



Quarterly Newsletter

From the Board President

Dear Friend,

When we say "doing together what we cannot do alone" one of the clearest ways we live out this slogan is through our partnerships and volunteers. This week is Volunteer Appreciation Week, and while we celebrate our volunteers all year long, we welcome every opportunity to shout out and thank the hundreds of volunteers who give of their time and talents to help Friends In Deed serve our local community. On behalf of the entire board and all those we serve, thank you to all our amazing volunteers.

Friends In Deed has some exciting events coming up in the next couple weeks through local partnerships. We invite you to join us for the [Pasadena Mayor's Interfaith Prayer Breakfast](#) on Thursday, May 5th at the Pasadena Convention Center, and also at [Friends In Cheese: An Evening at Agnes Restaurant and Cheesery](#) with proceeds benefiting Friends In Deed.

We hope you enjoy the stories below, which truly exemplify the people behind the scenes and the humans we help every single day.

In service,

Bret Schaefer
Board President, Friends In Deed



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

Donate today

Join the Legacy Society

Stories from Our Team

Elaine's Story - Carrying On Through Many Changes

As a long-time volunteer in the Food Pantry, Elaine has seen a lot of changes. She remembers when money was desperately tight, when we relied on volunteers' own cars for picking up bulk food donations, and when Tim had to rush out to buy the cheapest possible hotdogs just so we would have some kind of protein to put in people's shopping bags. [Read more...](#)



Some of our lovely volunteers during Volunteer Appreciation Week!





Nishanthi's Story - Balancing Expedience and Compassion

If it takes the same resources to house ten people who have only recently lost their homes as it does to house one “difficult” client who has been living on the streets for decades, then should we not concentrate on the ten “easy” clients? Many organizations do. But one of the things that FID board member Nishanthi Kurukulasuriya values about her involvement with Friends In Deed is that FID does try to find a balance. [Read more...](#)

Stories from Our Programs

Cheynelle's Story - A Change in Perspective

Cheynelle has always valued her freedom. She rebelled against her adopted family and chose a life outside conventional society, living for a while in a shelter on the side of an LA freeway.

However, Cheynelle became a mother, and with that came a change of perspective. She says she was a “grown-ass child” herself, unprepared for the responsibilities of parenthood. [Read more...](#)



Vanessa's Story - Getting Out of the Hole

Vanessa felt like she was in a hole she couldn't get out of. She lost loved ones, she was involved in traumatic family situations, she became



depressed, and she was struggling to hold down a job. She had friends who were willing to help, but she felt bad putting so much weight on them, so she “stepped out on her own” and began living on the streets. On and off, Vanessa was unhoused for around seven years. [Read more...](#)

Pepper and Lindsey's Story - Old Friends

Pepper - the “Mayor of Skid Row” - is a charismatic and well-known figure in downtown Los Angeles. FID staff member Lindsey got to know him ten years ago, when she used to make weekly trips to Skid Row with her family to give out food and supplies. A determined individualist, Pepper was adamant about not receiving any help, but he and Lindsey did become very good friends. [Read more...](#)



Nicole's Story - Escaping Exploitation

Nicole turned up at The Women’s Room dragging an enormous suitcase behind her and with nowhere to go that night. She had been sleeping in her car, but it had broken down and the local residents had it towed away. A vulnerable young woman, she really wasn't the kind of person we wanted to leave to the mercies of the streets, and we certainly couldn't send her back to her very abusive and exploitative family. [Read more...](#)



Our Staff - Stories from Then and Now

Tim's Story - Playhouse to Pantry

Tim first came to Los Angeles in pursuit of an acting career (the photo shows Tim's first professional headshot!). At the time of his move to LA, Tim did not think the values he had been exposed to at his Mennonite high school and college had made much of a lasting impact on him. It was only after living in LA and seeing at first hand the endemic racism and social injustice in the city, and then being forced to resign from a job after protesting against his employer's cruelty to animals, that he decided he needed to do something more meaningful. Theater's loss is FID's gain! [Read more...](#)



Programs

[Bad Weather Shelter \(BWS\)](#)

Providing cold-weather support for our neighbors experiencing homelessness

Eviction Prevention and Rental Assistance (EPRA)

Short- and medium-term rental support to prevent eviction

Food Pantry

Dignified grocery shopping experience for 400+ households weekly

Street Outreach & Housing

Team of workers on the streets engaging with our neighbors experiencing homelessness and connecting them to services

The Women's Room (TWR)

Daytime shelter for homeless and at-risk women

Our Staff

Rabbi Joshua Levine Grater
Executive Director

Marty Campolo
Deputy Director and Grants Officer

Erik Osugi
Senior Director of Programs

Merria Velasco
Director of Development

Helen Angove
Operations Manager

Marlene Martinez
Director of TWR

Tim Nistler
Director of The Food Pantry

William Shelby
Director of Street Outreach and Housing

Ryan Greer
Director of EPRA

Lindsey Reed
Senior Manager of Programs and Director of BWS

Stacey Cutshaw
Food Pantry Manager

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*Housing Navigator and
Outreach Specialist*

Jane Armbruster
TWR Program Associate

Angel Maxwell
Street Outreach Worker

Michael Jaimes
Street Outreach Worker

Eva Rivera
Administrative Assistant

Doug Haught
Security and Grounds

Coty Dietel
Food Pantry Aide

Ursula Hyman

Rev. Marlene Pomeroy

Friends In Deed is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion. We embrace and celebrate the spectrum of our employees', volunteers', and clients' ages, color, ability or disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, neurodiversity, and other characteristics that make our employees, volunteers, and clients unique.

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