



House of Hope

HAPPENINGS

Winter 2009



The Magic of the Holidays

Our holiday newsletter always finds me challenged to put together words that convey, in a fresh way, the successful recovery our women discover at House of Hope. Rather, I ask you to

imagine our women and their families at graduation as they whisper their gratefulness for recovery and families reunited. Listen to the squeals of delight as they reunite with their children, parents, siblings and loved ones. Observe the rays of hope on their faces as they look forward to their new opportunities. Some may go onto college, some may find employment in a new career, some may return home to become dedicated mothers to their children. Many will return to be volunteers at the House of Hope or the recovery community as a whole, giving back so freely that which has been given to them.

This past year, House of Hope has made every dollar count for the benefit of the women who need our services so desperately. That is the best way for us to honor your generosity. For every dollar you contributed and for every hour of your time you have volunteered, the House of Hope thanks you.

While looking forward to a bright future, all of us can look back with heartfelt appreciation for the many gifts our friends have given to us. Knowing that our women have the support of so many wonderful friends energizes all of us to join together to meet the many challenges that the New Year holds.

Hard times either cripple us or make us stronger. I believe that our response to the current economic crises has made the House of Hope stronger and more resilient.

- Our funding from the County of Los Angeles, which in the past has been a major source of income, has been severely reduced and in some cases eliminated. Many of our clients come from middle and lower income families and no woman has been turned away due to an inability to pay, as long as she has a strong desire to turn her life around. To compensate for the loss of county revenue we have turned to actively recruiting fee-for-service clients. Our efficient cost structure enables us to charge a fee substantially below the prices of the more notable “28-Day” treatment facilities.

- We have begun to augment our residential program with individualized treatment. House of Hope now offers treatment protocols ranging from two to six months or longer. These individualized treatments offer alternatives to accommodate working women and the need for varying levels of care.
- We have started a self-pay alternative sentencing program for women who may be facing a jail sentence for minor non-violent alcohol or drug convictions. Much of the recidivism and trauma to the family and society can be stopped if women are provided recovery treatment while serving their sentence. This is our contribution back to our community.
- Las Esperanzas, our Ladies Auxiliary (open to all) continues to raise much need operating funds through their annual teas, fashion shows, bingo nights and other community events. A reinvigorated Alumni Group provides health and recreational opportunities for our clients that we would otherwise have to buy. A newly formed volunteer group—Helping Hands—promises to be another resource to House of Hope. I invite you to read the article on Helping Hands.
- We have enhanced our efforts to appeal to non-profit foundations for program funding. The competition for grants is fierce and the demands on their resources have never been greater. Nevertheless, we are committed to leave no stone unturned as we search for the resources we need to help women in recovery.

Despite all the positive steps we have taken, we still depend heavily on your individual donations. I urge you to provide a gift, no matter the amount, to House of Hope this Holiday Season. It is because of your generosity that we have been in service to women since 1955 and will continue to offer hope to women who truly need and desire help.

Every single one of us at the House wishes every single one of you a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous New Year filled with love and laughter.

Bobbi Tschirgi



A Message from the Program Director

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to share about the miracles of recovery and the transformation of life that happens here at House of Hope.

As we near the end of 2009 and reflect on this year's opportunities and our potential for growth, the increasing diversity of our clientele has shaped our approach to meet their needs.

We made some changes to our program that came with anticipated and unanticipated challenges. With professional guidance and leadership both our clinical and administrative staff faced these challenges head on. We changed our residential treatment program from six months to four months and we now include individualized treatment to meet the specific needs of each woman.

One of the miracles of House of Hope is that it transforms desperate, wounded women, who lack self-esteem, self-worth and hope, into beautiful "women of sober dignity." If you ask any woman here to describe House of Hope in one word, she will answer... "Love." We nurture them with love and direct them with structure.

It is such a reward to watch these women flourish before our very eyes. We empower them to believe that they can be whomever they wish and that their opportunities are endless.....if they can learn to trust the process of recovery.

On behalf of the staff and our clients, I would like to wish you Happy Holidays and a very prosperous New Year.

Myrra Alo

Helping Hands



The annual Dia De Los Muertos Festival in downtown San Pedro was an enormous success! Held on Halloween, merchants up and down 6th Street participated.

There were booths featuring traditional Day of the Dead handmade crafts, snacks and toys. "Our Creations" store-owner Carla Ortega set out tables for children to learn to make paper flowers, and design their own sugar-skulls, all free of charge.

It was Carla who provided a booth for Helping Hands, the fundraising group dedicated to House of Hope, where some of the women of the House provided



free face-painting to the children, many of whom arrived in costume. Creepy skeletons,

pretty princesses, and a fair showing of ninjas were some of the many costumes worn — the children were delighted, and they just kept coming!



The ladies all did a wonderful job, working tirelessly for hours – all the while with smiles on their faces. They were being of service, enjoying that special feeling that occurs while helping others in the community, a vital part of continued sobriety.

How You Can Help

House of Hope offers many ways to help women who desperately want to find the path to recovery. Money is always welcome and we have a critical need for operating funds. However, for those not currently in a position to make a monetary donation, there are other ways you can contribute.

Monetary Gifts:

House of Hope can accept cash, checks, securities, VISA and MasterCard.

Unrestricted Gifts:

We welcome unrestricted gifts. They provide us with the flexibility to apply to scholarships for women who require it the most.

Designated Gifts:

We accept restricted gifts from donors who want to direct their gifts toward specific needs. Here are some suggestions:

- **Gift of Hope Fund:** provides assistance for women who are unable to pay for House of Hope's services,
- **Endowment Enhancement Fund:** gifts and bequests that build on the Dotha Welbourn Memorial Endowment,
- **Deferred Maintenance Fund:** create a prudent reserve for major repairs and improvements (e.g., roofs and renovations),
- **Happenings Fund:** become "publisher" of this newsletter.

Pro Bono Opportunities:

Anyone donating their services *pro bono* will be acknowledged in brochures, newsletters and other publicity opportunities.

- Optometrist
- Physician's Assistant or Visiting Nurse
- Dentist
- Dietitian
- Tree Trimmer
- Heating and Refrigeration Mechanic
- Printer
- Graphic Artist

Volunteers are needed to:

Drive clients to appointments and court appearances as well as;

- Menu planner/food shopper
- Receptionist/general clerical support
- Work on behalf of House of Hope at PV Resale Thrift Shop in Lomita
- Help on special events (such as Chicago)



Save the date!

Chicago will be performing live at the Fred Kavli Theatre in the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza at 8:00 p.m. on Monday, March 29, 2010.

A portion of the proceeds from this concert will be donated to the House of Hope. Ticket prices are \$86 for orchestra seats; \$81 for mezzanine, and \$76 for balcony. Tickets can be ordered online directly from the theater at (www.toaks.org/cap/tickets/events) or visit the House of Hope website at www.houseofhopesp.org, for additional information.

Carole Mason



A special Thank You

This newsletter would not be complete without recognizing Carole Mason, a special star at House of Hope. Carole recently retired from the Board Of Directors, following nine years of dedicated service, most recently as Vice President. Prior to joining the Board of Directors, she was an active member and officer for Las Esperanzas for many years. If you have attended any function at the House of Hope, be it graduation, open house, a fundraising event, or some other activity, you have no doubt seen Carole, as she rarely, if ever, misses a single one! In addition to her Board commitment, Carole also leads a weekly class for our women, as she has done for many years. She works quietly, behind the scenes, pitching in wherever she can help. Thank you, dear Carole, for your many years of past support and continued service to House of Hope!

House of Hope Fundraising Organizations

We are privileged to have three active organizations that support House of Hope in a variety of ways. Each is unique, and they all have at least one common goal: *to raise money for House of Hope.*

These groups are about much more than raising money. They offer friendship and support to one another. The rewards members receive in return for the work performed, cannot be measured in monetary terms.

Las Esperanzas

Las Esperanzas (The Hopeful Ones) is House of Hope's oldest auxiliary. Their events include the 12-month drawing campaign, Bingo twice a year and the Annual Spring Tea and Fashion Show, now held at the Breakers Hotel in nearby Long Beach.

Las Esperanzas also hosts two events just for the clients...a Holiday Potluck in December and an Ice Cream Social in July.

Las Esperanzas meets at 7:00 PM on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Membership is open to all women.

The Alumnae

The Alumnae have integrated the gift of service and fun into this rejuvenated group of graduates, whose primary focus is to share the joy of recovery with the women who are still in treatment. Their fundraisers include breakfasts, car washes, raffles, and the very popular dances. The dances provide an opportunity for the women to socialize, often for the first time in sobriety. The members of *The Alumnae* take particular joy in playing Santa to the women in Primary Care.

The Alumnae meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month and invites any alumna of House of Hope to join them.

Helping Hands

Helping Hands is the newest fundraising auxiliary and has enthusiastically started several fundraising campaigns, including; "A Christmas Carol" at the Warner Grand Theatre on December 22nd. The Event is followed by a reception at the Parkhurst Gallery. They have also launched a magazine subscription campaign, for which 40% of the sales go directly to House of Hope. These subscriptions make wonderful holiday gifts. Learn more about this program at <http://magfundraising.com/houseofhope> and follow the simple directions to place your orders.

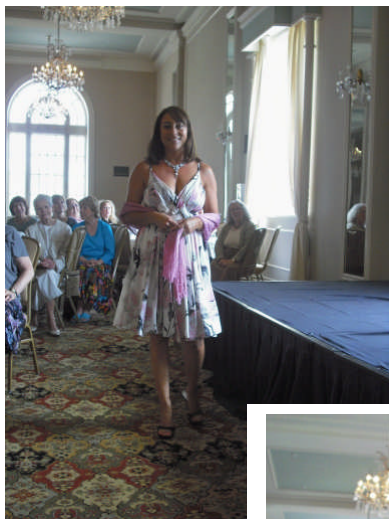
Helping Hands meets at 2 PM on the 2nd Sunday of each month at the House of Hope Adams Center. Membership is open to all.

For more information on any of these groups, please call the House of Hope ~ (310) 521-9209

Annual Spring Tea

Las Esperanzas hosted their annual spring tea and fashion show at a new venue. This year's fundraising event was held in the Empire Ballroom at the Breakers in Long Beach. Patrons were treated to a variety of finger sandwiches, scones, cookies and candies, punch, coffee--and tea, of course!

One of the highlights of the afternoon was the debut of the newly formed chorus of the House of Hope, who entertained guests with their enthusiastic performance. (See There's a Song in the Air!)



Members of Las Esperanzas also served as models for the fashion show. (Models Margie, left, Anna, center and

Cara, below – strut their stuff!) Max's Place in San Pedro presented several ensembles, from casual sportswear to elegant evening



attire. A Silent Auction offered a variety of treasures, with the winning bidders taking home original art, crystal, and Lakers playoff tickets.



There's a Song in the Air!



Director Dick David leads the chorus in practice

If you were to stroll by the Adams Center on a Thursday afternoon, you would likely hear the sound of voices raised in song. Early this year, Dick David volunteered to form and lead the first-ever chorus comprised of clients from the House of Hope. Dick wanted to introduce the element of music as part of the recovery curriculum; he also wanted to ensure that the chorus would be a fun activity for the women.

Dick's task is challenging, as many of the chorus members have no formal musical training, and the group is constantly changing as clients enter and move through the program. In spite of this, the weekly one-hour practices have already born fruit,



The chorus performs at the Annual Las Esperanzas Spring Tea and Fashion Show

as the chorus made its very successful debut in May at the Annual Tea and Fashion Show held in Long Beach. Also volunteering in this effort is Karen Herrin, who accompanies the group on keyboard.

House of Hope Thanks Our Recent Donors

House of Hope's mission is to provide a clean and sober, nurturing environment for women seeking to recover from the ravages of alcoholism and drug addiction. We appreciate the support of the following donors.

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The listed are donations received between November 1, 2008 and November 1, 2009
If we inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, please call Maricela and (310) 521-9209

We add our special thanks to the scores of people who purchased tickets from Las Esperanzas.
Participation in this year-long raffle results in direct support to House of Hope. It's not too late to participate.
Please go to www.houseofhopesp.org/lasesperanzas for details.

Keri's Story

Each edition of *Happenings*, features one or more House of Hope graduates. Keri is just one of hundreds of women who have recovered from alcoholism and drug addiction.

Even though I had supportive and loving parents and a normal childhood, I always felt different, that I never belonged anywhere. Until my senior year in high school, soccer was my life. Then everything changed. I injured my knee and was told I would be unable to play soccer again. Life as I knew it was over. I just stopped caring, started hanging out with my brother, and began doing things that I swore I would never do.

Soon I could not even get up for work at McDonalds without smoking a bowl of weed and doing a line of meth. My addictive behavior started to show in everything I did.

“My addictions had taken over my life and there was no end in sight!!”

My Mom had watched an episode of “Oprah” about people on meth, recognized all the signs, and built up the strength to ask me if I was on drugs. Of course, I denied it, knowing that I was in pretty deep. Finally, Mom gave me two weeks to get help and then kicked me out.

Looking back now, it was the best thing she could have ever done for me! I had nowhere to go, no one to turn to, and I could not stop drinking and using. I crashed on my Mom’s front porch.

I became friends with a bartender where I hung out and started bar-backing for her. I wasn’t paid much, but I did get to drink free. It was perfect. Soon I moved in with her, got a car, and stopped doing meth. I was just done. I left my job at McDonald’s; started drinking very heavily and my life began to revolve around that bar.

After four months, the house we were living in was sold and once again, I had nowhere to go. I started sleeping in my car, constantly looking for a safe place to park, where the cops would not bother me. Then I started smoking crack. Looking back, I realize I was always using something. I went from weed and alcohol to meth; from meth to alcohol; from alcohol to crack. My addictions had taken over my life and there was no end in sight!

I stopped hanging out at the bar after a falling out with my friend, and found a job nearby at an office furniture restoration store. The owner paid less than minimum wage, but he paid me cash at the end of each day. An addict/alcoholic like me could not wait two weeks to be paid anyway. I had been working there for a couple of months when the owner sexually assaulted me. I was so sick in my disease that I went back to work for him the next day and never told the police. I had no self-worth or

self-esteem. Every night before I fell asleep I rolled down my car windows and prayed to God to take my life.

About a month after I was assaulted, I came up with a “master plan” to rob my boss. One Friday he refused to pay me and that was it. I grabbed two of my friends and we went back and robbed him. I got \$5 out of the robbery and was arrested by the sheriffs. Two tall cans of beer and a bag of Doritos sent me to prison for 10 months!

That arrest saved my life. While I was at Lynwood County Jail, I met the woman who became my 12-step sponsor. I felt a connection right away, even though I did not know that she was in AA for about two months. When I went to prison, we stayed in contact. She was the only one I talked to on the outside, other than my Mom. I was released in May of 2008 and my parents let me stay on their couch. By the second night, I realized I could not stay sober on my own. I wanted to drink, but instead called my sponsor who took me to four meetings in three days. I felt a part of something for the first time in my life.

My sponsor gave me phone numbers of recovery programs for me to call. I called House of Hope every day for nearly a month before I was admitted. Coming to House of Hope was the best decision I have ever made. House of Hope gave me a foundation for sobriety and life-long friends. Not long after graduation, I started helping out at their Executive Office. It was a learning experience, and a fun one at that. I never realized when I was in the House all the work that the staff does to help each woman. I am so grateful for House of Hope.

“House of Hope gave me a foundation for sobriety and life-long friends.”

In June 2009, the Executive Director of House of Hope offered me the chance to become their first VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) worker. I had the opportunity to travel to Seattle for training, and I participated in the classes with a newfound confidence. It was an enlightening experience to realize all that I have learned from House of Hope and the AA program.

I still struggle every day with forgiving myself for my sexual assault. It is hard, but today I have these amazing friends in my life who are there for me and who I can turn to for anything. My life is filled with gifts from this program. I believe my Higher Power has put me where I have needed to be each moment of my life.

Editor’s note: Keri graduated from the six-month program at House of Hope and is now a VISTA volunteer working as a development coordinator.



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Mission Statement

House of Hope provides a safe, clean and sober, nurturing environment for substance-abusing women. Our mission is to help women to regain their dignity and learn how to live life without alcohol or drugs.

We at House of Hope know that substance abuse, the interactive disease of alcoholism and drug addiction, can never be cured. We know that the disease can be arrested—given time—with an encouraging environment, educational tools, knowledgeable support groups and, most importantly, the woman's sincere desire to change her life.

Therefore, we continually seek to expand and improve our abilities to help women achieve self-awareness, spirituality, dignity, and integrity, become financially responsible, re-establish family ties, and be reunited with their children when possible. We help restore to health, women who are wounded, lost and broken and return them to society with the tools they need to continue their lives of recovery.

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