



FRIENDS
IN
DEED*

PRESENTS

JAZZ
on the
SCREEN
"All Jazzed Up to Serve"



FID IN FOCUS

Summer Newsletter 2020

Stories from the programs

Getting it done - fast!



In the blink of an eye - Wendi's Story

Wendi said she "didn't have words" to describe all her feelings about the help FID was able to give her, but actually she was amazingly articulate about her story and the reasons she wants it to be told. She feels there are many misconceptions about the situation she found herself in - homeless, with a disability and a substance abuse problem - and she wants those misconceptions to be addressed.

Coming from an affluent, educated, middle-class background, homelessness was never a situation Wendi expected to have to deal with. But her father passed away, there were legal issues she had to deal with, and she was wrestling with an eating disorder. It happened, she said, in "the blink of an eye."

She had no idea, beforehand, of the sheer terror involved in being homeless - the fact that it makes you so terribly vulnerable and people sense that, and can take advantage of it so easily. Wendi spoke about how hard it is to be "displaced all the time." She never had a space of her own - she constantly had to be on guard, reacting to a dangerous and fluctuating environment, without ever having a safe place from which she could shut it all out. Her mental health worsened to include severe PTSD, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

Wendi described herself travelling all over the US (including Hawaii) trying to find a place of safety. In the end she came to Los Angeles, where she was able to find a place in a sober living facility. At the time of writing she is celebrating six months of sobriety. It was her doctor who made the referral to Friends In Deed, but when he encouraged Wendi to call (having paved the way by contacting the Street Outreach Team himself, first), Wendi was more confident to do so due to the fact that she had already got to know us via the Food Pantry. In fact, for a while, Tim (Pantry Director) and Najwa (Street Outreach) were liaising with each other to make sure Wendi got all the help she needed.

Najwa was able to get Wendi a temporary place to stay during the COVID-19 crisis via Pasadena's Emergency Motel Program. To get permanent housing is a lot more difficult, but Najwa says that Wendi is the first client she's worked with who managed to get all the necessary paperwork together straight away. Najwa is confident that she will get Wendy into permanent housing in record time.

When you're homeless, Wendi says, it's very hard to stay focused and on-track enough to get yourself out of the situation. But Friends In Deed is sticking with her to see the whole process through. Wendi told us, "I can wake up and feel there's hope."

STOP PRESS: We heard this morning (Friday 31) that Wendi has a place in permanent housing!

Rent moratorium couldn't help - Cyndi's story

Cyndi is a medical field professional whose hours were reduced in December 2019, and as a result she got behind on her rent. She was hoping she'd be able to catch up, but then the COVID-19 crisis hit, and she lost her job. To make things worse, several family members, on whom she would normally be able to depend, contracted COVID-19 and were relying on *her* for help instead!



Even the Pasadena rent moratorium did not help Cyndi, because that only applies to rent arrears that have built up since the stay-at-home order began, and Cyndi's problems predated that.

In an epic 24-hour turnaround, Homelessness Prevention Manager Debbie managed to rush through the admin work to get Cyndi's rent arrears paid in time to avoid her being evicted. Debbie is now connecting Cyndi with other resources to help her make sure she does not face the same situation again in the future.



"Real" food - Christine and Alex's story

Neither Christine nor Alex is in good health. Both are disabled, with limited mobility, and their only source of income is SSI. With the advent of the COVID-19 crisis they became more-or-less stranded at home. They have a mobility scooter, which helps a little, but even that is out of action at the moment! But

Christine and Alex have been using the Food Pantry for nearly three years and, through some good inter-organizational teamwork, Friends In Deed and the Tournament of Roses have been able to make sure they continue to receive regular deliveries of groceries.

Usually, when things are easier, it is Christine who goes to get the groceries - but Alex says that on the rare occasions he turns up at FID House even he is recognized and welcomed. He describes the food they get as "*real* food," better than from any other pantry they've used. They also appreciate the effort that the pantry staff and volunteers make to help them with their dietary needs - they will put aside low-sodium foods for them if they have something available. Alex says that the personal touch means a great deal to them.

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

DONATE



PRESENTS

JAZZ on the SCREEN

"All Jazzed Up to Serve"

This Year's Jazz on the Green Goes Virtual to Jazz on the Screen!

Tuesday, August 25th -
Saturday, August 29th, 2020

With Live Video Event on Saturday at 7:30pm

www.bidpal.net/fidjazz2020

HONOREES

First Congregational Church of Pasadena

Grocery Outlet, Altadena

Oliver and Susan Stark

Lifetime Achievement Award

Bishop Beverly Shamana

For information, sponsorship opportunities or
to donate to the silent auction, please e-mail
office@friendsindeedpas.org or call 626.797.2402 ext. 201.
www.friendsindeedpas.org

* Doing together what we cannot do alone

Stories from our volunteers

Prom dresses and restaurant cuisine

Prom dress advice - Deijah's Story

Deijah started volunteering with Friends In Deed two years ago, while she was still in high school. She's now an arriving sophomore in college, but uncertain, just now, about what her future holds in terms of classes. She has been making the most of her summer break volunteering with The Women's Room and, at a time when our regular cohort of volunteers is seriously depleted (no seniors are volunteering at present), her help has been greatly valued!

Deijah found FID when she was looking for an organization with which to do a project during her senior year of high school. TWR appealed because she wanted to focus on an area that she felt was under-recognized. She likes the connection she feels she has made with our ladies and says it is a privilege to share their stories.

It is not just the ladies who share their stories, however! One of Deijah's favorite memories of TWR is a time when she was asking the ladies their advice on her prom dress. Together they looked at different dresses on her phone, and discussed what colors would suit her best. I think you can agree, from the picture above, that they made a great choice!

This may only be a small story, but it illustrates something important about what we try to do in The Women's Room. Along with providing necessities like food and showers, we also try to provide a small slice of ordinary life for these women who live in such difficult and traumatic conditions.



Professional chef provides lunch - Rae's story

Rae has always tried to make volunteering a part of her life - she says it's a way of being part of her community and getting to know it. When she moved to Pasadena in October, to a new home only a short distance from Friends In Deed House, The Women's Room was the obvious choice.

As a professional chef, Rae's contribution to The Women's Room is freshly prepared, healthy food, all made from scratch. For a two-week period during the early part of lockdown she provided lunch every day! She says she makes sure that the

food she provides is the same quality she would serve in a restaurant, and she tries to use a variety of ingredients and flavors that our guests may not otherwise have the chance to experience. She says she wants our guests to know that they are cared for, and to make them smile.

Rae doesn't often spend time with our Women's Room ladies herself; she finds it reminds her uncomfortably of a time when she was in need herself. But there was one occasion when she was running late and was still at TWR when the clients began to arrive. Hearing their appreciation first hand made a big impact on Rae, as did the feedback they were able to give her, helping her to tailor what she cooks to their dietary needs and concerns.

Along with Deijah and Rae, The Women's Room would like to thank Anat Bruck, [Villa Gardens](#) (especially Dawneen Lorange, Director of Marketing and Irma Gallegos, Catering Manager), Jochen Strack and his wife, the Homeschool Moms (especially Mishele Myers), and all the many volunteers who have sent money for our hot meal program and donated items for "snack bags" and toiletries for our guests.

Reevaluating her life - Debbie's story

Debbie's co-workers will be interested to see her photo in this newsletter because none of them have ever seen her without her mask on! She is one of a new cohort of volunteers who have come to us since being furloughed or laid off during the lockdown. Mishele Myers, a friend of Debbie's and one of our most dedicated long-term supporters, suggested that Debbie approach FID as a place to volunteer and we are very glad she did!



It has been a process of careful thought, alongside trial and error, figuring out how best to manage the pantry under the new conditions. Debbie has been a part of that, adapting to new circumstances and suggesting improvements to the efficiency of the system. She appreciates the way the Pantry volunteers and staff work as a team in which everyone's suggestions are valued.

Debbie says she feels "so blessed every time I go - it's really rewarding." She is enjoying getting to know the regulars and their dietary needs and tries to set aside things like gluten-free items for those she knows will need them.

Her future is uncertain - she's not sure whether her furlough will continue or if she'll eventually be laid off - and she says that the experience of helping out at Friends In Deed has really made her reevaluate her career. If she doesn't find herself back in her old job she may pursue a new career in the nonprofit sector!

The Food Pantry would like to thank: Ryan, Goh, Kellie-Bea, Cathy, Claudia, Maria, Glenda, Stef, Mary, Mark B, Ingrid, Mazie, Debbie, Sydney, Bolaji, John, Pierre, Rebecca, Eva, Matt, Gerry, J.P., Mark E, Mark P, Susie, David, and numerous City of Pasadena employees (Vivian, Omar, Charlotte, Angelina, Anaye, Nancy, Victor, Javier, Jesus, Camea).



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

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

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
Debbie Turner, Program Director (HPP)
Jane Armbruster, Program Associate (TWR)
Stacey Cutshaw, Program Associate (Pantry)
Najwa Payton Jones, Street Outreach Specialist
Helen Angove, Operations Manager
Doug Haight, Security & Grounds
Coty Dietel, Food Pantry Aide

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