

**FRIENDS  
IN  
DEED\***



## FID IN FOCUS

*Winter Newsletter 2021*

### From the Executive Director

Dear Friend,

As we begin 2021, I know we are all praying that health and recovery returns to our nation and the world. Here at FID we have worked hard to serve our clients and guests with compassion, love, and dignity throughout this most difficult time. And of course, we couldn't do any of it without you and your support!

I want to personally thank each and every one of you who supported us in 2020 - we raised more money than ever in our history, and we added nearly 1300 first-time donors! On behalf of the board, staff, and of course all of the people we are able to serve, we are beyond grateful and appreciative. We are humbled by the trust and confidence you place in us with your time and treasure.

And now, we begin again! We have some exciting plans and new ideas coming soon, so stay tuned, stay engaged and stay connected.

Blessings,

Rabbi Joshua



# A little help, at the right time



## The journey to stability - Kristina's story

Kristina came to LA straight after college and was making a successful life for herself until she got laid off and found she was ineligible for unemployment benefits. Fortunately she heard about Friends In Deed, and was

able to get food from the Pantry as our then Homelessness Prevention Manager Monica helped her get caught up with her rent and she searched for a new job.

Once she'd found a job it seemed like Kristina's life was right back on track - until her new company lost a major contract and she was laid off once again. Fortunately, FID was also there again to help! This time Kristina worked with Debbie, who was once again able to help her with her rent.

Kristina now works as a phone technician for AT&T. She has held the job for over a year, she has bought a car, and her life is in a stable place. She is now coordinating the collection of toiletries for The Women's Room, wanting to give back a little in return for the help she received. Kristina says the life lesson she has learned from her experiences is to "never be afraid to ask for help" because you don't know what help might be out there.

## Getting an education - Gwendolyn's story

Gwendolyn was the caregiver for her elderly aunt. Sadly, her aunt passed away and Gwen had to leave her home. For a while she was able to live on the money her aunt left her, but she couldn't find a job and she ended up living on the street. She was too afraid to sleep at night so she would sleep during the day and spend her nights walking.

Both the Salvation Army and UCLA were able to give Gwen a little help - food and a bus pass - and eventually Gwen found a place at a shelter in Pasadena. This has not always been the easiest place to live in, but Gwen persevered. During this time she found Friends In Deed and The Women's Room.



The shelter in which Gwen has been living encouraged her to return

to education, and so she started attending classes at PCC - and did extremely well. Marlene saves food for Gwen so she has something to eat at TWR after her classes are done for the day, and the Pantry was able to help her with school supplies. Now Gwen has a place at USC for the fall semester, and an approved grant that will cover her college tuition!

Gwen is anxious about the safety of attending school this fall and may defer for a year and take a job to tide her over in the meantime. We are delighted that she plans to continue to come to The Women's Room, and hope that she will continue to make use of the support we offer as she makes her dreams a reality.



### A permanent home - Richardia's story

We last told Richardia's story a year ago. She was a long-term Women's Room client, homeless after having been shuttled back and forth between various places and various family members, including a cousin who stole her food stamps, took her money, and, eventually, threw her out. The Street Outreach Program was able to find her a place in a transitional housing facility, where they would work with her to find her permanent housing. The picture above shows how much joy she was feeling at the time!

We are delighted to be able to tell you that Richardia now has her own apartment in East LA! Her transitional housing facility has worked with her to get her own place, and even helped her with furnishing it. It is conveniently next to a metro station, which means that Richardia may be able to start coming to The Women's Room again. We are delighted that Richardia called Najwa to tell her this has happened - not least because that means Richardia has a strong enough relationship with FID that if she struggles again in the future she will reach out to us for help. For so many of our clients a little help at the right time can be key to preventing the development of far worse problems.

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

DONATE

*Stories from our volunteers*

# Healthcare and laughter

"The homeless nurse" - Joyce's story

As a public health nurse for the City of Pasadena, Joyce had a couple of successes with getting homeless folks treated for TB. Tuberculosis treatment is a long process requiring many medical appointments, so it is particularly challenging to treat members of the homeless community. Joyce discovered both that she had a flair for doing health care in the homeless community and also that she really loved it. She became known as “the homeless nurse.”



Joyce was invited to speak to a group of women at All Saints Church who were planning to set up a program to support homeless women. As a visual aid for her talk, she brought a bunch of wild poppies in a tin can - a reminder that, just like the rest of us, even folks living on the streets will reach out for beauty. The program became The Women’s Room at Friends In Deed, and when Joyce visited it several years later and saw TWR’s poppy logo she knew that her message had been heard.

It was probably inevitable that Joyce would start volunteering at FID after her retirement. She says it “feels like the right place for me.” She really enjoys sharing her health background with the TWR guests, answering questions and comments, and helping those who need it to access better health care. She’s a hugely valued volunteer, one of the first older volunteers to return despite the added risks of the pandemic.



#### **A welcome break from online schooling - Adrienne's story**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic Adrienne has been at home managing her kids' online learning, but felt she needed to be doing something more - something where she could feel like she was giving back. A friend introduced her to Friends In Deed, and Adrienne has been volunteering at the Food Pantry since October, bringing her organizational skills, energy, and a lot of laughs to the community.

Adrienne recently helped with our Christmas for the Kids event. She says it was awesome to be able to bring so much joy to so many children, and to receive their appreciation in return. She says Friends In Deed is a “great spot” and it makes her “happy to be there.”

# Mollifying hunger

## Changing lives through action - Molly L.'s story

Molly L. writes:

"My name is Molly L. and my family has taught me that everyone belongs and everyone matters. I have Down Syndrome and sometimes I have to work harder to achieve my dreams. But, I can do that because I am really lucky to have people who love me and when I am stuck I have people who will help me. I belong to Club 21 Learning and Resource Center and it is also like a family to me. My family believes that we all need each other and that we can change lives by our love and our actions. My heart has always been hurt when I see people who do not have a home. It breaks my heart and I wanted to help. Our friend, Vicki Thompson, who helps so many people, told us about Friends in Deed and that they help people who are having a hard time. So, I decided making food packets would be something I can do to help people who have needs. Many friends helped donate items and then I put them together. We also keep several in our car so we can give them out when we see people in need. I love doing this!"



## A summer windfall becomes a winter windfall for FID families - Molly M.'s story

Accountancy major Molly M. had a bit of a windfall this summer - much to her surprise the claims specialist firm she had worked for in the summer of 2019 needed her help again. She had not expected to have the opportunity to earn any money during the pandemic, and felt herself to be very blessed.

Prior to starting college Molly was a student at Westridge School. At Westridge they have a strong Service Learning Program, for which Molly served as the Service Learning Representative. This clearly had a profound effect on her because as the holidays approached, with all the challenges they bring for the disadvantaged in our community, she took her summer savings and spent them on food staples for the Friends In Deed's Food Pantry. Under the influence of her mom - a dental hygienist - she also invested in toothbrushes and toothpaste, which are much sought after items at the Pantry. Thank you, Molly!

# 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) - Providing cold-weather support for our neighbors experiencing homelessness

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

Lindsey Reed, BWS Program Associate

Helen Angove, Operations Manager

Doug Haught, Security & Grounds

Coty Dietel, Food Pantry Aide

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