

# Strategic Communications: Using Personal Stories for Impact



<https://nonprofithousing.org/myhomestory/>

We see that policymakers and the public are moved when we are able to tell the personal impact affordable housing has on our lives





# Presenters

Christina Gotuaco,  
Associate Director,  
Communications,  
EAH

Michael Norris,  
Communications  
Manager, Housing  
Trust Silicon Valley

Derrhea McLiechey-  
Davidson, Services  
Coordinator,  
Catholic Charities of  
Santa Clara County

Tim Starritt,  
Resident Leader

Rachel Richman,  
NPH Advocacy and  
Engagement  
Consultant,  
Moderator



**What we  
will  
discuss  
today**

- **Stories**
- **Strategic impact**
- **Getting organized**
- **Top Tools**
- **Telling our stories**
- **Questions**

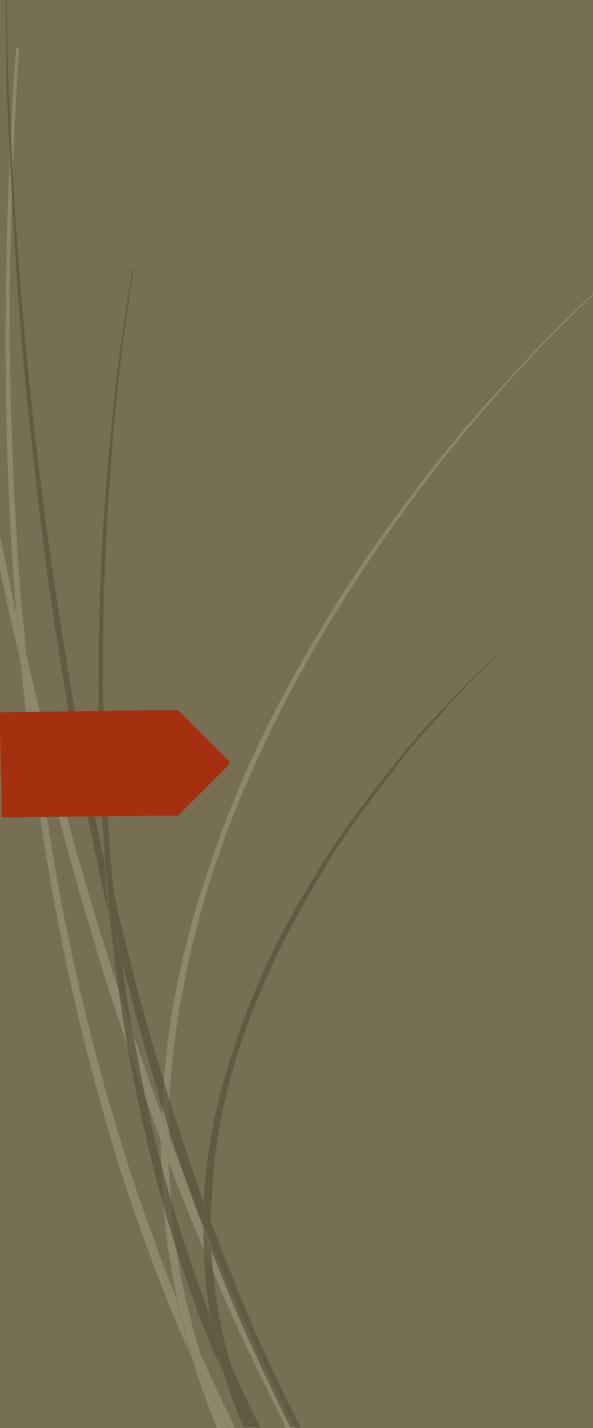
# Felicia and Darryn



# Cynthia T.

- Cynthia was homeless for almost 2 years, living in a women's shelter in San Joaquin County from 2013-2015. She has been housed for 3 years.
- Now advocates for the elderly and low-incomer working families.
- Cynthia says everyone should have access to affordable housing.
- After seeing what impact she would make by sharing her story, Cynthia attended the 2018 Lobby Day in Sacramento.





**What makes a good  
story?**



**EAH: Using stories in strategic communications**

## Trinese Biloups

## Los Robles Apartments, Union City — EAH Housing



In 2005, I was pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Human Development, and working part-time for Alameda County. I was also a single mother. When my only daughter (at that time) and I were displaced when our apartment in Hayward got turned into condos, initially I wasn't sure where we would go, but I put my name on

the waiting list for any available housing I could find. We had to move a couple of times before we ended up here at Los Robles.

Having affordable housing has been a blessing—and has taken a burden of worry off me. As a disabled, single mom, living at Los Robles has allowed us to be in a home that we otherwise could not afford – and has also allowed me to stop worrying about how to pay for housing in addition to all my other bills.

There have been other benefits for my family as well. At Los Robles, there are many family activities that help build a sense of community. My older daughter was blessed

to receive a scholarship, offered by EAH Housing, that helped pay for her college costs. She recently graduated with a degree in Child Psychology from San Jose State University and is now applying to Master's Programs, with a goal of being a child psychologist.

I have been active in the community and able to serve on the board here at Los Robles for the past eight years. This is home.

*“Stay encouraged and stay positive: You may have to be flexible, but you can always make something out of what you have.”*

EAH Housing 50th Anniversary in 2018



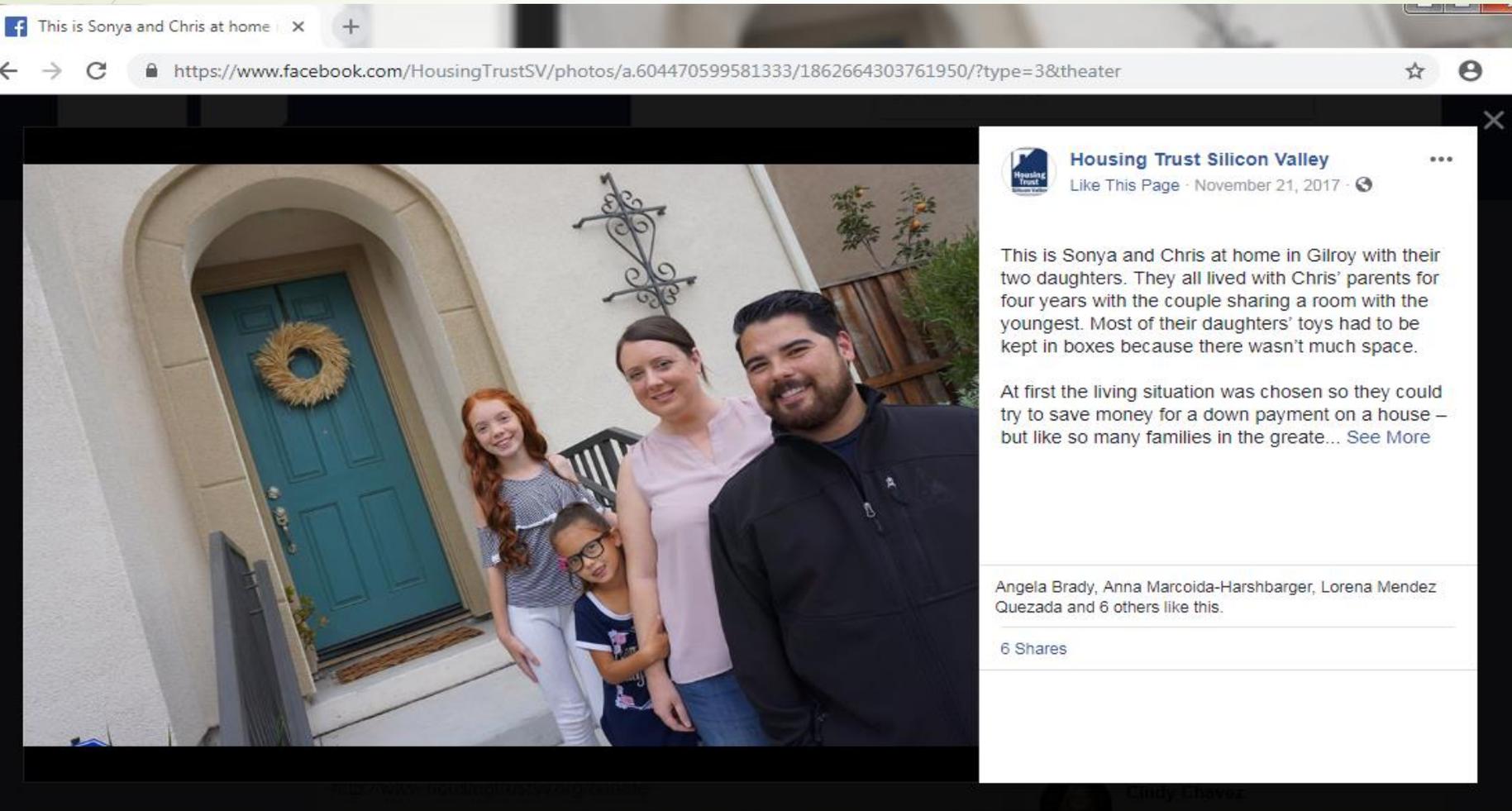
EAH Housing 50th Anniversary in 2018



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# Housing Trust of Silicon Valley: Using stories in strategic communications



This is Sonya and Chris at home in Gilroy with their two daughters. They all lived with Chris' parents for four years with the couple sharing a room with the youngest. Most of their daughters' toys had to be kept in boxes because there wasn't much space.

At first the living situation was chosen so they could try to save money for a down payment on a house – but like so many families in the great... See More

Angela Brady, Anna Marcoida-Harshbarger, Lorena Mendez Quezada and 6 others like this.

6 Shares

The image shows a Facebook post from the 'Housing Trust Silicon Valley' page. The post features a photograph of a family of four (a man, a woman, and two young girls) standing in front of a house with a teal door. The text of the post describes their living situation and their financial goals. The post has received 6 shares and is liked by several people, including Angela Brady, Anna Marcoida-Harshbarger, and Lorena Mendez Quezada.

# Using stories for impact

- ➔ Cynthia and Tim at the Housing California conference



# Strategic communications for impact: The Public



- Newspapers, TV and radio & other media
- Policymakers & opinion leaders
- Elected officials and their staffs
- Neighbors and voters
- Friends and relatives of residents
- Foundations
- Advocacy groups
- Residents

## Tools

- Email blasts and texting
- Press releases and press kits
- Media events and news stories
- Social media including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram
- Your website

# Strategic communications for impact: Partners



- **Funders**
- **Cities and Counties including Program Directors, Administrators and Department Heads**
- **Construction partners**
- **Vendors and Service Providers**
- **Other affordable housing organizations**

## **Tools**

- **Newsletter**
- **Annual event**
- **Grant and RFP applications**
- **Social media including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube**
- **Your Website**
- **Speeches**

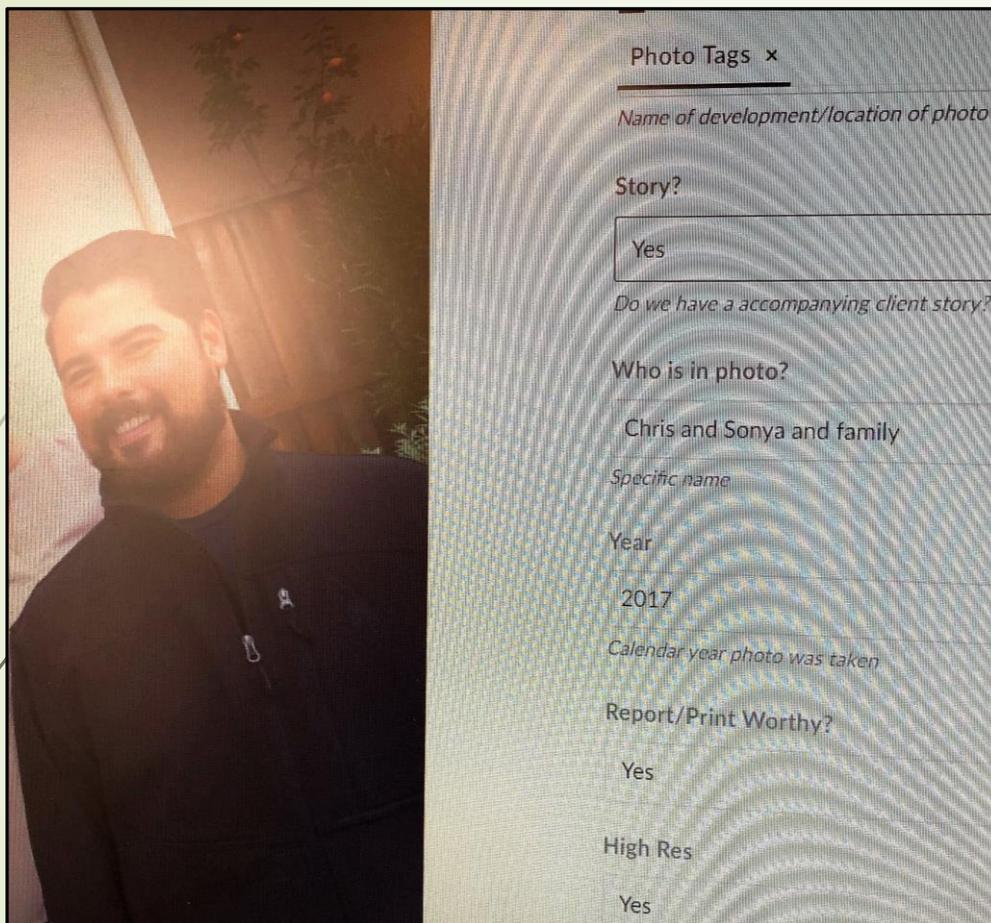
# Strategic communications for impact: Internal (your organization)



- Residents
- Current employees
- Agency/organization leadership
- Board of Directors
- Advisory Board

## Tools

- Internal newsletters and alerts
- Bulletin boards
- Memos and email
- Social media including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
- Staff meetings
- Annual Picnic, Holiday Party
- Your website



Property	Code	State	County	Resident Name, Age	Brief Description	Descriptors	Status Distribution
Golden Oak	GO	CA	Contra Costa	Jamie M., 44	Single mom finds secure housing for herself and daughters. Eldest daughter is EAH scholarship winner. Both are first in family to go to college.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• first in college</li> <li>• single parent</li> <li>• scholarship winner</li> <li>• formerly homeless</li> </ul>	EAH website Facebook Yammer Twitter

**Organization of story collection: getting started, tools you will need, staying organized**



Setbacks don't stop mother of scholarship-winning daughter from thriving at Los Robles



Immigrant parents from Guatemala set former Centertown resident on the path to college and success



New Housing Community and a New Home



Survivor of roller-coaster early life finds peace helping others



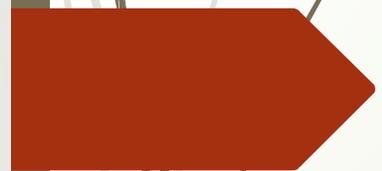
Kukui Tower class inspires scholarship winner to pursue film-making career



U.S. Army trained medic survived near death from alcohol abuse



# Organization of story collection: getting started, tools you will need



# Telling your story

What was the challenge you were facing in your life before you moved into affordable housing?

What inspired you to make a change?

How did you feel about it?

What happened as a result of your decision to make a change?

How is your life different now?

How does that make you feel?

How is affordable housing part of our society's shared values?

Questions?



**NPH**

NON-PROFIT HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

<https://nonprofithousing.org/myhomestory/>