

NEWS RELEASE



United Way to Assist New Homeless Effort

December 8, 2016

REDDING, CA – The Board of Directors of United Way of Northern California has approved a fiscal sponsorship agreement with Bridges to Housing, a new organization that will raise and manage funds to supplement homeless citizens in the Redding area as they move off the streets.

The agreement, which took effect December 1, means Bridges to Housing is covered under United Way's status as a 501 (c)(3) charity, so that donations to the homeless program are tax deductible. As fiscal sponsor, United Way will also handle financial transactions and tax compliance administration for Bridges. United Way has similar agreements with two other homeless initiatives, the Redding Area Homelessness Coalition and Homeless Rock Stars.

Bridges to Housing seeks to address a significant obstacle in dealing with the chronic homeless – ensuring funds are immediately available to help move individuals off the street at the same time those individuals are ready to change their circumstances.

Under this model, Bridges volunteers go into the field, develop relationships with homeless citizens and offer a temporary housing opportunity. Clients must agree to act as responsible tenants; pay toward monthly rent; accept and work closely with a case manager, and be placed on a waiting list for federally subsidized housing.

Bridges to Housing is led by Melissa Englebright and Dr. Douglas McMullin. Englebright is a homemaker and photographer whose homeless advocacy page on Facebook, "People of Redding," has attracted a large following. Dr. McMullin is a prominent Shasta County physician who in recent years has served as medical director for the residency department at Shasta Community Health Center. Through that work, Dr. McMullin frequently encounters and treats homeless citizens.

"Dr. McMullin and I are looking forward to rallying our community's support in getting our most vulnerable homeless residents off of the street and into housing," Englebright said. "We believe our combination of assistance, casework and accountability will help to stabilize broken lives and help move homeless off our streets. Our community is desperate for solutions right now, and we're looking forward to Bridges playing a role in solving the problem."

The program seeks to start small, working with up to 10 clients in 2017. "This is a great opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of this kind of intervention strategy," said Larry Olmstead, president & CEO of United Way of Northern California. "We are excited about supporting this program, and about working with Doug and Melissa. They have impressed us with their knowledge and expertise, and their sincere passion for helping the homeless and the community at large."

Donations to Bridges to Housing can be made at: <http://www.reddingbridgestohousing.org/>
Donations also can be made on the United Way website:

<http://www.norcalunitedway.org/civcrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=2>

To donate through Text to Give, text **BRIDGESREDDING** to **40403**

-0-

Media Contact:

Larry Olmstead: 530-241-7521, lolmstead@norcalunitedway.org

About United Way of Northern California:

United Way of Northern California (UWNC) was established in Redding in 1953 and serves nine counties: Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity. Its mission is to fight for the education, income and health of all residents in the community. UWNC raises funds for non-profit agencies and operates two 24/7 human services helplines: 2-1-1 Shasta and 2-1-1 Tehama, collectively known as 2-1-1 NorCal. UWNC also operates Volunteer NorCal, a website that connects volunteers to agencies (volunteernorcal.org), and currently coordinates the Prosperity Initiative, a collective impact project that promotes financial stability and youth enrichment. For more information about United Way of Northern California visit www.norcalunitedway.org.