

THE MISSION

let's end homelessness in LA

Starting Over in a One-Room Mansion

by Jasani

Abandoned, abused, and traumatized,
Jasani finds the courage to rebuild her
life at Hope Gardens — thanks to you!

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No child ever deserves abuse. So what do you do when your own stepfather tries to rape you? When I turned 17, I moved in with my boyfriend. But I couldn't escape the abuse. He got violent with me and it continued through the rest of our marriage. But I didn't have the courage to leave.

By the time I turned 22, I had three kids. And I needed help. But my husband wouldn't let me have any contact with family or friends. I was so traumatized, I started to feel like I deserved the abuse. My whole life just kept getting worse.

First, we got evicted from our apartment. We lived in motels for a while and finally ended up living out of our car. I couldn't even afford to wash our clothes. My kids struggled with speech problems and even started acting out violently. It broke my heart, but I felt so helpless.

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Ending Homelessness is *Not* Impossible — W



Together, Let's Change the Face of Homelessness in the City of Angels

Although we're a city named for angels, Los Angeles contains more people who are homeless than anywhere else in the country. In fact, 10% of all people who are homeless in America live in L.A.

Today, as many as 110,000 men, women, and children — and maybe more — live in homeless shelters, SROs (single-room occupancy buildings), cheap motels, cars, and even on the streets and sidewalks of neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

LA Needs a New Direction

For years, our region's long-time strategy was to funnel people who are homeless toward Skid Row, corral them there, and then forget about them. But it's not working. We need a new plan.

After years of neglect, the problem of homelessness in Los Angeles is an infected, open wound that we all must face today. No one deserves to be homeless. That's why — with your help — Union Rescue Mission

is planning to change the face of homelessness forever in the City of Angels.

Reaching for Lofty Goals

Next year, beginning with our January issue of *The Mission* newsletter, we will outline a bold plan with 10 specific solutions to address the four stages of homelessness (see sidebar) in Los Angeles. Our goals are lofty.

- **Three-year goal:** Cut the number of people living on the streets of Skid Row by 90%
- **Seven-year goal:** Cut the number of people who are homeless in L.A. County by 50%
- **Ten-year goal:** End Los Angeles' reign as the homeless capital of the United States.

We Can Do It If We Work Together

Reaching these goals will be hard — and we can't do it alone. First, we need the extraordinary generosity

of people like you. But if we're going to reach our goals, we must enlist the resources — and the *hearts* — of the entire city of Los Angeles. Our message? All of us must band together to end homelessness. Together we can change the face of homelessness forever.

God Gives Us Strength and Courage

Union Rescue Mission has been reaching out to people who are homeless in Los Angeles for 118 years, and no one is more motivated to lead this movement against homelessness than we are. We have hope and faith in a God who cares about those who are homeless, and who gives us the strength and courage to confront what seems to many a tragic but impossible problem.

Poverty and homelessness have reached all-time highs in our City of Angels. Enough is enough. It's time to help our city live up to its name.

With Your Help!

"There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land."

— Deuteronomy 15:11



The Four Stages of Homelessness

1. Nearly Homeless

People on the verge of losing their home. They need immediate assistance with food, financial support, etc.

2. Transitionally Homeless

People who become homeless for the first time.

3. Episodically Homeless

People who bounce in and out of homelessness several times without ever dealing with the root problem that causes them to be homeless.

4. Chronically Homeless

People who resist shelters — usually because of severe addiction and/or mental health issues.

Together, we can provide solutions for each stage of homelessness!



"STARTING OVER . . ." CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Then in the fall of 2008, I learned I was pregnant again. I had to do something. My husband didn't want to go to a shelter, but what choice did we have?

I started praying, "Lord, please give us a stable roof over our heads and help us keep our family together. Please."

And God answered. Union Rescue Mission gave us our own room. But that one room felt like a mansion. When we moved in, I wanted to kiss the floor. But soon after we arrived, he left me for another woman, just before our fourth child was born in May.

Yet God never abandoned me. Last August, we moved in to Union Rescue Mission's Hope Gardens, which helps single mothers and kids get their lives back on track.

Now we have a safe place to live, I'm going to school, and I even have a

part-time job. I have a peace I've never known. I walk with my head up and I really see myself achieving something with my life now. My dream is to get a job as a licensed vocational nurse — that's my passion.

I give God all the credit, because He led me to Union Rescue Mission and Hope Gardens. This place saved my life.



Homelessness in L.A. County — 2009

48,053

Homeless Individuals

8,000

Homeless Families

949

Unaccompanied Youth
(persons less than 18 years old)



Your Gift Gives Hope to the Homeless Capital of America

So many people struggle with homelessness in Los Angeles that our City of Angels is now known as the Homeless Capital of America. Tens of thousands of men, women, and children live in motels, garages, cars, tents, and underpasses — struggling without hope.

Your gift will provide hot meals, safe shelter — and new hope!

Our goal is to change the face of homelessness forever in Los Angeles. No one can do it alone. But with your generous gift of \$25, \$35, or more, we can help provide warm meals, safe shelter and life-transforming hope to everyone who seeks help at Union Rescue Mission.

So please send the most generous gift you can today. Thank you!

For more information or to put your gift to work even faster, go to www.urm.org/cityofangels



It's tragic that Los Angeles — a city named for Angels — has the largest number of people who are homeless in all of the United States. Watch this video — and see what Angels see. Visit www.urm.org/Angels

Our Mission

We embrace people experiencing homelessness with the compassion of Christ — giving hope and healing for a changed life — helping them find their way home.



545 S. San Pedro Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013
1-888-77-THE WAY HOME (888-778-4392)
www.urm.org



Notes from Andy

Homelessness has a Face

Every morning, I wake up heartbroken over the thousands of people who are living homeless in Los Angeles. I'm heartbroken because it's a personal issue for me — personal in that every man, woman, and child who's homeless is a precious, beautiful soul with a face I cherish.

A face just like Jasani's, who you read about in this newsletter.

Or a face like the father I recently met who was laid off and lost his home. Thank God he had the courage to bring his four precious little girls and his pregnant wife to Union Rescue Mission, where he's now getting the help his family needs.

Or a face like the 16-year-old boy I recently encountered who was looking for a job. His mother had been unemployed for 18 months and they were about to lose their home. He was considering dropping out of school so he could work and help save them from homelessness. Fortunately, I was able to help him find an after-school job.

Yes, those who are homeless have faces. That makes it a personal issue for me. And I pray that everyone in Los Angeles makes it a personal issue, as well.

Blessings, Andy