“Never Thought I Would Be In This Situation”

Sixty Year Old Woman Loses Job, Home and Becomes Homeless

For 40 years, she worked as a bookkeeper. She showed up to work every day, on time, worked hard, paid her bills and lived the American dream. Almost two years ago, as the company downsized, she lost her job. Always able to find work, she did not panic. She collected unemployment and started applying for work.

“Everywhere I went, IF they were hiring, they were hiring people much younger than me. It seems once they saw how old I was, they were not interested,” says Candace.

Recently Candace ran out of extensions on her unemployment and her check went from $300 a week to $80 per week. She could no longer afford her rent, let alone a room to rent. Evicted from her apartment, to her own shock and horror, she was now homeless.

“I never thought I would be in this situation. I was the one that would help the less fortunate. I had this pre-conceived idea that the homeless were a bunch of drug addicts. I was so wrong. For the first time, I know what it feels like to be judged for being homeless... people look at me carrying a duffle bag and avoid me at all costs... it is so embarrassing” says Candace.

With nowhere to go, Candace was referred to Hope of the Valley’s Courtyard Shelter where she was accepted with open arms. Her first night she cried, unable to believe that she was now living in a shelter. Since then, her positive, “can-do” attitude has returned, working hard each day to find employment and better her life. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, you will find Candace each evening greeting the other 50 homeless guests, giving words of inspiration and hope.

Mission staff is now working with Candace in her quest to end her homelessness.

Renown Construction Firm, California Home Builders, Prepares to Start Genesis House Remodel

Home Aid Adopts Mission’s Women and Children’s Shelter as Fall Project

The 3,750 sq. ft. Pacoima home, built in the 1950’s was constructed by the Catholic Archdiocese for Nun’s in training. Hope of the Valley has purchased the 12-bedroom, 6-bathroom house. Whereas the house has great potential, it needs renovation due to deferred maintenance.

Home Aid Los Angeles, a non-profit group that partners with home builders across the United States, has accepted what we are calling the Genesis House, as their next project. After consulting with several homebuilders, California Home Builders has agreed to lead the project of renovating the house by completely remodeling the kitchen and bathrooms as well as providing new windows, doors, heating and air, paint and flooring.

Once complete, the Genesis House will be home to between 25-30 women and children. Mission staff will work closely with each woman and child to equip them with the skills and resources to end their homelessness and break free from poverty. To learn more about the Genesis House go to www.hopeofthevalley.org

Special Thanks

Park Family: $25,000 Gift to Purchase Courtyard Canopy
Southland Regional Association of Realtors Foundation: $20,000
Sponsorship of Genesis House Kitchen
Weingart Foundation: $17,500
General Support for Genesis House
James L. Stamps Foundation: $7,500
Supplies for the Courtyard Shelter
Northeast North Hollywood Neighborhood Council: $2,500 for Courtyard Shelter Cots
Crime of Passion Sends Man in Tailspin

Homeless and Hopeless A New Life Begins

Abandoned by his father and abused by his mother, Jesse experienced life’s struggles as a child. Oftentimes his mother would beat him, tie him up and throw him in a closet. He would see his dad once a year at Christmas, for a few minutes when he would give Jesse a little spending money.

“I remember crying a lot as a child. I felt so abandoned and alone. I just wanted someone to love me,” says Jesse. 

With a mother unwilling to support him, he started working for a caterer while in Jr. High School. In High School, he joined the Job Core and started collecting multiple diploma’s in the construction trades. His newly developed skills made it easy to land good jobs.

Putting his childhood behind him, Jesse was now married with three children of his own, working for the City of Los Angeles as a Load Operator. Life was good until the morning he received a phone call from one of his sons telling him that every day when he left for work, the neighbor would come over and he and mommy would lock the door to the bedroom.

In a fit of rage, Jesse left his skip loader and drove home with a baseball bat in his hand. He walked in the house and saw what he feared. Outraged, he beat the other man, almost killing him.

That event changed his life. His wife left him and took the kids. He lost his job with the City of Los Angeles and served time for his crime. Upon release from prison, with a criminal record, work was hard to come by. He became depressed and started drinking, nearly a 1/5 of Jack Daniels a day. He became homeless, living on the side of the freeway in Granada Hills.

Within a 24-hour period, he had two random people ask if he was homeless and told him to call Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission. Feeling hopeless and overwhelmed, he felt it was a sign from God. He called the number to the Mission and was immediately accepted into the John E. White House of Hope where his new life began.

It has now been six months. Jesse is well on the road to recovery. He utilizes his construction skills to help around the Mission. Jessie comments, “From day one, I felt loved at the Mission, and more importantly, I fell in love with God. I thank God every day for Hope of the Valley and the second chance they have given me.”

Great Thanksgiving Banquet(s) Slated

Like last year, Hope of the Valley will provide two massive Thanksgiving Meals for anyone in need for Thanksgiving. The first banquet will take place the day before Thanksgiving at 1pm in Van Nuys and the second banquet will be on Thanksgiving Day at 1pm in Sun Valley. All guests will enjoy a five star Gourmet Thanksgiving meal, entertainment, haircuts and more. (for more information go to www.hopeofthevalley.org)