



# FID IN FOCUS

*Fall Newsletter 2020*

*A message from incoming Board Chair*

**Bret Schaefer**



I am honored to be the incoming Board Chair of FID, following Richard Cheung, who has been an incredible leader of this organization for the past several years. I have been serving as Treasurer, and so have seen the tremendous growth that Friends In Deed has experienced, both financially and programmatically. We are serving so many more people in need, but providing our critical services with the same hallmark compassion, connection, and dignity.

Of course, during these extremely difficult times of COVID, there have been unprecedented challenges. I am proud of our staff, volunteers and board of directors for stepping up and meeting these challenges head on, adapting our programs to meet the needs of our community, and doing it so successfully. The foundation for the long-term success of FID is the dedicated support we receive from the community both in terms of volunteers and financial support. We are especially gratified by the increased level of donations we have received in response to the economic hardship our most vulnerable neighbors have experienced this year. I am hopeful that our current challenges will inspire the community to support redoubled efforts to serve the homeless and disadvantaged in Pasadena.

So, thanks to all you for being part of our team! I look forward to serving FID in the coming year and with your help we will continue to do together what we cannot do alone.

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*Stories from the programs*

# Timely support



## Creating communities during COVID - Kenneth's Story

Kenneth's mother died a year before his release from jail, which meant that he re-entered society with almost no support network. Friends helped at first, but eventually he was forced to sleep in his car.

Somehow he got hold of a Street Outreach Team phone number, and spoke with Najwa. About a week later - as he was trying to

decide where to park for the night - he got a call back telling him to go to a motel in Rosemead *right now* - Najwa had managed to get him a place!

Since then, some of the motel residents have formed a little community around Kenneth's cooking. He has bought himself a hotplate and when we spoke with him on the phone he was preparing a fantastic breakfast of hash browns and eggs for himself and his COVID bubble.

Najwa has been working hard, in partnership with other agencies, to find permanent housing for Kenneth. The funding is in place - all that remains is to find an apartment. Kenneth says the thing he is looking forward to most is the relief of having a permanent place to live. He's confident that, with this vitally important piece of the support jigsaw in place, he will now be able to make a positive contribution to society.

## A TWR lifeline - Ramona's story

Ramona was a licensed vocational nurse in California for 19 years but she let her license go due to stress.

Having lost her job she went from making \$4,000 a month to nothing, and so lost her housing. She was homeless for two-and-a-half years, living in her car and taking home health care side jobs here and there to make enough for gas and food.

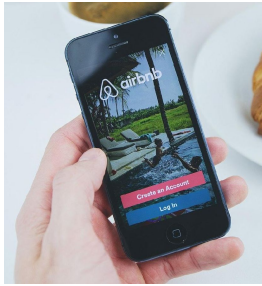


Ramona would go to the laundromat to wash up and make herself look presentable. She found out about TWR from googling for women's shelters. At TWR she would shower, eat, and rest, and work with our case manager who was able to get her shoes and other small necessities for work.

Friends In Deed lost touch with Ramona when TWR was briefly closed during the initial stages of the COVID lockdown. However, with excellent timing, on the day before she had a job interview

Ramona found out we had reopened. She was able to shower, do laundry, and get an ACTS voucher for some scrubs to be ready for her interview.

She came back the following day, very happy to report that she got the live-in home healthcare job!



### When a welcome break turns bad - Madeleine's story

Most of us think of Airbnb as a resource we use for vacations, or maybe for a business trip, but for some it ends up being the only way they can find somewhere to live. Madeleine is in her early sixties, has no family, and relies on benefits and whatever work she can find to make ends meet. For a while she was driving for Uber Eats.

Madeleine has been relying on Airbnb for a while, and was lucky enough to find a place where she could stay, within her means, for six months. She breathed a sigh of relief, thinking she had housing security at least for the foreseeable future.

The COVID-19 stimulus check was another welcome break - until a letter arrived the very next month informing her that she had gone over her income limit and her benefits would be cut! Even though the stimulus check is a one-off payment, an extraordinary number of people have been affected this way, and the whole lockdown situation has created long delays in getting the mess sorted out.

Fortunately Friends In Deed's Homelessness Prevention Program - under the direction of our new HPP manager Ryan - has been able to help Madeleine meet her rent. We are also hoping to help her resolve the problem of longer-term accommodation.

*It is through your generosity that we are able to provide these programs and other services*

DONATE

*Stories from our volunteers*

## Stepping up to the plate

### Giving as much as she gets - Cassandra's story

Cassandra's association with Friends In Deed began eight years ago when she moved in to a new home just up

the road from Friends In Deed House. Like so many of our community, she is determined to give as much as she gets. She and her family were in need, and were grateful for the groceries we were able to offer them. But Cassandra was not prepared to leave it at that, and she also got involved as a volunteer, helping out first with Operation Gobbler at Thanksgiving, then with our Christmas for the Kids toy drive.

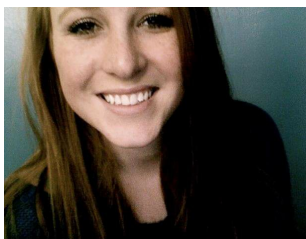


The pressures placed on the Food Pantry by the COVID-19 outbreak meant that, for a while, the Food Pantry stopped attempting to register families who were coming to us for groceries. However, as the situation continued, it became clear that we could not properly support our clients without a formal registration process. Cassandra has stepped up to the plate, coming in every day the pantry is open to register clients, leaving the pantry staff free to concentrate on making sure that everyone gets fed.

Talking to Cassandra made us aware of one of the less tangible benefits FID's Food Pantry has to offer. As important as the groceries, she says, was the opportunity to meet other people in the same situation as herself. Everyone, no matter what their circumstances, race, or religion, is treated with dignity as part of the Friends In Deed community.

The aspect of her involvement with FID that has made the greatest impression on Cassandra is helping out with Christmas for the Kids. She says the pick-up event is really special, with the plates of cookies, the warm cider, and the excited children who might not, without this program, get any gift at all.

Stacey Cutshaw, Food Pantry Associate, writes: "Cassandra has been a good neighbor, client, and a trusted friend of The Friends In Deed Food Pantry for many years. I was delighted to work with her when I joined the pantry last year, and I quickly learned to appreciate her straightforward approach to problem solving. She immediately became a respected confidant and she continues to mentor me on more effective ways to serve our clients. Cassandra truly embodies the Friends In Deed spirit of doing together what we cannot do alone.



### **A new perspective - Siobhan's story**

Until recently Siobhan was living in Europe. She returned to the States to help out when her sister was having a baby and has ended up sitting out the COVID-19 crisis in Pasadena.

She describes her involvement with FID as good timing - her



availability coincides with a shortage of volunteers in The Women's Room while we are unable to use the skills and time of so many of our senior volunteers. Siobhan now volunteers twice a week, and feels that this consistency is helpful - she is a familiar face for a group of people for whom familiarity and stability are in short supply. She has also discovered that a lot of the TWR ladies have daughters of around her age, and this too is something they relate to and enjoy.

Siobhan appreciates the perspective that volunteering at FID has given her. While for many of us the COVID-19 crisis has created a series of irritations - not being able to go to the movies or a favorite restaurant - for our TWR guests the problems have been far more profound. In particular, those periods when TWR was forced to briefly close really impacted the wellbeing of some of our ladies. Siobhan says the experience of volunteering at FID has made her take a step back and consider the impact of the virus on a whole different population.

Marlene Martinez, TWR Director, writes: "Siobhan has been a great addition to our TWR family - she comes twice a week with a smile on her face. From serving a warm meal to taking a few moments out of her time to listen to a guest's day, you'll always see Siobhan eager and ready to help out in any way she can. It has been a blessing to have had Siobhan join our team."

## For the pantry



### Operation Gobbler

The Food Pantry will gratefully receive donations of turkeys for Thanksgiving. **Please do not drop off prior to Saturday November 21.** For more information please email Tim at [pantry@friendsindeedpas.org](mailto:pantry@friendsindeedpas.org).

### Christmas for the Kids

If you would like to provide a holiday gift for one or more of the children in our Pantry families, please email Tim at [pantry@friendsindeedpas.org](mailto:pantry@friendsindeedpas.org).





[Click here to get your own Friends In Deed yard sign! We will deliver!](#)

## In Memoriam



Dorothy Christ

It was always a pleasure to interact with Dorothy. She had a deep and innate kindness in her that was immediately recognizable. She was passionate about the help she gave and the eagerness of her generosity flowed effortlessly.

Two years ago, Jackie Knowles, one of the founders of The Women's Room, threw a party celebrating Dorothy and honoring our amazing volunteers. That day we learned that Dorothy spent her life in service to altruistic causes. We had not known about her many charitable endeavors outside of Friends In Deed and found it truly inspiring. We got to see more sides of Dorothy that day than just the one we knew. Slideshows of her family, friends, travel, and the adventures she had, truly drove home what a life of love she led. Dorothy will be remembered and truly missed by everyone at Friends In Deed.



Janet Woods

Janet Woods lit up the The Women's Room every time she came for her shift. She was always

accompanied by her dog, Toby, and the combination of animal therapy and Janet's loving presence had tremendous impact.

Janet oversaw the downstairs area during her shifts and brought a wonderful calm to this busy area. Her presence made the experience more than just doing laundry and taking a shower. The guests knew that they also had a friend they could talk to. Janet was so special and will truly be missed and remembered with love.



#### PROGRAMS

The Women's Room (TWR) - Daytime shelter for homeless and at-risk women  
The Food Pantry - Dignified grocery shopping experience for 300+ households weekly  
The Bad Weather Shelter (BWS) - Weather-activated shelter offers a hot meal and warm cot for up to 140 guests  
Homeless Prevention Program (HPP) - Short- and medium-term rental support to prevent eviction  
Street Outreach - Team of workers on the streets engaging with our neighbors experiencing homelessness, and connecting them to services

#### STAFF

Rabbi Joshua Levine Grater, Executive Director  
Marty Campolo, Director of Finance and Grants  
Marlene Martinez, Program Director (TWR)  
Tim Nistler, Program Director (Pantry)  
William Shelby, Program Director (BWS, Street Outreach), Housing Locator  
Ryan Greer, Program Manager (HPP)  
Jane Armbruster, Program Associate (TWR)  
Stacey Cutshaw, Program Associate (Pantry)  
Najwa Payton Jones, Street Outreach Specialist  
Fabian Gonzales, Street Outreach Worker  
Helen Angove, Operations Manager  
Doug Haught, Security & Grounds  
Coty Dietel, Food Pantry Aide

#### BOARD

Richard Cheung, Co-chair  
Bret Schaefer, Co-chair and Treasurer  
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Debby Singer, Secretary  
Pamela Marx, Immediate Past President  
Rev. George Hines  
Kathy Simpson  
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Tim Howett  
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Jonathan Webster  
Ervin Galvan  
Kevin Bourland  
Christopher Pelch

#### CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

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Alan and Lin Vlacich  
Mark and Sandy Esensten  
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Erica Fishman

Stacy Santeramo  
Richard Cheung  
Ron and Sue Dietel  
Woody and Sofia Hain  
Margaret Leong  
Debra and Ernie Mansfield

Barbara Ryder-Levinson

**LEGACY SOCIETY**

Connie Holguin  
Celia Leaver

**FRIENDS**  
IN  
DEED \*