

Sweet Dreams creates hope

Women get new shot at jobs, life

By Michel Nolan Staff Writer

SAN BERNARDINO — The women of the Sweet Dreams house are like any other family.

They talk about their children, laugh and share chores.

Like old scars, ugly memories of their past are healing.

In a clean, homestyle environment on a quiet cul-de-sac, these homeless women and their children get a second chance.

"I was out on the street, in fields, beaten and raped, shot and stabbed, and I wanted to start over so I came here," said Arleta Davis, who will soon graduate after 11 months in the Time for Change Foundation's program.

"The most important thing to me was changing my relationship with my daughter and learning to live life on life's terms," said Davis, 43, one of the head bakers at Nestle Toll House Cafe in Ontario Mills.

"Time for Change really supported me in what I wanted to do," said Davis, who is looking for an apartment she will share with her 17-year-old daughter, who has started college.

"My daughter told my case manager she was proud of me," said Davis, fighting back tears.

La Reisha Lee, 31, has completed her parole and been sober — like Davis — for about 18 months.

Lee is working toward her



LaFonzo Carter Staff Photographer

Rebecca Marshall cooks in the kitchen while her son Andrew looks on Thursday at Time for Change Foundation's Sweet Dreams house in San Bernardino.

GED and wants to go to college. She is doing in-home supportive services.

"The parenting classes have taught me how to be a better mother to my son. I know I'm a great mom today," said Lee, whose 1-year-old son, Rei'Shawn, is just learning to walk.

Since 2002, the nonprofit has been dedicated to helping women make the transition from homelessness and incarceration to self-sufficiency.

Here, Rebecca Marshall has been clean and sober and is learning to be a better mother to her 3-year-old twin sons.

"I'm looking forward to going back to school. I'm interested in getting into a respiratory therapist program," she said.

"The lessons I've been learn-

ing are parenting skills, money-management skills, how to function in society as a mom to my kids," said Marshall, 29, who's been in the program three months.

"I'm learning to give back to the community," Marshall said.

On Thursday, the women were looking forward to "Mommy and Me," when they would spend time with their kids — after school and day care.

Time for Change provides essential resources to women in need who are ready to change the course of their lives, said Shonda Hutton, a spokeswoman for the foundation.

"All the women — once they get a job and start to generate income — save 65 percent of their income, and that helps lead them on a path of self-suf-

The 4-1-1

Time for Change Foundation Services:

- Emergency shelter (up to 30 days)
- Transitional housing (up to 24 months)
- Independent living skills
- Financial education and money management
- Family reunification
- Leadership development
- Parenting education

Information:

www.timeforchangefoundation.org; 909-886-2994

iciency. They leave with money in the bank and learn the importance of saving," Hutton said.

"The women who've graduated and transitioned out, they still come to visit. We want them to be successful."

Hutton said the Time for Change Foundation in June launched a website called Take Action California. The site, at takeactionca.org, is a collaboration of members throughout California.

"The new website is a vehicle for change, where people across the state of California can stand up and take action on issues that are important to them," Lee said.

"We are a family. We are all came from the same place and are striving for the same thing. That brings us together."

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