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PATHWAY FROM BOYS TO MEN GALA



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By Dianne Anderson

Those looking to hobnob with local movers and shakers or just mingle with the brothers will make their way out to the annual Pathway From Boys To Men, Inc. gala to support the cause in fashion forward swag and glam.

The celebration will shine the light on the growth of young men through their journey from the hard places they used to call home.

James Randolph said the gala represents 18 years of nonprofit service, and is all about supporting their young men, 18 and older, who learn how to find a job, and in the process, find themselves.

“Most of the young men that come through our program have gone through the foster system, or are being emancipated from foster care. I go into some of the schools and speak about setting goals and having a purpose for our lives. What is our purpose? What is your purpose?” he said.

He didn't have to think long about his choice for this year's gala, two local achievers who have made their way up through the toughest of circumstances, and have spent decades reaching back to help others.

On Saturday, October 21, the gala will be held at Cypress Neighborhood Center, located at 8380 Cypress Ave in Fontana from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$49.

Keynote speaker and honorees are hometown hero Terrence Stone, CEO of Young Visionaries Youth Leadership Academy, and the Lifetime Achievement Award goes to CNN Hometown Hero, Kim Carter, founder of Time for Change Foundation.

Randolph said Terrence Stone represents the best part of growth through adversity because he has faced many rough and winding roads, but emerged to serve thousands of local youth with jobs, and shelter. He has helped those coming out of jails and prisons, and those looking for work.



James Randolph



“With Terrence, I just like his spirit. He has a good spirit, and some of the trials he’s gone through to make it to where he’s at. Terrance had challenges and he’s overcome those challenges, and he still puts God first,” Randolph said.

He met both Stone and Kim Carter at about the same time in 2006, and admired how they were doing the hard work to help the community.

Randolph said his program has also partnered with Carter, helping some of her former participants with rental assistance when they moved into their own living spaces.

“Kim is doing a lot, I’ve known her for about 16 years. She was there in Sacramento when my organization was selected as nonprofit of the year in 2019, and we’ve been running on the same roads. The work we put in is what matters,” he said.

The gala event opens with a prayer from Pastor Joshua Beckley of Pastor Ecclesia Christian Fellowship. Also honored are City of Fontana Mayor Aquanetta Warren, Zill Oforiatta Black Employee Network at Amazon, Mike Davis, CEO & President of You Go International Network, Steve Sutherland, Ronald Dale Evans, Sr. Consultant Unity For Service, Alice Smith of Restoration House of Refuge, and Matt Dickerson.

Over the years, Randolph has helped about 90 of his young men land jobs at Home Depot, and continues to connect with big-name stores, but he’d like to see more young men get into the carpenter’s union.

“Learn a skill and you can work for yourself after you learn to do something. Just being able to have that skill – it takes skills to pay the bills,” he said.

His program has reached hundreds and hundreds of local kids, more like thousands counting adults. They give care packages to the homeless with clothes, socks and food. Many youth are homeless in the area, he said, and some are dealing with mental health issues.

“But they still got to eat. One of the new things we started doing is with the working poor. If you have a job and the car breaks down, you have to get the work. Which will you pay? Fix your car, or the rent?” he said.

Whatever is needed, he helps with the donations they are able to secure. Last year, they served over 60 working poor families in emergencies, and while the program isn't the largest in the county, he said they have a lot of heart.

“\$75,000 may not sound like a lot to me or you, but the person that got the assistance, it is a lot. This year is even more. We've already passed \$75,000 [giveaways] this year,” he said.

Initially, he began his program to help young men lost on their path. While he has four daughters, he wanted to do something extra for local young men because he understands what they're going through.

“I had issues with drugs and alcohol at that time I was going through some challenges. Once I stopped in 1988, I was able to move forward towards my goals,” he said, noting November 25 marks 35 years clean and sober.

“Our young people need help. Some don't have fathers and some are just lost. They are listening to each other and they're giving themselves the wrong instruction. We need to fill in the gap. Some of the parents may be in jail or dead, or just missing in action,” he said.

At Ecclesia Christian Fellowship where he is a member, their donations go out every Wednesday and a big outreach next month to redistribute all sorts of goodies, and clothes. He was impressed when one grandmother took some clothes for her twin granddaughters and came back to church wearing what they received.

After all, it's not so much about the money, but it is what money can buy. If families can get free food and clothes, he said they can use that savings to pay the rent.



“That touches my heart to see the resources are being used by the community. We keep moving forward, keep doing what we can do. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and we really need the support to provide services that we’re providing,” he said.

Last week, he made last minute runs to distribute the large donations to their partner churches, Ecclesia Christian Fellowship and Greater Faith Grace Bible Church. He said it would go a long way to support the community.

“We got about 12 pallets of donations from Amazon. That’s what we’re doing this morning. I’m worn out,” he said.

But it’s a good kind of tired.

“Amazon has been good to us these last couple of years with philanthropy. Hygiene clothes, food, electronics, baby stuff, diapers, it’s just so much. I can add ad infinitum,” he said. “I called some of our other organizations to let them know that we’re available.”

To donate online or attend the gala, see <https://www.pathwayfromboystomen.com/>

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