

StreetWise

A PUBLICATION OF LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES



ON THE COVER: Larkin Street's Engagement Counselor, Mel Gilcrest, distributes donations from PUMA shoes to program participants / April 28, 2020

134 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

YOUTH SERVICES



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we navigate these unprecedented times, **I want to stop and acknowledge all of you – our supporters, board members, staff, and volunteers.** I recognize the sweeping effects that COVID-19 has had on our daily lives, shared communities, and the world around us. Like everyone, I miss being close, in community, and look forward to a time soon when I can see you in person again.



While life has changed dramatically over the past month, at Larkin Street we are guided by two unwavering principles: **young people need to be able to access services, and we need to keep them and our staff safe.** Yet the impact of the pandemic on young people has already been severe:

- 42% have lost jobs or had their hours dramatically reduced.
- For those who have a safe place to shelter-in-place, the order is creating feelings of isolation, which can exacerbate mental health and substance use issues.
- For those without a safe place to shelter-in-place, service reductions citywide are limiting access to basic needs, including food and hygiene services.

We have responded by maintaining our existing shelter and housing programs without interruption, plus are getting dozens of youth off the streets each week and into hotel rooms. We are providing hundreds of extra weekly meals, as well as tens of thousands of dollars of distributed food gift cards. Behavioral health, educational, and employment programs have expanded remote services delivery options.

As we've pivoted, our extraordinary staff have been showing up for work before we had access to Professional Protective Equipment (PPE) and through public transit cuts. They have ensured all our many facilities are sanitized, mitigating transmission risks on top of supporting our youth. These are our unsung heroes, and I want to thank them.

The coming months will bring new challenges, but we know we can navigate them together. While this pandemic has changed the way we do things, **your generosity reinforces our collective strength, ensuring the young people we serve don't walk this journey alone.**

In community,

Sherilyn Adams
Executive Director
Larkin Street Youth Services



Disinfecting best practices with a Larkin Street staff

As we continue to adjust to the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, we are ensuring that our staff members are informed on best practices on keeping our facilities clean and safe. Watch this video to learn how we disinfect frequently-touched surfaces. [Watch now!](#)

COVID-19 UPDATE



We are committed to delivering vital, life-saving services to young people in need in accordance with the City and State Shelter in Place Orders, and we have taken precautionary measures to prioritize health and safety, including changes in meal service, increased cleaning, delivery of remote case management and tele-therapy when possible.

Some changes include:

- **Drop-in sites:** distributing takeout meals and hygiene supplies, as well as bathroom and handwashing access while maintaining physical distancing. Staff are providing in-person and remote case management, problem-solving, assessments, and housing navigation.
- **Shelters:** both shelters are operating, promoting physical distancing to the greatest degree possible, and following SFDPH guidance on handwashing, cleaning, and disinfecting.
- **Behavioral Health:** case managers and clinicians are checking in with youth daily by phone. Youth who are accessing the drop-in space can use the Wellness Room for privacy during a therapy call.
- **Employment, Education, and Youth Leadership:** remote tutoring, distance learning, and tele-support to participants.
- **Housing:** processing active housing referrals and increased number of youth housed through emergency beds. All housing programs are operating under the Shelter in Place Order. Congregate sites are operating with minimum staff levels, and scattered site participants are receiving high-touch remote case management.
- **Screening and Testing:** Larkin Street has implemented a standard screening tool in our drop-in, shelter, and housing programs to refer youth to treatment through the public health system if necessary.

To view more, [click here.](#)

Are you a non-profit and looking for resources? We put together a guide to help navigate. [Non-profit resource guide](#)

STAFF STORY



Christian Valdez, Case Manager at the Lark Inn (one of our shelters), started working with Larkin Street a little over a year ago. Born and raised in the Bay Area, he started his career at a youth diversion program dealing with vulnerable youth. He enjoyed engaging with clients as a Relief Counselor but had a greater desire to build one-on-one relationships. As a Case Manager, Christian has the opportunity to work with youth to implement core curriculum, set and achieve goals, and acquire

life skills. He plays an important role here at Larkin Street, but this is especially true during this time. In addition to his normal duties, he now assists with daily screenings and making sure youth have the resources they need to stay safe.

For Christian, being a front-line worker is challenging but the reward of helping someone achieve their goals is what keeps him going, especially in these times of fear and uncertainty. "Speaking from my own personal experience, it's no better feeling when I know that I've given my time and effort to assist someone and they achieve their goals."



PAVING THE WAY FOR OUR YOUTH 2020

Due to COVID-19, we moved our 18th annual Paving the Way Gala online and extended access to all our supporters. Launched on March 23, our virtual gala featured a special message from Sherilyn Adams, Executive Director, an online auction filled with must-have packages, and an opportunity to donate.

We are so grateful for our generous supporters who have shown us that we are not alone during this challenging time. Special thanks to all our sponsors and supporters. Together, we raised \$660,000 for the work to end youth homelessness.

VISIONARY SPONSOR



FOUNDER SPONSORS



Sharon & Craig McCollam

Mary Vaughn Lester



POLICY PLATFORM

In January, we released our new policy platform, **How to End Youth Homelessness**, a comprehensive guide to the principles and approaches required to address youth homelessness. This will serve as our guide, but we will pivot when necessary based on the effects of COVID-19. We are continually thinking about the additional support young people will need going forward to navigate a precarious job market, education, and basic needs.

To make youth homelessness brief, rare and one-time, we engage at the systems level to address the root causes of homelessness that prevent young

people from reaching their full potential. Though it is a complex problem, we believe that a foundation for a successful system to end youth homelessness is built on the following principles:

- Partnerships across public, private, and non-profit sectors
- Amplifying youth voice and leadership
- Committing to ending structural racism and systemic inequities which are underlying causes of homelessness
- Adopting an outcomes-focused and data-driven approach

Friends of Larkin Street 10th Annual Ice Skating Party

DEC. 11, 2019

Thanks to our next generation group of supporters, Friends of Larkin Street, and guests for making the 10th Annual Sip 'n Skate a huge success! Because of you, we raised more than \$41,000 for young people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco — enough to provide one month of housing, health services and jobs support for over 8 young people.



Harvest and Winter Festivals

Larkin Street program participants celebrated the holiday season with our annual Harvest and Winter festivals!



We started the celebrations with a hot breakfast followed by activities, crafts and music and then lunch. Young people were also thrilled to watch a video from recording artist G-Eazy, who sponsored the event, wishing them a happy holiday! At our Winter Festival, young people received gifts and holiday cards prepared by volunteers from One City Gives.

Huge thanks to Instacart, G-Eazy's Endless Summer Fund and PUMA for their generous donations! And big thanks to our staff and volunteers.



Google

Last November, Google visited our HQ to learn more about the services we offer on-site and across San Francisco. Jasmine Jones, a Larkin Street program participant, and Chibu Griffith, a Larkin Street alum participated in Google's Leader Quest



VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY APPRECIATION



Lulu

After organizing our drop-in center's clothing closet, LuLu Artist Collective was inspired by our work and wanted to expand their involvement. In February, they highlighted Larkin Street at their event "LuLu Loves" while encouraging guests to donate travel-size shampoos and new socks.

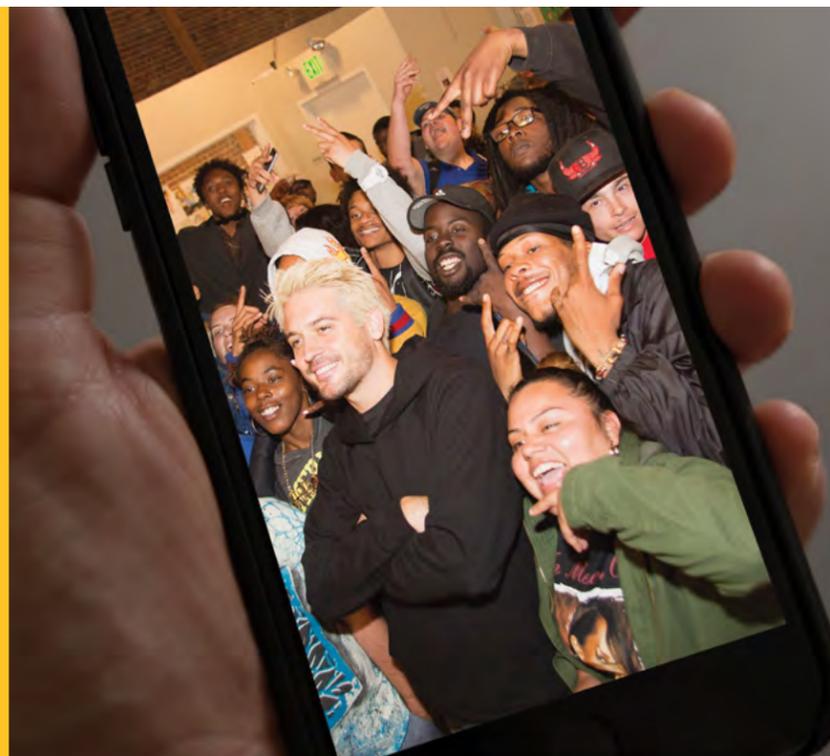
G-Eazy

In response to COVID-19, rapper and Bay Area native G-Eazy and his Endless Summer Fund, donated meals for a whole month, partnered with PUMA to donate 500 pairs of PUMA sneakers, and helped promote our Paving the Way virtual Gala.

"We recognize the impact the current crisis is having on those in need and are proud to partner together to support Larkin Street Youth Services"
-PUMA and G-Eazy



Watch now!



LARKIN STREET PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS SHARE HOW THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK HAS IMPACTED THEIR LIVES



Angel Baten

As someone who's recovering from past substance use, it's been difficult not being able to go to my support group meetings. I've been sober for a year and a half now and I intend to work very hard not to let COVID-19's impact get in the way of my recovery. That's not to say it hasn't been a struggle. Even though I'm able to attend my meetings online, it simply doesn't achieve the same emotional support as an in-person interaction would. I enjoyed getting to know the people in my recovery meetings, being able to hug them after a particularly difficult session and bask in our togetherness.

I'm grateful to still be able to talk to my therapist at Larkin Street through the phone and still receive support from my case manager whenever I need them. I'm continuing to do my public speaking classes online through CCSF which is also tough given that it requires in-person experience to effectively learn the material. I haven't been able to do any drag shows which was a special way for me to express myself and build self-esteem. Unlike some of my peers, I'm fortunate to be able to keep my job at Community Housing Partnership. Through all this, I'm learning how to be patient and understanding even as I struggle with these changes that the pandemic has brought.



Chibuenyi Griffith

I was looking forward to visiting New York City in May in hopes of someday moving there but because of the COVID-19 outbreak, I've had to cancel my plans. As a HR Specialist at Salesforce, I'm able to work from home while also continuing to take a class through Arizona State University's online program. Even though it's sometimes difficult to find a quiet workspace in the house, I consider myself lucky since I don't have to worry about not having a safe place to sleep during this pandemic.

The COVID-19 outbreak has created so much panic everywhere and it's hard not to wonder what the next few months will bring for me. My two-year contract with my housing at Larkin Street is going to end in June which means I will need to find a new place soon. I'm currently working with my case manager to find new housing in the east bay but that's been difficult since I haven't been able to meet with potential landlords in person let alone check out potential accommodations. I can only hope that this doesn't hinder my impending move.

It's been a challenging experience learning to adapt to these changes but I'm staying at home and taking these necessary precautions to protect myself and others. I'm very much looking forward to seeing my friends and coworkers again.



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larkinstreetyouth.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



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VIRTUAL DISCUSSION

June (more details coming soon)

Over the coming months, Larkin Street plans to host a series of virtual discussions featuring agency youth, staff, leadership, and special guests. Please complete our online [survey](#) to let us know which topic areas are most important and interesting to you. We look forward to sharing more details soon.



BAY AREA CFO OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Hyatt Regency San Francisco | October 1, 2020

We have moved our annual, Bay Area CFO of the Year Awards, to October this year. Please join us in recognizing the finalists and announcing the winners, at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. Attracting more than 500 Bay Area financial and business leaders, the event has raised more than \$6 million for our work to end youth homelessness.

Please visit cfoawards.org for more information!

COVID-19 SUPPORT

DONATE

HOST #GivingTuesdayNow fundraiser

SEND grocery cards to assist youth who have lost their jobs

PURCHASE essential basics on our Amazon list

BE AN ADVOCATE share our content via social media

CONTACT volunteer@larkinstreetyouth.org for any questions

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

What kind of content do you want to see from us?