CROSSROADS

“I’d probably be dead if I didn’t come to the Mission—or I’d be out of touch with reality.”

JESSE CHAVEZ, MISSION ALUM AND Valedictorian

“A resolute hope... times two”

“Bridging the Gap through Mentorship, Education, and Advocacy”

The theme for the First Annual Women’s Conference will be “Bridging the Gap through Mentorship, Education, and Advocacy.” There will be workshops facilitated by professionals from various areas of expertise. Other organizations collaborating on the conference are the Weingart Center, Women’s Center of Los Angeles, Downtown Women’s Center, and the Community Health Improvement Program. The goal is to increase collaboration between many of these organizations.

The theme of the conference is “Bridging the Gap through Mentorship, Education, and Advocacy.” The conference will focus on engaging executive-level leaders, local service providers and program participants. The goal is to increase collaboration between many of these organizations.

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Los Angeles has 44,359 homeless individuals, 12% of whom suffer from mental illness and 30% from substance abuse. They count—do you?

The Los Angeles Mission would like to thank Herb Smith, President of the Mission, and guests to do the same. This is a time of re-focusing at this time of the year, we are encouraging our students to be involved in the Homeless Count. Thank you for your compassion for the homeless and hurting in our community. We believe that Los Angeles County can provide that life-changing organization can provide that life-changing program participants. The group is a significant impact for us.

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They count—will you?

While you might be making resolutions in your own life at this time of the year, we are encouraging our students and guests to do the same. This is a time of re-focusing our lives.

Maybe your goal is to give your time to volunteer or to increase the amount of time you currently volunteer. We have a great opportunity this month that will have a significant impact for us at the Mission and across Los Angeles County.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) will be conducting their Homeless Count on January 26th-28th. We want to encourage our donors and current volunteers to participate in the Homeless Count at the Mission or in your own geographic area.

It’s important to know who these homeless individuals are. The more we know and understand who they are, the more we can adjust our services to their needs. With the current efforts and focus on homelessness at the federal, state and city levels, it’s the perfect storm of opportunity for us all to address this important issue.

Please visit www.theycountwillyou.org to volunteer for the Homeless Count. Thank you for your compassion for the homeless and hurting in our community. We believe homelessness in Los Angeles can be solved, but we can’t do it without your help.

Blessings,

Herb Smith, President

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Volunteer Orientation: January 9th, 9-11 A.M.

Anyone who would like to volunteer must first attend an orientation session at the Mission. To register for the upcoming orientation, please visit us online at LosAngelesMission.org/act. Come join us!

ADC Women’s Conference: January 11th

The thanks for our 1st Annual Women’s Conference will be “Bridging the Gap through Mentorship, Education and Seniors.” Please join us as we discuss opportunities and challenges facing women today. The conference will be held at The California Embassery. For more information, please contact Dr. Roxanne Jordan at (213) 629-1227, ext. 522.

Graduation: February 12th

Join us at the Mission to celebrate the men and women who will be graduating from our Fresh Start program.

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Los Angeles Mission
A resolute hope...times two

Jesse and Kenneth Chavez lost their home and spent 4 months just trying to survive day to day. Jesse found his way to the Mission and was our vaudeville star in October! His father Kenneth is currently in our Fresh Start program. They shared their story of hope and transformation with us.

JC: Before I came to the Mission, I was homeless for about 6 months. I lived in the San Gabriel Valley with my father but then our house was reposessed. I was in and out of prison from the time I was 18 until I was 30 years old. I never did many drugs, but I had a problem going in and out of prison.

KC: When we lost our house, I put my son and me on the streets. I was working, then I lost my job and couldn’t afford to go anywhere. We were in the same area, but I ended up in a sober living home. I couldn’t have anyone stay with me, but sometimes I’d sneak Jesse in.

JC: It was pretty tough because I didn’t have a roof over my head. I was fortunate enough to come across a spot deep in the Los Angeles River where I stayed a lot. When I first lived on the streets, I stayed under a couple of bridges. I even slept at an elementary school for a few nights.

Deciding to do the right thing

JC: Losing the house, it was pretty embarrassing because we lost everything. When I was out on the streets, I got into a fight with someone and he broke my jaw in two places. I was on the streets for 30 days with a broken jaw and had lost a lot of weight. I decided that I wanted to do the right thing, to recover and fix my mind. When I was in prison, somebody had told me about the Los Angeles Mission.

KC: I saw the effect the Mission had on my son when I would come to visit him after he began the Fresh Start program. I knew the course of study and everybody treated me well. So I thought the Mission was a wonderful opportunity for me too.

Focused on the goal

JC: I grew up a Christian but walked away from God when I was 30 years old. About a month or so before coming to the Mission, I had found my way back to church and was working on my relationship with God and Jesus Christ. I was really excited about being here at the Mission. The Chicago School of Professional Psychology was so beneficial to me getting my mind right. I held everything in before. Once I got into Fresh Start, I put everything aside and didn’t let anything stop me from completing the program and graduating. I was named valedictorian.

KC: I’m so proud of him. I was working in the kitchen the night of his graduation but I got to take a break and hear his speech. I’ve always known he was a very intelligent individual and I’m just so happy that he’s able to do this, focus on something and complete it. And not only complete this program, but excel.

JC: I probably would be dead if I didn’t come to the Mission—or I’d be out of touch with reality. Thank you to the donors for being partners in our success and our recovery. They allow us to focus on the task at hand and graduate.

Thank you for all you do to give people like Kenneth and Jesse a Fresh Start. God bless you!
Meeting the new face of homelessness

Homelessness is not a new problem in Los Angeles. But it is an evolving one. The numbers continue to be staggering. In a report released this year by the Economic Roundtable, a nonprofit based in Los Angeles, 13,000 people fall into homelessness each month in Los Angeles County. But now more than ever, the reasons people face homelessness fall across a broad spectrum.

“We’ve seen changes in our emergency services; the population is older than we’ve seen before,” says Harb Smith, Los Angeles Mission president. “There are more women and children coming in for our services. Plus there are greater numbers of people coming to us with severe mental health issues.”

7 out of 10 homeless people are unsheltered

In a report released by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority based on their biannual Homeless Count, 44,359 people are homeless in Los Angeles County—a 12 percent increase from 2013. An estimated 70% of those experiencing homelessness are completely unsheltered.

Most of the numbers in the report increased from 2013, but one group’s statistics stayed flat—homeless veterans. With so much focus nationally and locally to house homeless veterans, that number remained on par with 2013. Sadly, homeless veterans continue to make up 10 percent of the overall homeless population in the county.

Historically, the Mission saw mostly men who were chronically homeless and battling various drug addictions—but economic challenges for individuals and families have changed the landscape drastically.

“The first and foremost issue is affordability of housing, or availability of affordable housing,” Herb says. “It starts with available housing at the income level where people’s jobs fall and a reasonable level of their income being used for rent.”

The perfect storm

With focus at the federal, state and city levels, Herb says he feels this is the perfect storm to continue to raise awareness about homelessness and find solutions.

“I think there’s a great opportunity for the Los Angeles Mission to partner with similar organizations,” says Herb, “to provide services and meet the challenges for individuals experiencing homelessness.”

44,359
Homeless individuals in Los Angeles County

12% increase in homeless individuals since 2013

30% suffer from mental illness

18% are females

10% are veterans

70% of individuals or family members are unsheltered

1.5 million people in California live in rental low-income households.

The Face of Homelessness in Los Angeles County
Support for our graduates!

Our next graduation ceremony is coming up on February 12th. As always we’re thrilled to celebrate this special milestone in the lives of our students. The event is a time of great joy and fellowship as we honor the men and women who’ve successfully completed our program. For many of them, graduation marks the first time they’ve seen an important task through from start to finish—making the evening even more meaningful.

A dream realized

LaToce Breaker came to the Anne Douglas Center looking to change her life. We had a chance to speak with her about her current job and how the ADC impacted her life for the better:

"Before coming to the Mission I was living a life without boundaries. Everything in my life was spinning out of control. I was mentally drained and in need of some serious guidance.

Once I settled in at the ADC all my fears subsided and a feeling of peace came over me. Every class the Mission offered to its students, I made a point to get involved in. The Mission provided assistance with updating my résumé and provided internet access so I could apply for employment opportunities.

Graduation day was exciting and overwhelming at the same time. I finally followed through with something, and that was making a decision to change my life. I began working two weeks after graduation, and switched jobs in June 2015. I currently work for the Long Beach Transit as a customer service clerk.

I would like to take a sincere thank you to the donors. They are everything to the Mission and the ADC. Because of their generosity and love, lives are being changed every day. May God continue to bless you!"

Signs of Hope

By Keith Atkinson, Chaplain

I love this time of year, because there is always the potential for new beginnings. It’s exciting to see what God has in store for us.

There are some very difficult times—times of great change. But the Los Angeles Mission will continue to provide a continuum of care that will foster discipline, job training skills, one-on-one counseling sessions and professional development.

When I think of the new face of homelessness, what comes to mind for me is the influx of individuals with mental health challenges. What also comes to mind is people who are new to the area and come through the doors of the Mission because they are facing hardships for various reasons.

We are also seeing younger people who have come out of the foster care system or group homes, and are in need of housing.

My prayer is that God will show me the people who don’t know that He loves them as His own children. I pray that He will bring me across their path so that I can encourage them and make them feel valuable.

Every kind act or deed or touch can be a revelation of God. That’s where we at the Mission will help meet the needs of those living on Skid Row.”
Many thanks to the Goldwin Foundation, the Johnny Carson Foundation, and guests to do the same. This is a time of refocusing everyone to know who they are. The more we know and understand who they are, the more we can adjust our services to their needs. With the LAHSA, Los Angeles County, and the Homeless Count on January 26th-28th. We want to encourage our donors and current services partners to join us at the Mission and across the City, State, and nation for adopting a recent meal to serve our community. An organization can provide that life-changing impact on the homeless and hurting people living on Skid Row.

The theme of the conference is “Bridging the Gap through Membership, Education, and Services.” There will be workshops facilitated by professionals from various areas of expertise. Other organizations collaborating on the conference are the Weinstein Center, the Dream Center, Union Rescue Mission, Downtown Women’s Center, the Cannon House and more.

For more information on the Women’s Conference, please contact Dr. Roxanne Jordan at (213) 629-1227, ext. 522.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is responsible for counting the number of people who are homeless in Los Angeles County. Statistics from the LAHSA 2015 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Results show that 26,123 individuals were counted as being homeless. This does not count the 80,000 people who are doubled up with a family member, friend, or stranger.

The start of the new year is a great time to take your support of the Mission to the next level. If you haven’t signed up to be a Mondo-a-Month partner, why not make the commitment today? This is the kind of new year’s resolution that will impact whole communities—for good! If you’re already blessing the Mission in this way, why not consider giving just $5 more each month?

Monthly donations help us budget more effectively to provide meals and other life-changing programs. Even a $5 increase will have a significant impact on the homeless and hurting people living on Skid Row.

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