

# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## HOMELESS INITIATIVE



# APPRECIATION NOTES

March 2017



## INTRODUCTION



In celebration of the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of approval by the Board of Supervisors of the Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative strategies, a call for ***Appreciation Notes*** was distributed to all of the community and government partners who are part of the Homeless Initiative. We invited everyone involved to acknowledge and celebrate those agencies and/or individuals, our local champions, who contributed to combatting homelessness during the past year. Many responded with stories of inspiration, compassion, and determination that contributed to transforming individual lives and our communities.

These Appreciation Notes express how we have witnessed or been personally touched by many homeless programs, services and individual acts of kindness that made a difference for an agency, department, community, families, and/or individuals.

They remind us that everyone has a vital role to play in combating homelessness - State, County, cities, community providers, business sector, academic institutions, foundations, faith-based organizations, people who directly experienced homelessness, and the community at large.

We encourage our partners to continue celebrating our champions combating homelessness by submitting your Appreciation Notes at <https://goo.gl/forms/JYeaLreBCiab8zfB2>. The Homeless Initiative will compile and distribute additional Appreciation Notes on a periodic basis.





**Acknowledging: *Whittier First Day***

Whittier First Day is an outstanding community partner that collaborates with L.A. CADA to find or provide emergency housing for our substance using adult participants in treatment. They are dedicated, inspirational & effective. Shout out to "T.K." for their accomplished case manager.  
— **Bill Tarkanian, LA CADA**

**Acknowledging: *FSC – San Gabriel Valley***

Our FSC processes a multitude of referrals daily and works hard to make sure families are placed with the right resources available to them. They treat families with dignity and make sure the transition towards housing placement is smooth.  
— **Andrew Fike, Door of Hope**

**Acknowledging: *Leticia Colchado, Frank Trejo, Darlene McDade-White, Belen Fuller, Hellen Hong, Jill Bauman, Jonathon Thompson, Mary Romero, Rhonda Johnson, Tyler Sutherland, Lori Willis, Kara Allen Soldati, Jessica Petrass, Elizabeth Cohen***

I would like to acknowledge appreciation of all individuals that contributed towards the work on Strategy A4: Discharges from Foster Care & Juvenile Probation. In the initial stages, the components were divided into two groups. All members clearly demonstrated the will, interest, and commitment to tackle the problems of homelessness. In the latter stages, the groups, DCFS and Probation, and the community partners agreed to take a combined comprehensive approach to effectively address all components as the two departments have similar needs. This milestone came to light following the development of a comprehensive tool (Structured Youth Transition Framework) created by Jill Bauman, Hellen Hong, and Jonathon Thompson. The tool supports the enhanced discharge guidelines and all activities and connections that should be made by the involved social work and/or support staff. It is our hope that the successful implementation of this tool will achieve our goal of increasing positive outcomes for our TAY population.  
— **Darlene McDade-White, DCFS**

**Acknowledging: *Our dear friend Rose***

We have a dear volunteer named Rose. She comes to our Kitchen when she can. She is regularly afflicted with many serious problems. She has a TERRIBLE inflammatory lung disease called SARCOIDOSIS that affects her life to the point that she is often in the hospital. She also has a husband that is dealing with early Alzheimers.

She doesn't own a car. She has to depend on public transportation that often doesn't show up and leaves her stranded. From waiting in the hot sun, which she is sensitive to, she has a problem with nausea and vomiting, because of her condition.

Despite all that, Rose remains a cheerful person. She gives our Kitchen the gift of herself. She provides our Kitchen with INVALUABLE resources for our guests that come in for a meal. She searches the internet at various sites and sends them on to me, to print out and share. She sends me links for available housing, jobs and services.

As an example, yesterday, SHE was the direct cause of a mother, daughter and granddaughter getting housing. Sometimes Rose knows that we are trying to help someone at our Kitchen find shelter or a job. She will call the agency or the person making the offer, and she puts in a good word for our person. Then when our person does make the call themselves, Rose has already softened their heart toward the person.

At our Kitchen, we are busy with many duties and responsibilities. We cannot begin to express how MUCH we appreciate Rose and her gift that she shares with us!

Thank you Rose!  
— **Carol Daley, Foothills Kitchen, Monrovia**





**Acknowledging: Becky Vanderzee (Our Place Housing Solutions), Tomasz Babiszkiwicz (PATH), Kim Barnette (LAHSA)**

Becky, Tomasz and Kim, thanks for being such a terrific resource to Downey staff, from our police department and city manager's office to our library and parks & rec staff. You've helped us in responding with caseworkers to help individuals in our city, provided information and training to our library staff, given us assistance in our noticing and clean-up efforts, and consistently supported the community's efforts in participating in the annual homeless count. Your presence has made a genuine difference in our organization's response to homelessness.

— **Anonymous**

**Acknowledging: Ami Rowland**

Thank you for your commitment to Youth Coordinated Entry and for your collaborative efforts to make it work.

— **Arlene Schneir, Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Children's Hospital LA**

**Acknowledging: Marc Trotz, Director of Housing for Health**

For his inspirational vision of caring for the whole person to promote housing stability!

— **Va Lecia Adams Kellum, St. Joseph Center**

**Acknowledging: Chrysalis Rapid Rehousing Jobs Team - Alicia Avalos, George Escandon, Larysha Green, Taylor Henderson, Carmel Mitchell, Neidy Portillo-Tseng, Clare Smith, Matt Straface, and Joseph Wise**

As the employment services provider, Chrysalis is the jobs partner for multiple rapid rehousing programs with amazing housing partners across Los Angeles. These dedicated employment services staff deserve our appreciation as they work tirelessly to help individuals move from homeless to housed - with jobs and able to pay the rent! Keep up the amazing work you are doing!

— **Michael Graff-Weisner, Chrysalis**

**Acknowledging: Thad's Episcopal Faith Community**

Thad's, an alternative Episcopal faith community that meets at the Writers Bootcamp in Bergamont Station, has been a partner with Imagine LA since its conception. Thad's motto is Love Spreading Difference Makers. Thad's believes in the power of relationships, so volunteering to journey with and mentor an Imagine LA family was a perfect fit, so much so that they are now mentoring their fourth Imagine LA family.

The relationships formed with each family have been transformative for each volunteer, family member, and the entire Thad's community. Most recently, a group of Thad's volunteers were the first mentor team to be matched with a TAY (Transitional Age Youth) family as part of our new TAYFT (Transitional Age Youth Families Thriving) Pilot Program.

— **Tara Ignont, Imagine LA**

**Acknowledging: Pat Bouchard**

Pat has recently retired from First Day, but I would like to thank him for his countless hours of service to the homeless population in the Whittier area. His energy, passion, drive and enthusiasm was second to none. He was always willing to help when the City called for service and he was a true inspiration to his colleagues and residents at the First Day site. 'Thank you' Pat for your many years of excellent service at First Day. You will be missed but I am sure I will be seeing you volunteer for other activities within Whittier.

— **Martine Browne, City of Whittier**





**Acknowledging: *An angel called Sheila***

I know a lady named Sheila, who is known as the angel, in the parks. February 2nd is Sheila's birthday and at 69, she spent a good portion of her day feeding the poor in the park and even some, in the shelter of their cars. She works tirelessly EVERY day, preparing, or collecting the food that she is given, to single-handedly pass out to the hungry. When you and I are home with our families on any holiday, Sheila has prepared a meal for her friends in the streets and one for her family. She carries blankets, and gloves and clothing for anyone she meets in need. She is a remarkable and truly inspiring woman and we are graced to have our lives touched by hers.

— **Carol Daley, Foothills Kitchen, Monrovia**

**Acknowledging: *Union Station – Adult Center, Shawn Davis***

Union Station Adult Center is a Shelter intake site and case management program for single adults in the San Gabriel Valley. Shelter resources for single adults in the San Gabriel Valley are very scarce, and trying to find a place outside of the winter months is very challenging. I reached out to Union Station Adult Center to help a disabled client in their area with immediate shelter. I was able to speak with a housing coordinator by the name of Shawn Davis and collaboratively developed a coordination plan to assist clients with temporary shelter. Because of the great partnership and coordination, Union Station Adult Center was able to provide immediate transitional housing, allowing clients the opportunity and time to establish self-sufficiency for future successful permanent housing.

— **Herb Smith, The Los Angeles Mission**

**Acknowledging: *Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority***

Kristina and Chris embody the spirit of caring, efficient and timely service. Every request that I send is answered immediately, and every concern I bring to their attention is addressed with urgency. They have served as both the first and last line of defense for our families as they navigate the world of homeless services. Recently, we had to transfer 2 families from one motel to another with little notice and few resources. Not only were they able to arrange transportation, but they were able to secure a motel for each family that fit their specific needs; one needed a motel that would accept her service animal and the other was restricted to a specific area due to a DV history. I know that we are just one of the many agencies that reaches out to them for specialized help, which makes their attentiveness to our concerns so very much appreciated. Thank you Chris and Kristina for supporting St. Joseph Center and the families we serve, and for helping me during times of great need.

— **Maia Eaglin, St. Joseph Center / HFSS & SPA 5 CES For Families**

**Acknowledging: *St. Joseph Center***

2-1-1 received a call from a single mother who was housed by St. Joseph Center Family Solutions Center. She shared that she had just been housed in an apartment after being homeless for three years. She was very thankful to the team at St. Joseph Center for helping her get back on her feet. Without their support, she did not know where she would be with her child. Before helping her move into her new permanent housing, St. Joseph Center also ensured the family was off the streets by providing them with motel vouchers when they had nowhere else to go. Now she has a stable place to raise her children and she could not have done it without the wonderful team at St. Joseph Center.

— **Kristina Godinez, 211 LA County**





## **Acknowledging: *Health Advocates***

Health Advocates is a LA County contracted legal aid agency that provides people who are permanently disabled the opportunity to obtain the benefits they might be entitled to, such as Social Security. Through Health Advocates we have been able to connect multiple clients to a case manager and lawyer, who provide them legal representation and consistent communication through the whole Social Security process. When a client has been unable to complete or understand any applications, Health Advocates has gone above and beyond to send a legal representative to the comfort of their home to help them through the paperwork. Through their consistent dedication and ongoing assistance, Health Advocates and their representatives have provided opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain the necessary income to survive.

— **Myieko Clayton, 211 LA County**

## **Acknowledging: *Michael Moore, LMFT***

Amongst all the wonderful encounters I have had in my 23 years at Northeast Valley Health Corporation (NEVHC), it is Michael Moore, LMFT, who stands out and deserves much recognition for his work with the homeless. He is an extraordinary behavioral health therapist, who is exceptionally patient and works tirelessly to help every individual find the resources needed to end homelessness. Michael has a huge heart, brilliant clinical skills and a dynamic brain! We have received beautiful notes from patients praising his ability to support them as they transform their lives. NEVHC is very fortunate to have Michael on its team! Thank you, Michael.

— **Kathy Proctor, Northeast Valley Health Corporation**

## **Acknowledging: *Dr. Jon Sherin & Dr. Mitch Katz***

Thanks for being mission driven and promoting enlightened, emerging best holistic practices with public and private partnerships.

— **Paul Freese**

## **Acknowledging: *Glendora Police Department***

Each year the City of Glendora hosts the East San Gabriel Valley Homeless shelter at two churches during the months of December and January. For one evening, in the shelter the employees of the Police Department serve food to the homeless. This is a great way for the officers, dispatchers and other civilian employees to give back to those who are less fortunate.

— **Dave Wanstrath, Glendora Police Department**

## **Acknowledging: *Our Rapid Rehousing Partners - DHS, Probation, CSH, Brilliant Corners, The People Concern, LA Family Housing, and St. Joseph Center***

Chrysalis participates in multiple rapid rehousing programs and we want to send our appreciation and thanks to the amazing partners that make these projects happen. We so appreciate the amazing work of staff from each of these partners -- DHS, Probation, Brilliant Corners, CSH, The People Concern, LA Family Housing, and St. Joseph Center -- who provide the housing and case management services that make it possible to end homeless for the hundreds of individuals we are serving in these programs. Thank you - we appreciate you!

— **Michael Graff-Weisner, Chrysalis**





## **Acknowledging: *Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority***

Last year I witnessed so many incidents of LAHSA staff going the extra mile under very tight deadlines and public pressure to provide help and assistance to the community, especially those of us filling volunteer roles. Thanks for the countless hours of help and caring you provide that translates into front line stories of help, hope and opportunity for men, women and children.

— **Herb Smith, The Los Angeles Mission**

## **Acknowledging: *Alison Hurst***

Thank you for being a source of optimism, courage, and forever faith for all those you encounter. You make our work possible!

— **Rachel Pedowitz, Safe Place for Youth**

## **Acknowledging: *Whittier First Day / Irene Muro***

Brookdale contacted the City of Whittier late one Friday afternoon, during the heavy rains, reporting a senior citizen who was newly homeless and looking for shelter. City staff mobilized quickly and went through PATH to reach First Day emergency staff - Irene, Executive Director at First Day, immediately called the City back and immediately sent two staff to meet with the man. They ultimately took him to First Day for the weekend (they had just one available bed). This reprieve gave them time to find an appropriate placement for him as a veteran, and determined he qualified for housing vouchers through PATH. Excellent example of the City working with a nonprofit social services agency and with a business to provide needed services! Thank you Irene at First Day.

— **Martin Browne, City of Whittier**

## **Acknowledging: *Carol Daley***

Carol Daley is one of the 3 Co/Founders of our organization. We started it almost 3 years ago and not a day goes by that we are not talking to each other about ways to improve and expand our programs. Carol and I did not have the education or business background to do what we do but Carol has been the strong force that keeps us in faith believing that through God "All things are possible." She works tirelessly every day helping coordinate our Ministry. She starts with 6am Mass and finishes the accounting and paperwork late into the night. When we started it was only one meal a month which quickly expanded to serving a full hot meal every Saturday. Today we have a clothing ministry, our wish list ministry, a bicycle ministry, a job board, a resource board and a food pantry. Carol is involved in all these programs as well as publishing our weekly newsletter to over 350 individuals. As if this is not enough she tutors at the Monrovia Library, takes Holy Communion to shut ins and sponsors an elderly friend that lives in LA whom she visits each week. Foothills Kitchen works with Starbucks and Carol picks up the donations and processes them 2 days a week. Carol Daley is a huge blessing to those who volunteer with her and to the guests that she serves with such a giving and generous heart. I am honored to work with her and to be her friend.

— **Janie Duncan, Foothills Kitchen**

## **Acknowledging: *Culver City Unified School District***

I'm so grateful for Culver City Unified School District's commitment to meeting the needs of every student by providing a caring environment, wrap-around services, food, clothing, counseling, helping families find shelter and permanent housing, as well as job opportunities. The extraordinary dedication of a team of caring individuals is transforming the lives of Culver City youth. It's beautiful.

— **Meghan Sahli-Wells, Culver City Council**

## **Acknowledging: *Malibu Taskforce on Homelessness***

Inspired by the Pacific Palisades Taskforce on Homelessness, residents of Malibu came together to raise money to fund 2 full-time outreach workers from The People Concern to perform outreach to homeless individuals in Malibu and connect individuals with services and resources to transition out of homelessness.

— **Elizabeth Shavelson, City of Malibu**





**Acknowledging: *A Resilient Single Mom***

Amalaya\* (\*Alias) has been struggling to find steady employment since early 2015. She is committed to building a stable life for her and her son, Levi\*. Amalaya often thought about going back to school and in 2016 she enrolled in Codetalk, a coding program sponsored by Snapchat through St. Joseph's Center in Venice, CA. Amalaya was always interested in social media branding and website development and Codetalk provided those skills and more: Codetalk's Mission is to use technological education to transform the lives of women in need. Codetalk achieves this mission of empowering women through technology via an innovative program that teaches women the necessary technical and professional skills to attain jobs in technology. In only 15 weeks, Amalaya learned the skills necessary to start a part-time job as the social media coordinator for the Downtown Women's Center. With this employment opportunity, she was able to increase her income by \$1,100 per month. This part-time employment is a huge step in Amalaya's goal of becoming financially responsible and independent to provide the life she desires for herself and her family.

— Tara Ignont, Imagine LA

**Acknowledging: *PATH Family Solutions Center***

2-1-1 was contacted by a single mother who was receiving services through PATH Family Solutions Center. She explained to the 211 Community Resource Advisor that she was in need of transportation assistance to go to a shelter. She and her child were being placed into a transitional shelter by PATH and she needed a ride to get there. The caller was excited as she shared that she and her child would have a place to stay for the next 90 days. She was relieved to not have to worry about finding a place to stay every night and was hopeful about the housing plan she had created with her workers at PATH. After her stay at the transitional shelter, she would be one step closer to permanent housing.

— Kristina Godinez, 211 LA County

**Acknowledging: *Brilliant Corners Case Managers: Ursula Hill, Chelsie Nicholson, Denise Madrigal, Eduardo Maldonado, Avane Johnson, Gerardo Gomez, Kathy Amador, Paula Ronces***

Thank you for your dedication and hard work in the Breaking Barriers program. Your efforts have assisted over 139 of our clients obtain housing while receiving numerous support efforts. I sincerely appreciate your direct efforts and your dedication to this much needed program.

— Reaver Bingham, Los Angeles County Probation Department

**Acknowledging: *DMH – Jacquelyn Wilcoxon and Gwendolyn Davis***

We are so grateful to our partners at DMH - SPA 5, who have generously dedicated time and expertise to collaborate with the City of Santa Monica staff and first responders. You truly are saving lives. Gwendolyn - there are not enough words to thank you for being there for us!

— Margaret Willis, City of Santa Monica

**Acknowledging: *Libby Boyce, DHS Housing for Health***

Libby Boyce has been a champion for the homeless in Los Angeles County for more than 20 years. She has been at the forefront of programs and collaborations to find ways to engage people in new and innovative strategies to reduce the number of people on the streets. She has inspired many of us to join in the work and personally walked me through my first homeless camp more than 10 years ago. She continues to inspire me today with her leadership and dogged pursuit of housing for people in our community.

— Mike Johnson, JWCH Institute, Inc.

**Acknowledging: *Grooming 4 Success***

Thanks for providing 759 free, high-quality haircuts in 2016 to our beloved, homeless U.S. Veterans who are living on the streets of the world famous Skid Row of Los Angeles California.

— Coach Ron, U.S. Vets Homeless Feeding & Housing Services







**Acknowledging: John Olson, Pastor Alena Ukamaka, Churches: United Methodist Monrovia, St. Bede's, Holy Redeemer, La Canada Presbyterian, St James the Less, La Placita, 2nd Baptist, Chef Janie Duncan, Chef Teresa Roco, Chef Ken Yu**

"Passing on the Inspiration"

People have asked how our Foothills Kitchen came to be. Back in early 2014, I met a man named John Olson. I believe John was around 80 at that time. He had started a project about ten years earlier when he was 70. (Most people by that age are relaxing in front of the TV set, but not John.) John had a dream. His dream was to expand a program, nationwide, with various churches all cooperating to help feed the poor.

He created Brothers Helper which was a novel idea at the time. Five days a week, different churches would alternate preparing 60 meals for the poor in downtown L.A., at La Placita (Our Lady Queen of Angels), located across from Olvera Street. That number grew to 400 meals being prepared by each church participating during the week. Monday it was St. Bede's (in La Canada), Tuesday was Holy Redeemer (La Crescenta), Wednesday was La Canada Presbyterian, Thursday was St James the Less (La Crescenta). On Friday and Saturday, La Placita parish in L.A. (where all the food was being taken) also prepared and served the meals.

I knew we had our own homeless in Monrovia and Duarte area. I took the initiative to call all the churches in Monrovia and ask, "What was their church doing for those in need?"

John Olson's inspiration lives on. People are being fed, because he showed us the way we could make it work!

To this date, our Foothills Kitchen has served over 4000 meals! Thank you John for your inspiration!

— **Carol Daley, Foothills Kitchen Monrovia**

**Acknowledging: SHARE Program**

The SHARE program is a housing collaborative that allows individuals from all walks of life to be able to obtain affordable housing and have the necessary support to thrive on their own. Through the SHARE program we were able to give clients an opportunity to have a home without the hassle of affording a deposit or additional bills like utilities. They connect their tenants to mental health support groups and additional support services. Shout out to the SHARE program for giving people in the community a way to reclaim their independence and breaking down housing barriers for those in need.

— **Myieko Clayton, 211 LA County**

**Acknowledging: LACPC Members & Leadership**

The LACPC has been a leader in the fight to end homelessness in some of the most difficult of circumstances. Working with all the leadership, agencies and their staff has been a wonderful gift to me and to those we are all called to serve on streets of LA. Partnership makes the dream work! Thanks to everyone for your part in this immense challenge.

— **Herb Smith, The Los Angeles Mission**

## Thank You!

