



United Way
California Capital Region

Yolo Wayfarer Center **A beacon of hope for the homeless of Yolo County**

When Leona Jull says that the mission of the Yolo Wayfarer Center is to “inspire hope and courage,” she doesn’t take those words lightly. As Executive Director, Leona knows that sometimes hope and courage are all that prevent a homeless person from getting back on the path toward a healthy and happy life. “We help people see that there is hope beyond being addicted, beyond being homeless. We try to paint a picture of that hope for the future,” Leona says.

Fully recovering from homelessness takes more than wishful thinking, of course. It usually requires a safe, drug and alcohol-free environment. It takes simple things like a clean bed, a warm meal, a place to wash your clothes, and a phone you can use to help find a job. And most of all, it takes people who care. But it starts with hope, and that’s something the Yolo Wayfarer Center has plenty of.

Leona tells the story of a young homeless couple in a particularly difficult situation who showed up at the Wayfarer Center in December of last year, just looking for something to eat. A week after arriving, the couple gave birth to twins born on Christmas morning. Leona recalls that when the local paper ran a story about the Christmas twins, people in the community responded immediately with donations of baby food, clothing, diapers, and even a crib.

“This is a community that really responds,” Leona says, which she attributes to a long and positive relationship between the Wayfarer Center and the people of Woodland. In 1983, a group of citizens became concerned about Woodland’s homeless and hungry and began passing out peanut butter sandwiches and bananas in sack lunches. Eventually the group sought help from local churches and began a soup kitchen, which two years later became the Yolo Wayfarer Center. Leona feels that this humble, grassroots beginning is the source of “the great love” that the town feels for the Center.

Certainly that affection was evident in the “amazing outpouring of support” for the homeless couple and their Christmas twins, Leona recalls. With the support of the community and working with another social services organization, the Wayfarer Center was able to help its new family get into a hotel and then transitional housing where they could start fresh. With that support system, Leona says, the mother was also able to re-enroll in school, restart her education, and look forward to a more hopeful future.

Would you like to help? Leona says that some of the Yolo Wayfarer Center’s most pressing needs are the basics: razors, shampoo, hygiene supplies in general all go a long way at a homeless shelter. Contact Leona Jull at 530-661-1218 or online at www.ywcmission.org.