



July 2009

Downtown Women's Center eNewsletter

News From the Heart Of Skid Row

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Greetings from the Downtown Women's Center (DWC)! Thank you for giving a moment of your time to read our eNewsletter - a brief update of happenings at the Center and ideas for how you can get involved!

As our organization and the population we serve continue to experience change, we have been intently focused on developing solutions to our most pressing challenges. The DWC community is preparing for the upcoming move to our new site; we have successfully completed the pilot installment of our first hands-on workforce training program; and we are finding new ways to adapt for a surge in need for our health advocacy services. Please read on for opportunities for involvement with DWC in the coming months; you can also visit our website at www.DWCweb.org for more information about the Center's impact on our community and how you can help!

You're Invited! *Happenings at DWC*

Project Home Art Walk
Saturday, July 25th, 5:30 - 9:30 pm

Take a walk for a cause! Enjoy great music, food and drink, and fine art at this wonderful event; proceeds from this year's Art Walk will benefit DWC's *Project Home*.

Project Home will provide permanent supportive housing apartments, a drop-in day center, supportive services, a social enterprise, and Skid Row's first full-time women's medical and mental health clinic. Our new home is

scheduled to open in late 2010 and will serve 3500 women annually.

Location: South Pasadena, CA. Start at SOPA Studios - 1025 Hope Street - to view work by the women of DWC and learn more about *Project Home*. Then continue to Fremont Gallery for a Silent Auction followed by Mission Street for more galleries and a wine tasting!

For more information about the event, please contact **Tracy Talaid** at (213) 680-0600 x201 or TracyT@DWCweb.org.

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### **Volunteer Orientation**

Wednesday, August 5th, 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Volunteer Orientation is a crash course on all of the important information needed to be a successful volunteer, and it will familiarize you with DWC programs, policies, and volunteer opportunities. Leave with your first assignment in hand!

If you are a first-time volunteer, please visit our [volunteer web page](#), fill out a group or individual volunteer application, and submit via email or fax to **Volunteer Coordinator Vanessa Wai** at [Volunteer@DWCweb.org](mailto:Volunteer@DWCweb.org) or (213) 680-0844. When you submit your application, please also RSVP for Volunteer Orientation.

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### **Summer Wine Tasting Evening**

Saturday, August 8th, 5:00 - 8:00 pm

The **DWC Public Outreach Team** and **CORKBAR** invite you to a summer wine tasting evening to benefit the Downtown Women's Center! Tickets are \$35 and include a wine flight, hors d'oeuvres, and a donation. The event will also feature a silent auction that includes a basketball signed by the NBA Champion **Los Angeles Lakers**!

**Location:** CORKBAR  
403 W. 12th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

RSVP: Please visit [www.firstgiving.com/corkbar](http://www.firstgiving.com/corkbar) for more information and to order tickets.

## **How You Can Help**

### *Donations of Storage Space*

DWC and interior design partner **Nest Feathers** are currently in need of storage space for incoming furniture donations for *Project Home*. If you are able to donate storage space please contact **Tracy Talaid** at 213.680.0600 x201 or [TracyT@DWCweb.org](mailto:TracyT@DWCweb.org).

## Spotlight on Participants

### *Workforce Training Participants Complete Program!*

Tuesday, July 14 was a very special day for six ambitious Ladies at DWC. This marked the day that they successfully completed the very first 12-week installment of our S.E.T. (Skills Enhancement Training) To Succeed program!

S.E.T. To Succeed began with a career fair in March, followed by a selection and training process for a range of roles that contribute to DWC's daily operations. Working closely with an assigned staff mentor, each participant was given opportunities to build skills and receive vocational training. Following the "time-banking" model, women earned rewards in exchange for time dedicated; with the more time contributed, the higher the value of goods received.

"It was a great experience," exclaimed **Maria T.** upon receiving her certificate of completion at this week's ceremony. Maria has volunteered as a tour guide at the Center for many years. However, after learning valuable public relations skills through her experience in the Tour Guide role through S.E.T. To Succeed, she feels she has learned to be "more professional" and gained insight through "different perspectives" that she will be able to use well into the future.

**Sadhana J.**, who spent the last three months working as a Fundraising and Marketing Clerk, feels the program "increases self-esteem" and is "grounding." After gaining "tremendous knowledge about nonprofit fundraising" and significantly improving her computer applications skills, she can now incorporate the experience into her resume, which she is "ready to send!" "I hope other Ladies take advantage (of this opportunity) in the future," she sincerely remarks.

Both the Ladies and staff are extremely pleased with the successful outcome of the pilot program. A new list of positions are currently being created, and we plan to begin the hiring process for the next phase this fall. We look forward to creating new opportunities for women to learn and gain momentum as they prepare to enter or re-enter the workforce!

## Generosity Outside of the Box

### *First DWC Pledge Program Participant*

Congratulations and thanks go to **Florence Rooney**, DWC's first Pledge Program participant. Florence has been a donor since 1991 and has continued to support the Center in a variety of ways. Like many of our extraordinary volunteers, she has a very special place in her heart for DWC! Some years ago, Florence and a group of volunteers from the **American Martyrs Parish** cooked meals at the Center during a period that spanned 13 years. Their leader (fondly known as the Big Kahuna to all of the volunteers in their group) insisted that they vary the meals they cooked for the women, even if there were several months in between!

*What is the Pledge Program?*

The Pledge Program simplifies how your donations to DWC are given and

tracked. You start by making a pledge to donate a fixed amount every month/quarter/year for a set period. You also specify how you will donate (e.g., personal checks by mail, automated credit card payments, etc.). You will receive quarterly statements for your records and tax purposes showing all your recorded donations against your annual pledge amount.

Your gifts are processed automatically, so DWC costs are reduced and your funds go right to work in support of our programs that provide meals, housing, and supportive services to homeless women in downtown Los Angeles.

We encourage you to follow Florence Rooney's terrific example and sign up to participate in the DWC Pledge Program today!

Visit our [Pledge Program web page](#) to get started!

## Economic Impact Update

### *Increased Health Support Needs & Creative Solutions*

The number of newly homeless women seeking DWC's services are highest they have been in over a decade. More extremely low-income women than ever before are seeking support fearing that they are at risk of becoming homeless. During the first half of this year, our health advocacy programs nearly doubled in participation. Many women have revealed that they have experienced recent job loss - and, thus, loss of health insurance; others are facing barriers accessing healthcare through state and federal health programs due to budget cuts.

In response, our health management and prevention services have grown stronger than ever. Our monthly on-site clinic, in partnership with **JWCH Institute, Inc.**, began operating on a weekly basis to meet the much higher demand for low- to no-cost primary care among the population we serve. Additionally, nine mobile clinics have visited the Center since January, including HIV and TB testing as well as other vital wellness screenings. We are now averaging 75% more health education workshops per month in our Day Center, and our nutritional planning and consulting services have acquired the capacity to help the 100 women visiting our Day Center daily to take control of their health.

We are pleased with the progress we have made, and we will continue to actively monitor the needs of our participants - and adapt to meet those demands - during these difficult times.