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TIME FOR CHANGE OPENS NEW SHELTER, HOSTS GALA

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By Dianne Anderson

After finally getting out of the justice system, formerly incarcerated women are just scratching the surface of what's to come – obstacle after obstacle.

For starters, access to stable affordable housing, gaining the necessary soft and hard job skills, and legal help with expungements and record clearing are on the shortlist. Most important is the guidance needed to reunify with their children.

Vanessa Perez said the Time for Change Foundation continues to impact the community in each of those areas of need.

Lately, they are expanding their reach with yet another local women's shelter to help rebuild lives, despite their past. The new emergency housing is set to accommodate six women at any given time, but will focus on their annual capacity turnover rate to increase to about 150 per year.

"We are going to be serving single women who are seeking to reunify with their children, overcome homelessness and adversity, and serve women coming out of incarceration with reentry services. It's just new hope, a new home and an opportunity to help women recover and live healthy thriving lives," said Perez, executive director of Time for Change Foundation.

Once the ladies complete the program and into employment during the first level, they are ready to move on to the next level of self-sufficiency.

"We transition into permanent housing where we help them identify housing, and we help support them with household furnishings, we give them a fully furnished apartment, helping them with their first and last month rent so they can live independently on their own," she said.

Considering the sky-high cost of housing, providing the first and last month's rent is no small feat as many people become homeless before they can get their foot in the door.

Since Time For Change programs began 23 years ago, the non-profit has helped over 4,800 individuals achieve self-sufficiency and reunited 325 children from foster care with their mothers.

Other successful programs like Project LEAP have also worked closely with formerly incarcerated men and women, who gained access to legal help, employment development and job placement. They have also received systems navigation, mental health services and support with social reintegration.

Under Dr. Kim Carter-Tillman's leadership, Perez said that their priority is to help those who are exiting institutions, and getting them functionally back into society.

"It's making sure they have good tools and skill sets to land jobs that are living wage, and support long term employment enhancing their



career trajectory to remain stable and housed to provide for their families and not recidivate back into incarceration," she said.

Coming up, Time for Change Foundation hosts its 23rd Annual Awards Gala, "Unwavering: Igniting Change, Inspiring Hope.

On Friday, April 11, the awards dinner fundraiser features a powerhouse lineup from entertainment, business, and public service. Actress and mental health advocate Taraji Henson will take home the Philanthropist of the Year Award. Country music superstar Jon Pardi is set to be honored with the Humanitarian Award. The event runs from 6:00 – 9:30 p.m., to be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Ontario Airport, located at 222 N. Vineyard Avenue. Tickets for the gala can be purchased at www.timeforchangefoundation.org.

Honorees also include Michelle Decker, CEO of the Inland Empire Community Foundation to receive the Community Champion award. Producer Chiara Tilesi will receive the Women's Global Icon Award. The Ramos Family Spirit of Compassion Award goes to Lifting as We Climb, a U.S. Air Force unit at March Air Reserve. Richard Jeske is honored with the Nancy Varner Angel Award, and Dynamic Duo Award recognizes Charisse Bremond Weaver and George Weaver.

Henson, widely known for her mental health advocacy, recently donated furniture for the new TFC shelter.

Perez said that everyone is extremely excited about the support they've received for Time for Change Foundation's mission. The safe space also provides wraparound services, and helps women's self-esteem, and mental health.

"That is a huge thing. Women coming off the streets after incarceration and homelessness, they get to come into a beautifully furnished building, which makes all the difference in being in a good, clean, happy, positive environment," she said.

Beds are limited, but she said if they don't have the space or availability, they refer out to many of their community partners, who provide shelter.

It is a never-ending mission.

"We're getting calls every single day from people looking for support. The great thing is we are expanding our capacity, which will help more women come in and get stable so they can transition to stable permanent housing to support their children," she said.

To buy a gala ticket, or make a donation, see www.timeforchangefoundation.org

To learn more about TFCF, see timeforchangefoundation.org/media/pdfs/FY-2024-Annual-Report-V2.pdf