

## Army aids fire survivors

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### **The Salvation Army in San Francisco offers emergency housing and other necessities.**

The Salvation Army and the American Red Cross recently partnered to assist over 100 people affected by three major fires in San Francisco.

The first blaze in the city's Mission District destroyed the homes of 67 residents, including 15 children.

"The devastating Mission Street fire tragically took a life, destroyed many homes and small businesses," said San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee. "We [worked] closely to rapidly re-house displaced residents and support small businesses as they [recovered]."

Two more smaller fires subsequently broke out in the Tenderloin and Alamo Square neighborhoods.

Throughout February, The Salvation Army San Francisco Mission Corps functioned as a temporary shelter for residents impacted by all three fires. The Red Cross began running a shelter and later transitioned operations to The Salvation Army. [The San Francisco Human Services Agency](#) (HSA) also worked to facilitate mid-to-long term housing matches.

"In an event like this, where the needs of the displaced resident are so great, they are best served when all of the responding agencies are coordinated," said Benjamin Amyes, HSA disaster response manager. "A response like this would easily challenge the resources of one agency, and the services required need to come from various programs. Only through a coordinated effort can all of the multiple resources be brought to bear."

<https://caringmagazine.org>

After the Red Cross ceased management of the shelter, it continued providing casework, referrals, guidance and additional assistance at an off-site location.

“While some individuals and families secured new housing options, factors of affordability, safety, and the emotional strain of suddenly losing a home of 20-plus years made locating a new residence more difficult for others,” said John McKnight, emergency disaster services director for The Salvation Army Golden State Division. “The intent of this short-term extension was to give the displaced a few more days to search for a feasible solution.”

The Salvation Army provided vouchers for individuals to select replacement furniture as they secured new places to live, along with vouchers for new clothing, personal products, and items for the children and teens in the shelter. Volunteers from The Salvation Army San Francisco Mission Corps also hosted family game nights, movie nights, and special birthday festivities for survivors celebrating birthdays to make the shelter feel more like home.

“We’ve tried to give these survivors up to one month to find housing following the fire,” McKnight said. “It wasn’t much time, but was a manageable amount to find another place to live, even a temporary one.”

Since the opening of the shelter, several San Francisco businesses—including Tartine Bakery, BiRite Grocery, Delfina, Tacolicious, HeyDay, GoodEggs, Sprig, Namu, Bernal Cutlery, Kasa Indian, Arizmendi, Lefty O’Douls, and Heirloom Café—contributed more than half of the meals served to shelter residents. The Salvation Army San Francisco’s Central Kitchen, Harbor Light Center, Adult Rehabilitation Center and Mission Corps provided the rest of the meals.

“We [were] blessed to be [in] a position to help a lot of people,” McKnight said. “Long after this shelter closes, we will continue to support this population as we know recovery will take time.”