



Dear FID Community,

Another week and some more very big successes! The Women's Room celebrated a Welcome Mat party for Toam, a guest who is now housed, has a good job, and has a whole bunch of brand-new household items thanks to the volunteers of TWR. It is always a beautiful and emotional day when this happens. Good luck Toam - and always know that you have a home away from home at TWR.



Najwa had another stellar week - one lady housed and two more with applications submitted, which should come through by early next week. One of the ladies is going to the wonderful bridge housing community in which four of our TWR guests have already been placed - a community within a community. The other two ladies are awaiting final approval to move into a brand-new women's shared location in Hollywood, which became available just this week. Thanks to the hard work, ongoing resource gathering, and connections that our Outreach Team are developing, this kind of success is becoming more and more possible. Go team!

Debbie, our Homelessness Prevention Manager, is hard at work keeping people from being evicted. This week, she was

able to help a person not only from becoming homeless, but also by securing her ability to move into a building where she will become the landlord and get free housing - and the place has Section 8 units available that both she and William can now access. Win-win!

It is these kinds of weeks that provide not only pride in our work but also illustrate the growing integration of our programs. As I enter my fourth year at FID, and with the growth and expansion of our services, the staff and I are continuously evaluating what is working and where we can improve. Here are just a few examples:

- Marlene and Denisse are in the middle of a five-month intensive case-management course, deepening their skills in order to provide stronger services to our guests in TWR. And, beginning in the next few weeks, they will start to share that knowledge with others on the staff.
- Najwa is now spending two hours every Wednesday in TWR so that she can talk directly with women who are ready for housing, and work with them on a regular schedule.
- We are examining the idea of having Scott, our Outreach Worker, spend time at the Bad Weather Shelter in order to talk to clients who may be open to going through the CES process to be in the pipeline for housing. This will allow him to make relationships that he can follow up on when seeing these folks on the streets. This is in addition to having a regular social worker on site, as well as more case managers and a weekly nursing clinic.
- Debbie is partnering with William, our Housing Locator, to share information and connections with landlords and property managers. This will strengthen both of their programs.

Together with the staff and the board of directors, we are constantly, and effectively, looking at where we can improve and the direction of FID should be taking in the future.

For all of you who support us, I want you to know that your time and treasure is making a difference in so many lives. [Please give generously](#) throughout the year so we can continue to make positive strides to help those who are most vulnerable in our community.

Finally, there was a beautiful memorial service for Donna Sparks, a long-time volunteer in The Women's Room, who passed away. Thanks to Jackie Knowles, Donna's family, former and current volunteers, and staff came together for a reunion and celebration of her life and dedication to TWR. There is a copy of the collage and her story below. May she

rest in peace and may her memory be for a blessing.

Blessings and have a lovely weekend,
Rabbi Joshua



P.S. [Reserve your bike now](#) for our Spin Class fundraising event on Feb 23rd! Details below.

As always, we can only operate with your help!

DONATE

FRIENDS
IN
DEED*

Get ready for 45 minutes of sweat and fun!
Don't miss out on this fun event!

[illegible]

Reserve your bike now!
(Donations also accepted)

All proceeds will benefit Friends In Deed's programs – Food Pantry, Bad Weather Shelter, The Women's Room, Street Outreach and Homeless Prevention Programs.
www.friendsindeedpas.org





RIP Donna Sparks



Donna Cooper Eichelberger Sparks passed from this life January 3, 2020. She will be remembered by many as a compassionate educator and teacher, an advocate for many less fortunate than herself, an artist, a writer, a traveler and a loving wife, mother and grandmother.



Donna was a native Californian, with family roots going as far back as the mid 1800's. She was born in 1937 in Fresno, California to Herb and Doris Cooper. An only child, she was doted upon by her parents and grandparents who lived in the area. One of her favorite childhood recollections was staying with her Grandma Ada and Papa Cooper during the summer at their walk up flat over the hardware store in Berkeley. The best part was the giant porcelain bathtub, that was only accessible by crawling through a huge window at the end of a long outside hallway, "So fun". And of course all of her memories of her dear friends from Fresno, driving along Van Ness on those warm balmy valley nights and the seaside getaways with these "Seabright Sisters."



She received her diploma from Fresno State University in 1957, and shortly after married her high-school sweetheart James P. Eichelberger. Jim was in the army at that time, so they called Bartlesville, Oklahoma home for the first few years of their marriage. After Jim's discharge the young couple moved several times, and added two young children to the family; Derrik in 1960, and Anne in 1962. Eventually they settled down in Glendale, California in 1964.

While raising her children, Donna was also an elementary school teacher for many years. Eventually she set her sights on greater challenges and got her Master's Degree in Education from Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena. She had a keen interest in bilingual education and worked as a teacher/specialist in the Glendale School District before becoming an Administrator.



She and Jim divorced in 1987. Shortly thereafter she dated and ultimately married Wayne Sparks, a principal at Horace Mann Elementary School in Glendale. Wayne was a great supporter and their marriage was a happy one. She retired from her Administrative position and became a freelance consultant, traveling around the state helping school districts with their programs. She and Wayne also traveled frequently, including trips to Jamaica, Europe and Kauai.

During this time, Donna started painting in watercolors and participating in writing workshops. She had been interested in art from a young age, but at last had time to pursue her passion. She was delighted to have her work exhibited in several group shows as well as having her writing selected for inclusion in the book, "The Courage to Write, An Anthology."

In 2003 Wayne passed away. Despite the loss Donna continued on, spirited by her many friends, her children and grandchildren (Jared, Wilson, Ruby and Aliah) as well as expressing herself through art and writing. It was also during this time that she became an active participant in the Women's Room, a refuge for women facing homelessness or abusive relationships.

"It just came tumbling through - just be me, give your heart, we're in this together. We're women, we're moms, we're sisters, daughters and grandmas we have the same hopes and dreams. What a wonderful journey for me. I love these ladies, I've made lasting friendships, laughed, cried, hugged it's changed me. We are strong, we are mighty, we are women." - Donna Sparks

Donna's story. Her contribution to The Women's Room was greatly valued.



Toam at her "Welcome Mat"



Practical and beautiful gifts for Toam in her new home



Doug with Anton and Nika, who were bringing food collected through High Point Academy's "Souper"-bowl food drive



Volunteer Suzie, pictured here with longstanding volunteer Brooke, is bringing needlework skills to The Women's Room!



Najwa with TWR guest Jill, who moves into bridge housing today!

