

**Doing together what we cannot do alone*



Quarterly Newsletter

From the Board President

Dear Friend,

Milestones have a way of helping us pause and reflect, and Friends In Deed has 130 years of reflections with countless people impacted by our incredible programs, services, staff, volunteers, clients, and community partners. The impact of Friends In Deed resonates deeply with all who are part of this journey, and we couldn't be more grateful.

This newsletter, we take a closer look at The Women's Room. The unfortunate truth is that homelessness can happen to anyone, but we are always in awe of the women who show up with smiles on their faces, demonstrating resilience and bravery despite their traumatic experiences. Their courage not only puts our own lives into perspective but also reinforces the importance of a compassionate, supportive community where everyone feels they belong. Read on for just a few of their stories.

I hope to see you on August 22nd to [celebrate 130 years of service](#) to the Pasadena area and to kick off another 130 years of commitment to its residents.

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 Programs



Wanda's Story - Knocked Off Balance

Wanda (pictured here with Director of TWR Lindsey) is one of a "new brand" of clients in The Women's Room – articulate, high-functioning women who never expected to be in the position of needing our services, but whose lives were knocked off balance by the pandemic and who have struggled to get back on their feet. In particular, Wanda lived close to Friends In Deed as a child, supported us and donated items, but never imagined she would need our services herself. [Read more...](#)

Barriers to Housing - Bella's Story

Transitioning someone into housing is never as simple as just handing them the keys - and the barriers our clients face are as varied as the people themselves. Here, we begin a new series of fictionalized accounts that illustrate some of the very real challenges our clients have to overcome in order to get a roof over their heads.

"Bella" was new to The Women's Room. She told the TWR staff she had been living in her car for



Stories from Our Community



Annie's Story - Checking Her Own Stuff at the Door

Annie has a deep connection to the work we do on both a personal and a professional level - she is studying for a masters degree in social work, but also researches nonprofit organizations for her employer, a local philanthropist. When she first visited us, Annie says that she "fell in love" with Friends In Deed immediately - especially with The Women's Room, where she was deeply impressed by how well run it was, by only three staff members! [Read more...](#)

Mishele's Story - Always a Lunch on the Table

Mishele had just moved to Pasadena and was looking for a way to connect with the community. She heard about Friends In Deed, looked us up online, read about The Women's Room, and got in touch. She has been involved in making lunch for The Women's Room on a monthly basis ever since! [Read more...](#)



Debby's Story - Fixing the World

About a decade ago, Debby Singer, who was then the Education Director at Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center (PJTC), was approached by her rabbi because he had been invited to join the board of Friends In Deed. "My wife will kill me if I join another board," he said. "Can you take a look and



see if you might be interested?"

That rabbi was, of course, our very own Joshua Levine Grater, and we have to hope his wife has forgiven him for since taking on a role that demands far more of his time than serving on a board! [Read more...](#)

Our Staff - Stories from Then and Now

Jenny's Story - Always Finding a Little Extra

Jenny was having a run of bad luck - her husband's shop had burned down, and the family was short of cash. Then she had a call from a former coworker, Lindsey, who had heard that Jenny was looking for some extra work. She offered Jenny a few hours per week at The Women's Room at Friends In Deed.

Her first day was totally different to her other job, and initially overwhelming - but Jenny really needed the money, so she stuck with it. [Read more...](#)



Stories from Our Archives



TWR 10th anniversary celebration in 2017

The TWR Story - The "Persisterhood"

What do women experiencing homelessness need most? This was a question posed by a group of women from Pasadena churches - the "Women's Issue Committee," - in 2005. They spent many months researching the question, but didn't let things rest there: they put their findings into practice by opening The Women's Room at Friends In Deed on September 13, 2007.

The Women's Room was supported through individual foundations, community organizations, the Women's Council of All Saints Church, and tremendous amounts of volunteer labor. [Read more...](#)

In Memoriam

Jennifer Nollar James
26 May 2024



Music was Pasadena resident Jennifer Nollar James' vocation - as a child, she played in Pasadena Young Musicians Orchestra and sang in the children's choir at All Saints Church. She later received a BA in music from the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester and then an MA in Musicology from USC. When a subsequent health condition made playing the cello impossible, she studied singing and sang with several choirs.

Jennifer also loved to travel, and she worked for twenty years at Caltech's Einstein Papers Project as an Associate Editor. We are very grateful to Jennifer's husband and parents for requesting [donations](#) to Friends In Deed in lieu of flowers.

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 600+ households weekly

Street Outreach and 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

(in alphabetical order)

Helen Angove

Director of Operations

Jane Armbruster

TWR Program Manager and Case Counselor

Isaac Arreola

Harm Reduction Specialist

Marty Campolo

Deputy Director and Grants Officer

Coty Dietel

Food Pantry Aide

Our Board

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*Housing Navigation Program Manager and
Substance Abuse Specialist*

Ryan Greer
Senior Director of Programs

Al Hackett
Outreach Specialist

Doug Haught
TWR Security and Grounds

Tish Inong
Director of Street Outreach and Housing

Jenny Juarez
TWR Program Associate

Joshua Levine Grater
Executive Director

Yesenia Marin-Acosta
TWR Program Associate

Kristina Martin
Food Pantry Program Associate

Marlene Martinez
Assistant Director of EPRA

Stacey McCarroll
Director of EPRA

Tim Nistler
Director of the Food Pantry

Najwa Payton Jones
Housing Navigator and Outreach Liaison

Elyse Reed
Development Associate

Lindsey Reed
Director of The Women's Room

Eva Rivera
Food Pantry Manager

William Shelby
*Senior Intensive Case Management
Specialist*

Ervin Galvan

Tim Howett

Ursula Hyman

Nishanthi Kurukulasuriya

Don Meaders

Jeff Salcido

Debby Singer

Lana Slavitt

and;

Pam Marx
Board President Emeritus

Virginia Valencia
*Outreach Program Manager and Mental
Health Specialist*

Laura Van Alstine
Director of BWS

Merria Velasco
Senior Director of Development

Dani Vinokurov Rivera
Development Associate

Kenyetta Wilson
Controller

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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