

TIME FOR CHANGE HOSTS 17TH AWARDS GALA

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By Dianne Anderson

Since starting 17 years ago, the nonprofit Time For Change has broadened its scope to help more women and children escape deep cycles of poverty.

So far, the organization has trained and empowered 1,200 women to independence, and reunited 282 children out of foster care with their moms.

Vanessa Perez, who started as an intern with them seven years ago, said she has watched their local services increase immensely, including the most recent expansion up north with a new location in the city of Hayward.

There, the "Brighter Futures" home is providing a safe haven for mothers and children in crisis, women seeking to reunify with their children, homeless women, and those returning home from prison.

Perez, who oversees operations in southern California, said Kim Carter, Time for Change founder, has officially transitioned to the Bay Area where she has taken on the role of ambassador. She is heading up that project, as well as seeking other funding opportunities.

In Hayward, the home is similar to an emergency shelter, serving up to six women and availability for six children. The San Bernardino location accommodates 16, but she said the program's success is that they walk with the women at each step of the way.

"As soon as they come in, they get an intensive self-sufficiency plan, we help them with their goals, and they work toward their plan, and transition into permanent housing. We don't believe in recycling homelessness, we want to end it," said Perez, Time for Change Director.

On Friday, April 12, the Time for Change Foundation hosts its 17th Annual Awards Gala "Oh, the Places She'll Go" to help address the growing need.

The fundraiser gala dinner is from 6:00- 9:00 p.m., at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Ontario. Tickets start at \$125 per individual.

This year's honorees for community service include: Carlos & Audrey Martinez, BLU Educational Foundation, Johnson Family Child Care, Linda Lindsey, and Mayor Deborah Robertson. Also recognized are James & Rowena Ramos, Beatriz Solis, Tim Evans and Dr. Roger Hadley.

Time for Change developed its 7-unit Phoenix Square home in San Bernardino to help low-income women thrive with job training, counseling and access to many resources through their nationally recognized program.

She said that the Phoenix Square location has brought a lot of good to the neighborhood, and the shelter proudly serves women and children in safe locations. Their families watch out for each other within the close-knit community, but she said negative stereotypes around homeless women still exist.



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She said that location has received recognition for crime prevention, and as crime-free multifamily housing.

"We've had zero police calls in the seven years since its existence, it's [the home] still brand new, very well kept, it's safe, it's clean. There's no drugs or alcohol," she said.

The program has also achieved other major milestones in recent years. In 2012, they received a multi-million dollar federal grant through the Department of HUD, and a multi-million grant through SAMSHA, taking the lead on the reentry project. In 2013-14, they implemented those projects with good success.

"Our reentry program received a zero percent recidivism rate. We're really helping women reintegrate into society," she said.

In 2015, Kim Carter was recognized as a top ten CNN hero. In 2016, the nonprofit became part of CNN/Subaru branded content. In 2017, they purchased their administrative office, moving from renting to ownership. Last year, they opened the Brighter Futures home in Hayward. This year, they were featured on the Steve Harvey show.

Their approach is a winning model of affordable housing that brings stability.

"It's a jewel in the city. We had the police sergeant say years ago that since we developed affordable housing in that community, crime on that block has gone down," she said.

In both San Bernardino and Hayward, the need for shelter runs equally high, but she said it may be more intense up north because the cost of living is so much higher, leading to gentrification and a greater level of homelessness.

The hope is to continue providing support for homeless women and children, but the end goal is for state and local agencies to increase access to low-income housing availability.

"You have very extreme costs of housing in Silicon Valley and San Francisco, and it's dipping into other parts of Alameda County and the Bay area. Women are really struggling to make ends meet and take care of their children," said Perez.

Since implementing their online intake screening form, along with calls for over the phone screening, she said requests for shelter keep pouring in.

Their waitlist is growing.

"It's on a daily basis that we're getting these online, as well as phone calls. We are constantly increasing our wait list because the need is so high. The demand is higher than the supply," she said.



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