

## Grant helps family center provide housing, counseling

By PAT STANLEY, Register Staff Writer

Deanna Moore says she spent much of the past nine years bouncing from place to place with her children, sometimes staying with friends, sometimes living in a trailer at Skyline Park.

"I was homeless, off and on," she said.

Today, the 35-year-old Napa woman has turned her life around, thanks in part to the determination of a trained home visitor from Napa's Cope Family Center program. A \$15,000 grant to Cope from Kaiser Permanente Foundation, and three prior Kaiser grants, help fund the program that sends counselors to client homes to help families like Moore's get back on their feet.

Tapping her own sense of determination along with Cope's resources, Moore now lives in a clean, subsidized apartment, paying just \$98 of the monthly rent while she searches for work under the guidance of her home visitor, Carol Potter.

Moore and her three children, ages 13, 3 1/2 and 15 months, can live there for up to 18 months while she looks for work.

Not long ago, the Napa single parent got off the streets and moved into Samaritan House, a family center and part of Napa Valley Shelter Project. Later, Cope helped her find her present digs.

Cope, a nonprofit organization, helps at-risk clients find housing and jobs and sends trained home visitors to assist those clients in turning their lives around. They assigned home visitor Carol Potter to the Moores.

Moore at first balked at help, but Potter was persistent.

"I thought (Potter) was with CPS (Child Protective Services)," Moore said. "I didn't want to move. I was resistant. I felt the system had failed me."

But, she said, Potter didn't give up. "She kept coming around, knocking at my door. I didn't want to talk."

Finally, she decided to give the system another try, and hasn't looked back.

"(Cope) got me into Samaritan house. I was like a bud at that point. Once I was in the shelter, I started to

bloom."

While at Samaritan House she began a job search that landed her part-time work. She's still looking for more permanent work and wants to be able to pay for an apartment herself.

After her stay at the Samaritan House, Moore found a basement room. "It was not safe," she said. "Me and my older son fell twice and my 3-year-old daughter fell once."

After she was evicted, a social worker found her a motel room that became home for the next 10 days.

Eventually, Cope found her current apartment.

"Carol, like all of our home visitors, is an incredible person," said Cope executive director Joelle Gallagher. "She provides a wonderful combination of support including that of coach, guide, cheerleader. She's like a mom. She inspires (clients) to be accountable and reach their potential."

Gallagher said the program helps people like Moore, who can benefit from "close one-on-one support."

Home visitors, she said, understand that working with someone at this level is "all about creating personal relationships, creating a rapport and building trust."

Moore, she continued, "is a wonderful example of what you can do when you realize all things are possible ... and you do the work you need to meet your goals." She said it's important for clients to be able to reach out and ask for help. "She is a great inspiration," she said.

"I'm still job searching," the Napa native said.

Moore also hopes to study social work at Napa Valley College. "I want to give back what I've gotten," she said. "I want other people to learn it's OK, you can get through it."

She said people need to realize obstacles in life can be overcome.

Her children are also happier. Moore said her oldest son was not doing well in school, but is now getting B+ grades.

"We live life on life's terms, now," she said. "That's a good thing. We were given a chance to find ourselves and get back on our feet."