

Published October 7th, 2015

Bay Area Nonprofit Calls on the Community to Hike to End Homelessness

Submitted by Chris Flitter



Lafayette resident Ernie Vosti with his grandson, Ethan, at last year's Hike for Shelter event. Photo provided

Nearly 120 people from the Lamorinda area, including more than 60 from St. Perpetua School alone, and hundreds of others are hoping to raise \$150,000 this year at the Sixth Annual Hike for Shelter event from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18, starting at the base of Mt. Diablo State Park at Macedo Ranch in Alamo. Presented by Lafayette-based Douglass Designs Inc., Hike for Shelter is a fundraising and awareness campaign open to all individuals, groups, and families of all fitness levels to benefit Shelter, Inc. The Martinez-based nonprofit prevents homelessness and promotes self-sufficiency among low-income and homeless residents through multiple services, such as case management, tutoring, employment services, finance management, parenting classes and life-skills training. Four hikes are available at varied levels of difficulty.

According to Shelter, Inc., the face of homelessness is changing. The nonprofit is seeing more adults, children and veterans struggling to meet basic needs, such as food, housing and safety. As the needs are growing, the availability of resources and services are declining due to budget cuts and a slowly recovering economy.

"Last year was my first time participating in the Hike for Shelter and I had a wonderful time walking (and running) with my grandson, Ethan," said Lafayette resident Ernie Vosti. "The hike was very well organized from the registration process, to the trail markers, to the delicious catered lunch and program. I hiked last year because it looked like a fun outdoor activity with my grandchildren

and I knew it supported a good cause. Since then I've had an opportunity to learn more about Shelter, Inc. and am currently a volunteer helping with their computers and I'm on the 2015 Hike Committee. I'm hiking this year because I want to support Shelter's mission to prevent homelessness by helping low-income families to stay in their homes. It is much more cost effective to keep families in their homes than to allow them to slip into the abyss of homelessness."

Individuals, families and teams can register at www.shelterhike.org. Registration fee is \$25 and there is a minimum fundraising goal of \$250 per adult and \$750 for 3-6 adults. Kids (under 18) are not required to fundraise.

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