



Los Angeles House of Ruth

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2008

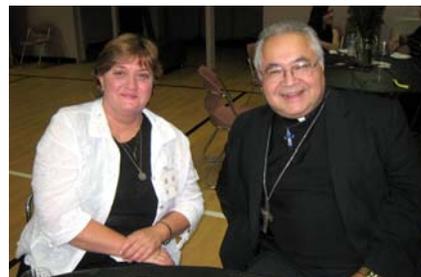
HOUSE OF RUTH CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF SERVICE!



House of Ruth Staff Members



Guests enjoying the tables



Sr Jennifer Gaeta & Bishop Gabino Zavala

In early November, Los Angeles House of Ruth held a special celebration Casino Night and Silent Auction to recognize the 30 year anniversary of our service to the homeless community and to raise funds to help us continue our mission. This event was organized by our board of directors, chaired by Annette Colefax and Karen MacFarlane, and was supported by many willing sponsors. Many long time supporters and first time guests attended this event in Encino to raise funds for the program and place bids on donated items such as signed prints by Chagall, jewelry, airplane rides, and vacation packages. Because of the generosity of sponsors and guests, we were successful in raising funds to support our shelter homes for food, clothing, and supplies for the women and children we serve.

The women that come to us have had many unfortunate circumstances in their lives and are forced to live below the federal poverty levels. Unemployment, underemployment, lack of affordable rentals, poor education and no family support results in few options for many young mothers with children. They suffer or are at-risk for spousal abuse, child abuse, health problems, and often have no one to turn to. Luckily, we know that the odds of success for those who come to House of Ruth are high and the best hand these homeless women and children tend to play in their lives is giving us a chance to help them on the road to a safe and secure life. We are proud of our unmatched record of keeping ninety-five percent of the families we serve in long-term permanent housing. Through our programs, we have helped over 3,000 women and children beat the odds and find stable, secure homes and lives.

At the event, many of our board and staff spoke about their involvement with House of Ruth and the response from those we serve. One of our counselors summed up the main sentiment of these women as she described how most mothers respond to us: *"Just about every woman that comes through our doors and sits down with us always tells us how grateful they are for us because now they do not have to worry about where their next meal will come from for their children, where they will sleep tonight and how they will survive another day on the streets."*

As Los Angeles House of Ruth celebrates 30 years of service to the homeless community this year, we measure our longevity and success not by years, but by the families we have served and the lives we have changed. It is amazing to think how far we have come, we started in 1978 with a one house transitional shelter and now are running three shelter houses in East Los Angeles. Soon we will be running five shelter houses serving 100 people each day!

Thank you for your support in helping feed, clothe, shelter and serve hundred of woman and children each year. With your continued support and prayers, we hope to continue to serve as the vital link to survival for homeless women and children for another 30 years and beyond.

House of Ruth Board of Directors

Betsy Azariah

Sr. Marilyn Binder, CSJ

Annette Colefax

Linda Gustafson

Barbara Hudziak

Ellen Johnston

Sharon Leahy

Karen Macfarlane

Leslie O'Brien

Tony Saldana

Deacon Gus Sebenius

Bishop Gabino Zavala

Sr. Jennifer Gaeta, SSS

Letter from the Director

Dear Dedicated Supporters and Friends:

As I look back over the past 15 years, it is touching to remember the faces of the mothers and children who have shared their lives and struggles with us. We say it is a blessing to do this work, which is more than true; it is a sacred walk we take. Women with children with no safe and secure housing? What an unbearable and unthinkable experience.

Living with persons in crisis is not easy and not difficult either, it is deeper than either end, it is a daily transformation for all of us. It is touching and intimate. We are in the streets, in the courts, in the jails at times, in the classrooms, in the therapy rooms, and at wonderful times, in the delivery rooms! We share as much as possible in the lives of our residents. We are there in all the difficult times because there is no one else close enough in their lives to be there with them. Through the presence of our staff, we are all there each and every day, helping to give a chance to the families we are blessed to serve.

Even as we share on these levels, we all return to the security of our homes each night. We have places to call home. And that is what 88,345 homeless persons in Los Angeles County need in order to have a decent future. Over these 30 years, we have assisted thousands of families in finding employment and safe, secure housing. Ninety-five percent of the families we serve are successful for many years into the future. They obtain success and work very hard to maintain that success.

Thanks to all of you who have made these years the phenomenal success that they have been. Toward a successful future...

With a grateful heart,

Sister Jennifer Gaeta, SSS

ELIZABETH'S STORY:

Another success story from Los Angeles House of Ruth

We often say that at Los Angeles House of Ruth, that the best measure of our success is the quality of life and level of self-sufficiency of past clients. We want to share with you the story of one former client who has been able to overcome poverty and homelessness and create a better life for herself and her seven children.

Elizabeth came to House of Ruth 11 years ago, scarcely over 21 years old to escape a bad domestic violence situation. She had been thinking about running for some time but did not know where to turn. She did not trust people and could not understand how people who were strangers to her would care enough about her and her children to take her in and help her out. She recalls, "I thought I would come to House of Ruth and people would not understand me and would be mean to me because I was a nobody to them." But she was relieved to find that was not the case. House of Ruth treats everyone like they are somebody because they are all special. At the time of her arrival, local children services had three of her four kids in custody because of the domestic violence issues. She felt lost and did not know what to do and how to get her kids back. The staff at House of Ruth welcomed her with open arms and she started to utilize the many services offered here such as the parenting classes, group and individual counseling and domestic violence classes. The only regret she has of her time at House of Ruth was that she did not pursue the continued education classes that were offered to her so she could improve her education. However, with the help of staff, within a year, she had her children back and was living in a rented apartment that House of Ruth helped her find and move into.

Over a decade later, Elizabeth now lives in Section 8 housing with her seven kids and still has a strong relationship with House of Ruth. Over the years House of Ruth has helped her when she would fall into harder times. She was given clothes for her children and Christmas presents and goodies every year so her 7 children would have an enjoyable Christmas. She was so proud to tell us that her oldest child just got accepted to college and knows that without the help from House of Ruth this would not be possible. The cycle of poverty has been broken for her family and her children have been able to live in a secure, safe home with a loving mother.

Elizabeth has followed the "pay it forward" model and now she volunteers her time at Los Angeles House of Ruth to help serve others who were in the situation she found herself in several years ago. Her heart is full of gratitude towards House of Ruth and love for those that now live at the shelters. She is a true example of one of the thousands of success stories at House of Ruth who have succeeded life because of the courage and dedication she had to find a better future for her children. Thirty years since the inception of Los Angeles House of Ruth, these are the stories that keep us going and striving to bring others to such peace and happiness.



ELIZABETH

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION TO END HOMELESSNESS!

- Donate by Check (enclosed envelope) or on-line (see back)
- Ask friends or family to **make a gift** to mark special occasions.
- Secure matching funds from your **employer**.
- Planned Giving:** Make a bequest in your will or set up a **charitable trust**
- Name *House of Ruth* the beneficiary of a **life insurance** policy.
- Make a **tribute gift**, honoring someone's special occasion (e.g., birthday) or remembering a loved one. (We'll send a letter of thanks and recognition.)
- Sponsor us** in any charitable giving program (employer, church, civic groups, etc)
- Volunteer** your time
- Donate materials** for our residents permanent housing (back)
- Help us out when you shop and search on-line by registering at:

www.Goodsearch.com
www.igive.com
www.mycause.com/HouseofRuth

GIVING HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER!

Just **SHOP** at **RALPHS**, **SWIPE** your **Ralphs Club Card**, and **MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

TO USE THE RALPHS COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION PROGRAM

- Simply register online at www.ralphs.com
- Click Services then click on School Programs
- Click on Community Contributions **LEARN MORE**
- Click on Participant **ENROLL**
- Be sure you have your Ralphs **REWARDS** Card(s) available (Do you use your phone number at the register? Call 800-660-9003 to get your **REWARDS** Card number.)
- ENROLL** with the NPO number for House of Ruth which is: **91096**
- TELL YOUR FRIENDS!**



Board Member Spotlight: Tony Saldana

It is rare when one can say that a man can truly identify a woman's plight, but in the case of Tony Saldana, a long time board member of Los Angeles House of Ruth, this is the case.

A decade ago, Tony was introduced to House of Ruth through a friend that was working as a case worker at the time. Coincidentally, he had recently been working with his company, Exide Technologies, to identify worthy causes in their community to help. When Tony heard about the mission and programs of Los Angeles House of Ruth, he was immediately and literally "on board."

It was a natural fit as Tony has always had a special spot in his heart for homeless families. He recognizes that most of society does not see these "forgotten families" and their plight to find food for their children, health care and education. He knows it is difficult enough to find these things as a homeless individual, but even more difficult for single mothers with children. Executive Director, Sister Jennifer Gaeta, is constantly impressed by the service and heartfelt dedication of Tony to his role on the board.

As a Board member, Tony is pleased to work with the board to help raise funds for Los Angeles House of Ruth. Most recently he helped with the fundraising efforts and served as the Master of Ceremonies for House of Ruth's 30th anniversary celebration. He is honored to be a part of a board that has a strong cohesiveness that is rarely found in boards of directors. The strength of the board and their trust of one another helps to reinforce the mission of all involved to work diligently on behalf of House of Ruth and better serve the homeless women and children that they are trying to help!



Tony Saldana (l) with fellow board member Bishop Zavala

When not serving Los Angeles House of Ruth or working as a Commercial Manager for Exide Technologies, Tony enjoys time with his wife, his daughter and his step-son. He also serves his community by teaching religion classes at St. Joseph's at La Puente and high school confirmation classes. He also enjoys traveling and has been to almost every state in the nation and several places overseas including the Orient and Europe. He declares that he is lucky to be part of a wonderful organization like House of Ruth and is impressed with the willingness of the staff to go the extra mile to help clients any time of the day or night. He is equally impressed by the vision and dedication the Executive Director, Sister Jennifer Gaeta, has as she continues to work towards expanding House of Ruth to serve even more homeless women and children in the years to come.

Tony feels that he is the one that has been truly blessed in his association with House of Ruth. He tells us that "after seeing the abuse and hardships of the families who come to House of Ruth, it gives me hope to see that there are good people in the world who seek causes greater than themselves and who are truly inspirational." He is constantly amazed at the generosity of individuals who go beyond themselves to help others in need. He cites the example of a generous donor, Bob Procop, a man who was so selfless and giving that he donated a house to House of Ruth to be used as a new shelter for homeless families. But we want Tony to know a fact that readers may already see— that Tony himself is one of those people who exemplifies the very thing he admires - he gives hope to those without hope! We are grateful for Tony and all that he has done and will do for the families at Los Angeles House of Ruth!



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Los Angeles House of Ruth

P.O. Box 33288
Los Angeles, CA 90033
Phone: (323) 266-4139
Fax: (323) 265-3945
Email: Ruth33288@aol.com

Winter 2008



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

A Special Thanks To... OUR DEDICATED STAFF

Jennifer Gaeta, SSS
Gloria Avalos
Cynthia Barrios
Sandra Ceja
Laura Estrada
Colene Florence
Teresa Gutierrez
Sandra L. Hernandez

Patricia McGowan SSS
Frances Pineda
Maricela Pineda
Blanca Ramirez
Veronica Ramirez
Fabiola Rodriquez
Jasmine Sanchez
Maria Luisa Sanchez
Beatriz Velasquez

Visit us on-line!

You can read more about us and donate on-line.

www.lahouseofruth.com

To donate on-line, go to the "Donations" Page and click on the picture below.



Current Needs!

We are always in need of items to help our residents make a new start in permanent housing! We appreciate any and all help!

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, canned goods, flour, beans) **CASH FOR DAILY OPERATING EXPENSES (\$850/day)**

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

PLEASE CUT & POST!