

More Housing Specialists, Expanded Services in 2019



About Sheila Almquist, Housing Specialist

In July 2019, SHARE welcomed Sheila Almquist, who had previously worked at the Council on Aging as a Care Coordinator for many years and has a passion for helping people. She reports, "Food and shelter are the basics for anyone, and shelter is difficult in Sonoma County so I'm happy to be part of an organization that addresses that." In just four months, she's arranged 19 matches, including one for Jerry (see story in this newsletter).

"I love this work of matching people," she said. "It's great seeing both sides so happy. Having an 'in-between point person' whose job it is to set up the match is important as everyone comes in with their own set of needs and issues."



Introducing Lynn Stanton, Housing Navigator

SHARE is excited to announce new team member Lynn Stanton. Lynn has a BA from Sonoma State and has worked for nonprofits for many years including two years at COTS in Petaluma and five years at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Marin County. Passionate about easing the suffering of the world, Lynn is excited to bring her skills to SHARE Sonoma County, where she knows her work will make a difference.

ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY

JERRY + KATHLEEN



A fire survivor who lost his home in Coffey Park in 2017, Jerry came to SHARE in February of 2019. SHARE has many successful matches in Oakmont and had a new provider there, Kathleen, a homeowner with three bedrooms. After meeting with both parties, Housing Specialist Sheila Almquist introduced seeker and provider to each other and a successful match was created.

Jerry was able to move into his new home less than a week later. There was help with the deposit, moving expenses and furniture costs. After two long years of living in his car and moving from hotel to motel, Jerry no longer worries about where he is going to sleep each night. His health has improved, he swims daily and finds time to ride his bike.

Kathleen adds, "I have to admit that the thought of bringing a stranger into my home was a difficult decision. Working with SHARE has made it easier. They do a background and reference checks and took the worry out of the process for me. I have the security of knowing that I have an agency, SHARE, to support me. Sheila follows up and checks in on us regularly. Jerry and I both feel supported and not alone."

Humble and grateful, Jerry said, "Many angels were involved to help facilitate this move. SHARE has provided amazing support through a devastating time in my life. I have finally found a beautiful place I can call home."

What Seekers and Providers say about SHARE Sonoma County:



"It's often been said that Sharing is Caring and Amy Appleton's SHARE Sonoma County is a living example of that! My family has

been a home provider since 2015 and we have experienced total care and concern for my uncle and also for the home seekers we have met. If I had a chance to re-work the SHARE logo, I'd wrap it in a great big heart to emphasize the care that SHARE provides!"

—Mike V.,
nephew of 97-year-old WWII vet, Albert



"Art has been a godsend. It is great to find someone for my mom and to provide Art with a place to live as well. Art has become family. He has good judgment and always keeps me posted on how my mom is doing. During the recent fire evacuation, Art stepped in and managed the crisis, driving my mom to my home in Petaluma through the back roads. They both stayed with me during the evacuation."

—Chris S., son of Alexa M. Art had suffered both professional and personal setbacks, and ended up homeless before this SHARE match with Alexa was created.



THANK YOU!

SHARE would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Eric Fraser and TeamWorkx for their early work with our program.



“The people who open up their homes to temporarily house fire victims are heroes. They recognize the urgent need and respond in the spirit of community.”

—Amy Appleton,
SHARE Sonoma County Executive Director



REMINDER TO OUR CLIENTS AND FRIENDS!

Have a ‘go bag’ ready in the event of an emergency!

Sharing SHARE News!

VOLUNTEERS!

SHARE Sonoma County needs volunteers! Our senior clients could use pro-bono appointments with doctors and dentists (only 2 clients per quarter), home nurse visits (3 per month), regular drivers and compassionate listeners. And if you have special skills, we need you at SHARE. We are looking for legal assistance, grant writers and board members.

If you can help us help Sonoma County’s seniors and those who are nearly or newly homeless, call us at **707-766-8800** or email info@sharesonomacounty.org.



COMMUNITY HOUSING

Capistrano Community House is a 6-bedroom home given to SHARE in 2015. All the current residents have been at Capistrano for 3 to 4 years. SHARE is actively pursuing candidates for a \$600/month (utilities included) bedroom rental in this community household.



SHARE HONORED

SHARE Sonoma County is proud to announce that Gerry La Londe-Berg, Board Secretary-Treasurer and SHARE volunteer, was honored at the 2019 North Bay Nonprofit Leadership Awards October luncheon where 18 nonprofits leaders were recognized for their contributions. Gerry has contributed financially to SHARE Sonoma County while also lending his expertise. Why does he give? Gerry said “With the forecast of an increasing aging population, the SHARE model of shared housing is simply a great housing solution. And I get to meet really nice people!”

PARTNERS HELP PROVIDE HIGHER LEVEL OF CARE

Partners in home health and care are helping us build our Services Exchange pool of Seekers who can provide a higher level of care for those returning home from the hospital or a skilled nursing facility. Partners include Sonoma County Human Services Adult & Aging Division Home and Community-Based Waiver program, along with St. Joseph, Kaiser Home Health, Sutter Health and other care agencies. Through this collaborative effort, SHARE allows our vulnerable seniors to age in place safely and with greater stability. We appreciate our grantors like Community Foundation Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, for recognizing SHARE’s value in the community. Another key resource is the Julie L. Grant Special Needs Fund.



WEBSITE UPGRADES

The www.sharesonomacounty.org website has been updated, allowing visitors to easily access SHARE Sonoma County’s services, make donations or other contributions. You are also invited to sign up to be a temporary emergency housing provider/host in the event of a disaster.

SHARE FINDS EMERGENCY HOUSING IN DISASTERS

Unfortunately in Sonoma County, it’s no longer a question of if, but when the next disaster will occur. With funding received from the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, SHARE Sonoma County has doubled its efforts to sign up folks to become emergency temporary SHAREFire Home Providers in preparation for an emergency.

Please visit www.sharesonomacounty.org and sign up as a host today. We are compiling a robust database that allows us to place folks very quickly when a state of emergency strikes.

SHARE has become an emergency housing resource for the county. Two years ago following the October 2017 wildfires, through our program SHAREFire, we housed over 300 people, families, individuals and pets in various emergency placements. We met the housing challenge again in the October 2019 evacuations.



Giving That Grows

Our latest funding efforts are engaging those individuals in our community who recognize housing as a top priority and are willing to contribute to this cause. Together we can make Sonoma County affordable for our seniors and housing seekers.

You and your family can change lives by making a tax-deductible contribution to SHARE Sonoma County through planned giving with lasting benefits. Planned giving takes many forms – gifts of cash, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, art, partnership interests, personal property, life insurance, a retirement plan or other assets. Every gift shares a common attribute: it strengthens our program – matching seniors to individuals needing permanent housing – for many years to come.

A planned gift is an opportunity to help others in need over the long term. It can be as easy as designating SHARE Sonoma County as one of your beneficiaries. The advantages to you and your family are many. Giving creates a legacy that expresses your deepest convictions. It need not diminish current income or assets. Indeed, it can provide potential income tax or estate advantages for you and your heirs.

Ways to give include making SHARE the beneficiary on an investment account. You can also name SHARE Sonoma County as a full or partial beneficiary of an IRA, annuity, life insurance or retirement account.

All you need to start the process is a desire to create a lasting legacy. Begin by consulting professionals knowledgeable about the financial, tax and estate planning implications of your gift. Discuss your intentions with your family, as well as your legal and financial advisors before you finalize your plans.

To inquire about leaving a gift to SHARE Sonoma County, please call Amy Appleton at **707-766-8800** or email info@sharesonomacounty.org. Visit www.sharesonomacounty.org to read more about this form of giving.

Thank you for your generosity.

Other ways you can share with SHARE Sonoma County:

We can't do this work without you. There are many ways to SHARE and we invite you to choose one that speaks to you.

- If you know of a senior who needs services or companionship, contact us.
- If you are in need of housing, reach out now.
- If you have dollars to donate to this essential housing program, we can increase the numbers of people we help. Your contributions are tax-deductible.
- If you have talents or resources that might help our clients, we'd love to know because we're all about exchanging resources.

And if you want to be on the call-list as an emergency housing host in the event of a public emergency (like the recent wildfires), we'd love to hear from you. You can download the sign-up form from our website, www.sharesonomacounty.org.

SHARE Sonoma County is designed to create genuine community in the form of home sharing, for elders, folks with disabilities and disaster victims who need a decent affordable home to call their own. SHARE Sonoma County is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.



SHARE Sonoma County

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SHARE has three structures for home shares: 1) rent exchange, 2) service exchange, 3) community houses. We serve Providers—home owners/renters who would like to age in place and may need income or services to do so, as well as Seekers—people needing housing who can provide services or additional income with rent. SHARE currently operates four community houses which provide affordable rental arrangements for vetted Seekers.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK: AMY APPLETON

Beyond the Match

SHARE's growth over the previous year means more people are being served than ever before. We've responded to that growth by hiring housing specialists to cover each region in Sonoma County. In 2019, we will exceed 100 new SHARES, and as of this writing, SHARE has impacted the lives of 210 seekers and providers.

As SHARE continues to grow, the paradox is that the more we do, the more we need to do. As we create SHARE matches, we must maintain them and that means staying in contact with our providers and seekers and making sure their service needs are consistently met. Maintaining matches adds to our costs, but it keeps our attrition rate to a minimum and is largely the reason we are successful.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who are part of the SHARE community for your care and your contributions to SHARE.

Amy Appleton, Executive Director, SHARE Sonoma County

The average Rent Exchange takes a Housing Specialist 20 hours to make a match. Service Exchanges take 30 hours.