South County Outreach as volunteers. They assist clients in our program areas, conduct food drives and participate in our back-to-school backpack event, holiday Adopt-A-Family program and fundraising events. With only seven full-time staff members, more than 1,600 volunteers logged 41,000 hours in 2015.

2015 TOTAL INCOME \$2.56M



EXPENSES \$2.55M



2015	
Current Assets	\$776,521
Total Assets	\$1,874,671
Liabilities	\$497,266
Net Assets	\$1,377,405
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$1,874,671

14% of individuals we serve are seniors

43% of those we serve are children

1,500 back-to-school backpacks were distributed to students

1,747 donors in 2015

1,425 households received donated holiday meals and children's toys

80% of households we serve are in the extremely low income category earning \$25,300 or less for a family of three

38 grants requests were funded for a total of \$358,640, including capital funding for a refrigerated truck

20% increase in new homeless clients over last year

82 of our homeless clients are women