

Our House

SRO Housing Corporation pursues its mission of community revitalization by providing clean, safe and affordable housing, managing public space and administering needed support services.

SRO Receives Grant from the Weingart Foundation for Capital Development Projects



Improvements at the Harold and Panama hotels (above) and the LaJolla (below) will include repair and replacement of roofs, a new DVR security system and a buzzer intercom.



The Weingart Foundation, one of the major private foundations in the United States, has donated over \$300,000 to SRO Housing Corporation's Capital Development Campaign.

The Capital Development Campaign will bring much-needed maintenance and safety enhancements and upgrades to SRO's emergency, transitional and permanent housing sites as well as the James M. Wood Community Center. During the 11-month Campaign, ten buildings, many of which were originally built in the early 1900s and renovated by SRO in the 1980s and

1990s, will receive new roofs, intercom and security systems, kitchens and elevators, acoustical and architectural improvements and one will have its heating system replaced and repaired. \$1.8 million will be spent on improvements.

This grant marks the successful start of SRO's private fundraising efforts. The support of the Weingart Foundation, an organization that shares SRO's concern for the homeless and others in need, will ensure that housing for more than 800 residents is safe, decent and dignified.



The Marshal House's roof and kitchen will be upgraded and a new elevator will be installed.

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Janitor Appreciation Luncheon

June 3—SRO sponsored the first *Janitor Appreciation Luncheon* to honor and recognize the men and women who, day after day, work to make our properties spotless.

About 20 staff were served chicken breasts smothered in mushroom sauce, short ribs, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn and

green beans by the catering staff of the Midnight Mission. Members of the Executive Management Team (EMT) handed out beverages and joined the staff for lunch. Door prizes were distributed as well as prizes for the most recently hired employee and the person with the greatest number of years of

service.

The event was an enormous success, boosted morale and generated goodwill. Staff felt noticed, recognized and cared for. Members of the EMT enjoyed getting to know the janitors and appreciated the chance to give back.

Resident Spotlight — Mindy Lympervis



Some things happened quickly for Mindy Lympervis. One day, the owner of eight restaurants, including a gourmet food-delivery service popular with local celebrities, and an accomplished chef, changed her life dramatically.

"I didn't do hard drugs or drink until I was 43 years old. Then I got hooked on crack." Mindy abandoned her Santa Monica home and restaurant, her possessions and her partner and moved into a crack house. For three months, she smoked constantly. Then, just as quickly as she had started using drugs, she stopped, detoxed and

checked herself into a rehab program. "I got tired of living life like that. I missed my house, my dogs, my car and having money in my pocket. I missed all of the things that I had had for the previous 43 years. I needed to figure out what was missing from my life that made me make such an insane mistake."

Mindy completed the 90-day program at The Mary Lind Foundation's Rena B. Recovery Home, a residential substance abuse center, and lived in a Christian sober-living home in Hollywood. Then she decided to test her newfound sobriety by moving downtown. "I knew I needed to put myself back into the real world. I had to make sure that I could stay sober anywhere, so I came downtown to the Marshal House."

Mindy found that she liked living in the Marshal House. "There's structure at the Marshal House. Everyone's working their program and people are supportive. Plus, living there was my first step towards getting my own

place again."

One afternoon, on her way to SRO's administrative offices on 4th and Spring Streets, Mindy passed by Pete's Café & Bar. "I walked in and asked if they were looking for a chef, and they hired me on the spot!" Today Mindy is the Executive Chef at Pete's Café & Bar, a bar and restaurant in the Old Bank District owned by real estate developer Tom Gilmore. She's moved from the Marshal House to a market-rate loft above the café, which she has furnished with donations from customers and friends, bought a Corvette, and adopted a deaf boxer from Boxer Rescue.

"I hope that everyone experiences something in their life that gives them perspective. I can say that those nine months (that I was in my addiction), although horrific, were a really good experience in my life. I have learned to cherish the things that I have in my life and recognized the things that I took for granted all those years."

Mindy is especially grateful

for the support she received early in her recovery and generously gives back to the recovery community. She is a non-paid staff member at The Mary Lind Foundation, serving as their food service consultant, and has gotten jobs for a half-dozen Mary Lind Foundation participants and alumni in Pete's Café's kitchen. "Mindy has reduced our food costs, trained staff, helped them become certified cooks and taught people in recovery how to benefit from being sober. She's a great example of repair from despair", says Arthur Scott, Director of the Mary Lind Foundation's Rena B. Recovery Home.

Mindy recently celebrated 18 months of sobriety and says she never plans on relapsing. "I had a conscious contact with God. I asked Him to take this desire and horrible feeling that I had and He did. Now, I'm happy and content; my life is full. I've got my sobriety, my job, health and happiness and I will never do another drug again."

Milestones

Anniversaries

July: Gary Lett, Gabriel Negrete, Lillian Abel Calamari, McKinley Nelson III, Edward Guerrero, James McIntosh, Matthew Brown, David Louis Cook.

August: Derrick Funderburk, McKenelly Peebles, William Wise, John Garcia, Valerie West, Michelle Williams, Anita Nelson, Betty Norman, Virginia Reed, Barbara Elleby, Brenda Lindgren, Cindy Qiu, Anne Wagoner, Ronald Dickerson.

September: Darlene Berry, Gregory Quinn, Mira Loudermilk, Michael Hill, Barbara Nunley, Danny Whitehead, Deborah Martin, Danielle Noble, Blanche Pirtle, Rosalind Irons-Harris, Richard Blow, Robert James, Juan Carlos Callejas, Juan Magaña, Charles Watson, Roderick Babsby, Renee Rodriguez.

Birthdays

July: Susana Moreno, Earle Henderson, Ramon Becerra, Tim Gray, Brenda Lindgren, Thelma Heflin, McKinley Nelson III, Rogelio Cabral, Victor Constantino, Daniel Nava, Denise Walker, Barbara Elleby, Gregory Quinn, Virginia Reed, Claudia Preciado, Russell Witmyer III.

August: Rita Barker, Danielle Noble, John Garcia, Angeliqwe Abbate, Charles Brooks, Denzil Hupf, Jimmie Buie, Claudine Mitchell, Reynard King, Allison Monay, Danny Whitehead, Joel Hamilton, Wynton Wallers, Ruth Chiang, Charles Wafer.

September: Apollo Pharaoh, Joseph Corcoran, Jaime Rodriguez, Gerado Gómez, Lillian Abel Calamari, Michael Loudermilk, Mohammed Miah, Anne Mozee, Rowe Roberts, Derrick Woo.

Welcome, Farewell and Congratulations!

Welcome: Temple Patterson, Driver; Antonio Marquez, Executive Assistant; Emmett Barnes, Janitor; Dessie Crosby, Janitor; Timothy Gray, Director of Facilities; Sara Suman, Case Manager; Cornell Stance, Janitor; Jennifer Brown, Janitor; Susana Moreno, Case Manager; Victor Constantino, Senior Case Manager; Gerardo Gomez, Case Manager; Brian Fiorenza, Office Manager.

Good-bye and Good Luck: Leticia Cervantes, Janitor; Alma Sanchez, Case Manager; Nancy Hartwell, Senior Case Manager; MaryLou Ramirez, Janitor; Donald Gordon, Janitor; Robbie Vairo, Director of Facilities; Lea Chavez, Case Manger; Julie Keener, Assistant Manger; Tyrone Black, Office Manager; Rita Ashley, Park Worker; Lawrence Shoffner, Maintenance Worker; Carter Kidd, Janitor; John Garcia, Senior Case Manager; Anabelle Mena, Assistant to the Associate Director of Housing Management; Johnnie Givens, Maintenance Worker.

Congratulations to: Tim Gray, who was elected President of the International Facilities Management Association (IFMA); Vivian Wade, who graduated from West Los Angeles College.

Community Echoes

SRO and Downtown Women's Center Offer Writing For Self-Expression Workshop

SRO Housing Corporation and the Downtown Women's Center (DWC) collaborated to produce an eight-week "Writing for Self-Expression" workshop. The workshop, which was taught by DWC staff Michelle Gubbay and held at the James M. Wood Community Center, was open to all community members. James Chappelle, an SRO resident, wrote the following short story in the class.

I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM CRY *By James Chappell*

I have never seen him cry. The sight of it was more than my mind could grasp. And the sound of it pierced me to the marrow. The man who until this day had been steel, a fortress and even an anchor to all who knew him was now something

less. Less than the facade that we had come to know. But in the tearing down of this sad soul something was gained. At this moment as he sat rocking at the curb like some poor wisp of a child. He seemed to me, and now was, more human than ever. His loss was immeasurable. The news of it had done its damage. She was gone now, her cold stiff self laid out upon the dewy wet lawn like some ornament, the newspaper still in her slim soft fingers. The chirping of radios from the patrol cars was the only sound save his gasps for air.

Who knew that getting the paper from the lawn before the morning's coffee could be deadly. Sure this was L. A. But it wasn't THAT L.A. This was Brentwood for God's sake.

"Excuse me sir?" the sergeant called from his station next to the body. "What was the lady's name, do you know her?" he inquired as I approached stopping far short of where he wanted me. Realizing that I was not about to come anywhere near the body the officer reluctantly trudged across the yard and asked his questions again. "Yes, Yes I know...I mean knew her," I answered the tense sticking in the small of my throat. "And who's the man?" he asked with only mild curiosity. "Nobody now," I thought to myself as I said the name, "John Michael Peters." "Thank You," said the sergeant in a tone as crisp and polite as the shine on his badge or the crease of his black uniform pants.

"Come on John," I spoke

softly as I helped this crumpled man to the porch all the while fighting back tears of my own. And there we sat numb and confused for the next few hours as our eyes took in the scene that was playing out unnaturally before us. Crime tape, traffic cops, detectives and finally the press and coroner's team; each member of this macabre little dance performing flawlessly with only us civilians in shock of it all. "Benny?" John asked after the longest time. "Yes John?" I replied. "She isn't really dead, is she?" he pleaded. I knelt before him taking this good and honest man's hands into mine I searched his eyes, for what I do not know, and then said plainly, "Yes John, I'm afraid she is" as another tear fell to kiss the ground.

Women's Day in the Park

May 20 — The Downtown Women's Action Coalition (DWAC) hosted its fourth annual Women's Day in the Park Celebration at Elysian Park. Over 200 women and children living in the Downtown Women's Center, Union Rescue Mission, SRO Housing Corporation, Skid Row Housing Trust and other neighborhood sites gathered at the Montecillo de Leo Politi picnic area to celebrate motherhood and womanhood. Some picnicked under the trees, while others made jewelry, got manicures, participated in a scavenger hunt, contributed to an art project, showed off their hula-hooping skills, sang, danced or modeled clothes during the Fashion Show. Children had their faces painted, made cards for their mothers and played. Lunch was

catered by Volunteers of America and local organizations offered information about their services.

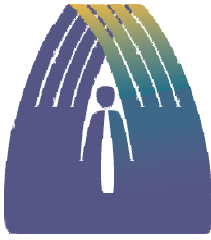


Free Concert in San Julian Park

April 29 — The Los Angeles County Arts Commission sponsored a free concert in San Julian Park featuring the Louis Van Taylor Band, a jazz and R&B group. The Los Angeles Poverty Department, an arts organization, in collaboration with SRO Housing Corporation, hosted the event. "We want to have music, dancing and other normative events in the community," said Anita U. Nelson, Executive Director/CEO of SRO Housing Corporation. "Through the support of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission we are able to bring talented musicians close to home."

The crowd danced and sang along during the two-hour performance which combined musical favorites with improvisational riffs.





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Upcoming Events

Staff Trainings

Transgender Issues
July 1

CERT
July 6, 13, 20 and 27

HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C
July 8

July 14, 15, 21 and 22
Communication Skills

Community Resources
August 19

Gender Sensitivity
September 9

September 30
Ethics and Boundaries

Professional Development

*We appreciate the effort to
gain more knowledge.*

Of special note: Oscar Lee, Gerardo Gómez, Victor Constantino, Susana Moreno, Brenda Lindgren, Claudine Mitchell and Sara Suman attended a special training on Mental Health Matters; Angelique Abbate and John Nosco attended a special training on Stroke Prevention and Management; Rosalind Harris, John García and John Frazier were presenters at the National Association of Case Management Conference in Philadelphia. Social Services staff attended Universal Precautions, Public Benefits and Sexual Harassment trainings and Prototype's Healing Our Village Conference. Program Managers attended an all-day training on End-of-Life Matters. Bob Pizzorno attended an all-day conference on Co-Occurring Disorders. Temple Patterson, Robin Boyd, Earle Henderson, Emmett Barnes, Jennifer Brown, Dessie Crosby, Juan Carlos Callejas, Sara Suman and Cornell Stance graduated from SRO's Communication Skills Training. John Nosco, Angelique Abbate, Victor Constantino, and Lillian Calamari received certificates in Elder Abuse, Dependent Adult Abuse, and Mandatory Reporting

After Ten Years, Couple Renews Wedding Vows

Central City East/"Skid Row" is one of the few places in Los Angeles where people rather than cars, line the streets. People walk around the neighborhood, meet and talk to their friends and live their lives among one another. It was in this environment of community that William, an SRO Park Worker, and Shawnta met in 1993. Both were spending time near San Julian Park, where William works. On a dare from one of his co-workers, William asked Shawnta out on a date. After dating for about a year, they went on fishing trip to the Long Beach Piermont pier. It was there that William asked Shawnta to marry him.

William and Shawnta were married in 1995 in a local chapel and lived in the neighborhood for many years. They built a strong and playful marriage based on kindness, compassion and consideration.

On April 9, William and Shawnta Wise marked their 10th wedding anniversary by renewing their wedding vows in the James M. Wood Community Center. A fourteen-person wedding party and 60 guests witnessed their commitment. Chaplain Telly Miller from St. Marks Church officiated. After the ceremony the couple and their guests continued their celebration in a private



The Wedding Party



Shawnta and William Wise