



# Los Angeles House of Ruth

## NEWSLETTER

Winter 2005

### Mission Statement:

Our mission at the Los Angeles House of Ruth is to provide temporary and transitional shelter for homeless and battered women and their children. Through our mission, we offer women and children a caring and supportive environment in order to help them transition to long-term self-sufficiency.

## Defining Homelessness in Los Angeles County

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The word homelessness always seems to take on an tactless definition – Webster's dictionary defines homelessness as *someone in the state of having no home or permanent place of residence.*

But, homelessness is more than that. It is the struggle of real people with real families trying to survive in the real world.

Over the course of one year, an estimated 254,000 men, women and children experience homelessness in Los Angeles County. Over 80,000 people are homeless each night in Los Angeles County, The most recent report conducted by The Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center (August 2004) regarding homelessness in the Los Angeles area helps us put a face on these homeless and understand the level of this problem in our community. **The real homeless in Los Angeles County look like this:**

- **THEY ARE SINGLE MOTHERS WITH FAMILIES:** 20% to 43% of homeless in Los Angeles are families, typically headed by single mothers (over 80%), with an average of 2.2 children.
- **THEY ARE OUR NEIGHBORS:** Most people who are homeless have been in Los Angeles for many years and, prior to becoming homeless, commonly lived in or near the community they currently inhabit. The LA County Health Survey (1997) found that 86% of formerly homeless persons had lived in Los Angeles 10 years or more, nearly the same as people who were never homeless. Forty percent had been born in California compared with 33% for those who had never been homeless.
- **THEY ARE EDUCATED:** The 2003 Economic Roundtable study reported that among adults in families, 10% had a BA or higher, 48% had graduated high school and may have had some college, and 43% did not graduate high school.
- **THEY HAVE JOBS:** Both the Economic Roundtable and the U.S. Conference of Mayors report a 16% employment rate for LA among homeless people. People residing in shelters appear to be more likely to have conventional employment than those living on the streets. Income for homeless persons, even those working full-time, is typically below the poverty level.
- **THEY HAVE PROBLEMS GREATER THAN HOMELESSNESS:** Poor homeless families more commonly report spousal abuse, child abuse, drug use, health problems, and weaker support networks than poor non-homeless families. For women in downtown Los Angeles, 59% reported being a victim of domestic violence during their life, and 24% during the last year. Rape during the past year was reported by 13% of the women.

The physical health of homeless people is worse than the general population. Major reported complaints were traumatic injuries, flu, skin disorders, upper respiratory tract infections, dyspepsia, infected abrasions, dental needs, vision care, and unintended pregnancies. An estimated one-quarter of homeless adults are physically disabled. The City of Los Angeles. 2003 - 2008 Consolidated Plan cites an overall homeless mental illness rate of 20.8% and a dual diagnosis rate of 13%.  
*Continued inside...*

### 2004-2005 Accomplishments

- In 2005, House of Ruth provided shelter and services for **30 women and 60 children**.
- In the last year, House of Ruth helped over **130 women and children** with food, clothing, referrals and supportive services.
- **95%** of the women in our program found permanent housing within the last year through the help of Section 8 vouchers or affordable housing.

**House of Ruth  
Board of Directors**

**Betsy Azariah**

Asst. Director, Dept. of Children's Services  
Retired

**Linda Gustafson**

Broker, Beiker & Co.

**Sharon Leahy**

Project Supervisor, Dept. of Children's Services,  
Retired

**Anne Wetzel**

Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Annette Colefax**

Non-profit Consultant

**Sr. Margaret Murray, CSJ**

Director of Support Services, Optimist Services

**Bishop Gabino Zavala**

Auxiliary Bishop, of San Gabriel Region

**Tony Saldana**

Community Relations, Exide Technologies

**Sr. Jennifer Gaeta, SSS**

Executive Director

**Letter from the Director**

Dear Friends,

It is a bittersweet time, that's for sure. With the recent events throughout the world and right here in the United States, from the tsunami to the earthquakes to the war to the recent flooding of New Orleans, we have to be grateful to live here in Los Angeles. The generosity and support for those in need throughout the world have been overwhelming and have, once again, revealed the true good nature of people everywhere. I have thought of all those who have suffered and hope that they are safe. Yet, at the same time, the needs of those here in our own backyard continue. As referred to on our front page, the needs of the homeless in Los Angeles County are as great as ever. Their suffering is as real as those who have lost homes in New Orleans and other places. But because attention has been elsewhere, the plans and focus on our local needs have become a lower priority. That being said, The House of Ruth still continues to serve the homeless women and children that come to us in their greatest hour. And, we still depend on your support and help to make this happen, so we ask for your continued support and thank you for all your past support.

We have had a successful year – serving more than 30 women and 60 children. We have provided our women and children with job and life skills training and classes. With your help, we have assisted 30 women and their families find permanent housing and have helped them move into their new homes with furniture, clothing, and supplies. We have helped many others go back to finish their education and find jobs. We have been striving to meet the ongoing needs of the homeless families in Los Angeles County as best we can. It is in the simple act of finding a home for a mother and her children that we find hope. And it is with your generous support of your time, resources, and talents that we find the ability to move forward with our mission.

Thank you for continuing to serve our shelter despite the busy and unsure times of our nation and the world. As Harry S. Truman, the 33rd President of the United States, said "We know that helping others is the best way—probably the only way to achieve a better future for ourselves." Here's to you and here's to a better future for all of us.

God bless you all,  
*Sister Jennifer Gaeta, SSS*

**Defining Homelessness continued (from page 1)**



**A Special Thanks...**

**\*The Ursuline Sisters of  
the Western Province**

**\*The Sisters of St.  
Joseph of Cardonlet**

**\*The Religious of the  
Sacred Heart of Mary**

**...we would not be  
here without you!!!**



Los Angeles has a higher rate of homelessness than most other U.S. cities and counties. Unfortunately, only 20% to 30% of these homeless are in shelters. This is due, in part, to the fact that the number of shelter beds available to homeless mothers and children throughout the city and county of Los Angeles House is far below the existing need. Combine these facts with the following conditions: a downturn in the economy; a decrease and increased competitiveness of public and private funding of homeless services; rising housing costs; and local and federal cuts in funding to social service programs – and you have a formula for homelessness. This makes it harder for individuals and families to access necessary services (i.e. mental health, recovery and affordable housing services) imperative to promoting self-sufficiency.

As you can see, homelessness is a multi-dimensional problem that calls for multi-dimensional solutions. The Los Angeles House of Ruth works every hour of every day to bring solutions to the homeless – even if it is just one individual at a time.

The homeless families House of Ruth serves– women and children in Los Angeles – are the ones hit hardest by poverty, hunger, and destitution. Every day House of Ruth receives a minimum of ten calls from families seeking shelter or agencies advocating for their clients. In the past few years, House of Ruth has faced an increasing number of families plagued by homelessness due to domestic violence, gang violence, and substance abuse. The Los Angeles House of Ruth addresses this critical unmet need of shelter and supportive services for homeless families in Los Angeles by offering shelter, food and social services to 120-140 women and their children every year. We offer them more than just shelter beds and food, we provide them with a refuge - a warm, safe home-like environment where our families can gain confidence and support to take steps toward self-sufficiency and defeat this thing called homelessness.

\*Source: [http://www.weingart.org/institute/research/other/pdf/homelessness\\_in\\_los\\_angeles-a\\_summary\\_of\\_recent\\_research.pdf](http://www.weingart.org/institute/research/other/pdf/homelessness_in_los_angeles-a_summary_of_recent_research.pdf)

## Veronica's Success Story

Veronica\* entered Los Angeles House of Ruth as a 27 year-old single mother with three children. Her decline to homelessness could be blamed on one of the most common reasons for homelessness in women - she was a victim of domestic violence. Veronica took her three daughters and fled from Kentucky and her abuser to come and stay with a friend in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, shortly after this, she was asked to move out. She had nowhere else to go and beyond that, she had bigger problems. She was a drug user. Because of her situation and her history of drug abuse, DCFS took her two oldest daughters and placed them in foster care. Veronica was left struggling with her drug addiction with her 6 month old daughter and no place to live. This was the turning point. She realized to get her life back in order and to regain custody of her kids, she had to take action. She enrolled in a drug treatment program. When Los Angeles House of Ruth met Veronica in 2003, she was in a drug treatment program focused on getting her girls back, getting a job, going back to school, and completing her drug program.



At the end of 2004, after much hard work and dedication, Veronica left our program with most of her goals accomplished. She had regained custody of one of her daughters. Her other daughter was adopted by her paternal grandparents but Veronica is allowed to visit her on a weekly basis. Veronica started her education at Los Angeles Community College and is working towards completing her AA. She plans to get at minimum her bachelors degree at a University. Her career goal is to be a Spanish Interpreter. Along with starting school, Veronica was given a job at the school under the work study program. While at House of Ruth, Veronica also completed her drug program and is now drug-free. With the help of one-on-one counseling from our counselors, Veronica was able to keep track of her goals and strive to complete them.

Beyond school, work, and success at her drug treatment program, Veronica was awarded the *Women's Opportunity Award*, an award given by Soroptimist International to single mothers that are committed to promoting the successful advancement and empowerment of women for working towards improving her employment status by gaining additional education and skills.

Veronica now lives with her two daughters in permanent housing under the Section 8 housing program. She is continuing her education and continues to work towards a greater level of self-sufficiency. "If it weren't for the help from Los Angeles House of Ruth, I don't know where we have ended up or what would have become of my family," Veronica said. The staff and other clients of Los Angeles House of Ruth are very proud of Veronica and the example she has set for others in the program. Sister Jennifer Gaeta, Executive Director, says "Veronica is such a great person with a warm, outgoing personality. She has made such a great effort and it is truly great to see everything working out for her!"

\*Name changed for privacy.

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION Year ending June 2005

<u>Assets</u>	
Cash	29,038
Accounts Receivable	116,934
Trust Account	1,705
Prepaid Expenses	8,199
Deposits	5,620
Land, Building, Improvements & Equipment	589,314
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>770,810</b>
<u>Liabilities and Net Assets</u>	
Accounts Payable	13,597
Client Trust Account	21,405
Interest Payable	118,515
Notes Payable	455,188
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>609,005</b>
<u>Net Assets</u>	
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>161,805</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>770,810</b>

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

<u>Revenues, Gains, and Other Support</u>	
Grants & Contributions	187,624
Program Donations	138,970
Fees and Grants from Gov. Agencies	264,881
Interest Income	140
<b>Total Revenue, Gains and Other Support</b>	<b>591,615</b>
<u>Expenses</u>	
Program Services	521,489
Supporting Services	70,126
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>591,615</b>
<b>Net Assets at end of Year</b>	<b>161,805</b>



"A latte spurned  
is a life turned"

**Give up that latte once a week and do more than just yourself a favor!**

**Once a week, instead of buying that \$5 latte, donate that amount to the Los Angeles House of Ruth!**

**Your latte savings can feed one of our family for a month!**

**Still not convinced? Consider this:**

**\$5 per day (average cost of a latte and a muffin) x 52 weeks  
= \$260 per year**

**\$260 can feed one of our families  
(1 mother, 1 child) for a month!**



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Organization  
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*Los Angeles House of Ruth*

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*Winter 2005*

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**FEBRUARY 11th & 12th**  
**USED BOOK SALE**  
With a Special Saturday Night  
Wine & Cheese Social!  
*Join us to help raise funds for our families!*  
Only \$12.50 serves the needs of one  
person in our shelter per day!



Location: TBA

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS!**

**HOW YOU CAN HELP!**



If your work participates in the **UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN**, you can use your employee contribution to help provide shelter, food, and support to hundreds of homeless families through Los Angeles House of Ruth. To designate your United Way donation for us, simply write our account number #35419 on your "designation card".

We are especially in need of items to help our residents make a new start in permanent housing! We appreciate any and all help! Our current needs include:

- Large Items:** Kitchen Items (Stoves, Refrigerators), Couches, Beds (Twin & Double), Dining Room Sets
- Kids Items:** Clothes for girls & boys, Shoes, Toys, Videos in Spanish & English
- Baby Items:** Diapers & Wipes, Cribs, Clothes, Car seats, Bottles, Strollers, Formula, Baby Food Jars
- Apartment Start-Up Kits:** Furniture, Linens, Curtains, Pillows, Bedding, Appliances, and Kitchen and Bath Supplies
- Other Items:** Women's Clothes & Socks, Retail or Market Gift Certificates, Women's Hygiene Products, Cleaning Supplies, Food (the basics: rice, can goods, flour, beans)

**\*CASH FOR DAILY OPERATING EXPENSES - \$850/day to serve 12 women and their children**

**WE CAN PICK UP ANY DONATED ITEMS! Call Maria at (323) 266-4139**



**Set up that "Latte Fund Jar" at work! Collect latte savings and donate them to LA House of Ruth!**

**PLEASE POST!**