

skid row housing trust

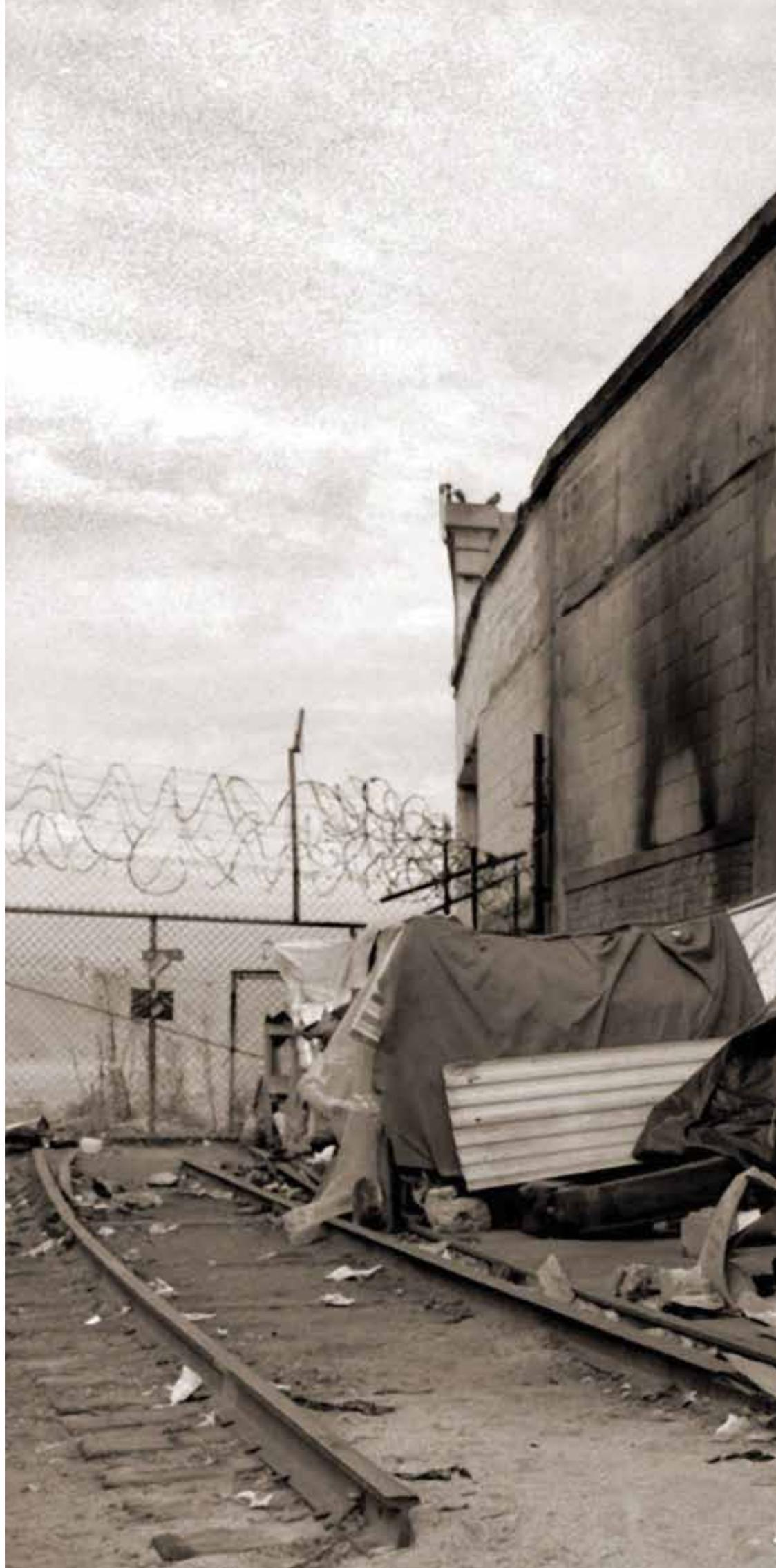
Dedication

This book is dedicated to past and present members of the Board of Directors and staff of Skid Row Housing Trust, the architects and builders who have designed and created our buildings, and the investors and donors who have made our work possible. But most of all, to the men and women whom the Trust exists to serve: our residents who persevere through formidable obstacles to overcome chronic homelessness and discover the promise of a better life.

HOMES. SUPPORT. SUCCESS.

THE PRESSING NEED

HOUSING FIRST



A CHRONICALLY HOMELESS AMERICAN REQUIRES AN AVERAGE OF \$42,000 IN PUBLIC SERVICES ANNUALLY TO LIVE ON THE STREETS.

73,000 MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN ARE HOMELESS ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT IN LOS ANGELES ALONE.

200,000 AMERICANS ARE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS.

700,000 PEOPLE ACROSS AMERICA ARE HOMELESS ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT OF THE YEAR.

3,000,000 + AMERICANS EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS ANNUALLY.

“NOTHING GOOD CAN
HAPPEN UNTIL
YOU HAVE **HOUSING**”

- ALICE CALLAGHAN



Of the 88 cities in Los Angeles County, only a small number offer significant services for the homeless. The vast majority simply rely on the concentration of shelters, Single Room Occupancy Hotels, missions, health services, soup kitchens and more recently, permanent supportive housing available on Skid Row. As a result, the 55 square block Skid Row area has the greatest concentration of homeless residents in the United States. Over the past 20 years, Skid Row Housing Trust has created more than 1,400 homes for homeless men and women. Many more are still consigned to dilapidated residential hotels or to the squalor of the streets, where bacterial contamination can reach 30 times the concentration of raw sewage, and septic vacuum tanker trucks follow street sweepers to prevent the contamination of storm drains.

Punitive measures such as the City of Los Angeles' "Safer City Initiative," first implemented in September 2006, may be responsible for a welcome diminution of violent crime on Skid Row, but it has done little to address the root cause of chronic homelessness. Despite increased police presence, the Skid Row environment remains frequently grim, often chaotic, and tremendously destabilizing. A July 2009 report issued jointly by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty and the National Coalition for the Homeless declared Los Angeles the single "meanest city" of 273 cities assessed across America. Law enforcement, relocation, and

incarceration for infractions such as jaywalking may only temporarily contain and conceal the problems of homelessness, rather than fundamentally improve the living conditions of our most vulnerable citizens.

Perennial debates continue over whether harm reduction or zero tolerance represents a better path to ameliorate conditions on Skid Row or whether instead the answer lies somewhere between the two extremes. Too frequently lost among the statistics, recriminations, and finger pointing, however, is the immense and relentless human toll of life on the streets. Many of the homeless residents of Skid Row are quite literally at the end of the

line. They are destitute. They are troubled. They are damaged. They often have no family and nowhere else to turn. They have multiple, recurrent disabilities and are very, very sick — both physically and mentally. Many simultaneously also battle profound substance abuse issues and addictions.

While there is no panacea to solve these long-standing and intractable impediments, there is a place to start.

Alice Callaghan, founder of the Skid Row Housing Trust has said, "Nothing good can happen until you have housing." Housing won't solve alcoholism or drug abuse. It won't solve persistent poverty

or unemployment. It won't magically restore lucidity or sanity. But it is a critical first step. It is the foundation from which people can and do get better. In many cases making the first step results in a transformation that is nothing short of miraculous.

This is not a book about "the homeless" on Skid Row. It is a book about personal endurance, resilience, and hope. These are the stories of men and women turning their lives and their community around.



PHOTO PROVIDED COURTESY OF THE SKID ROW PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB AND MANUEL COMPTON



“Home is the place where,
when you have to go there,
They have to take you in.”

“I should have called it
Something you somehow
haven't to deserve.”

– *Robert Frost, The Death of the Hired Man, 1914*

THE PROMISE

OF SKID ROW HOUSING TRUST

CONFRONTING THE MOST COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING CAUSES OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS. AND WINNING.

At Skid Row Housing Trust, we believe we can and must end homelessness, one resident at a time. Despite the great challenges of chronic homelessness, where others see hopelessness, we see opportunity. Where others place conditions, we remove impediments. We end isolation and activate potential. Our work means the difference between someone lying on a sidewalk and having a home.

Beyond low income housing, beyond family housing, beyond housing for the working poor, we take on the most challenging individual cases and seek out the most ambitious and complicated real estate development opportunities because we have the expertise, adaptability, and creativity to achieve success. We have pioneered integrated permanent housing with a continuum of counseling and physical and mental health treatment. We have seen first-hand how we can dramatically improve the quality of life even for the most susceptible and sick members of the Skid Row community.

The best reason to end homelessness is because it is the right thing to do. It is part of the fabric of our common humanity to acknowledge and address the misery that befalls so many on Skid Row even when it is inconvenient, uncomfortable, or disturbing. It is both a moral imperative and a civic duty to help the most disadvantaged who are starting from scratch in trying to turn their lives around. But it is also profoundly practical. It is vastly cheaper, more efficient and more effective to provide our residents permanent supportive housing than it is to incarcerate them or furnish primary healthcare through emergency rooms.

No world-class city can leave its most vulnerable residents behind, yet our social safety net has proven inadequate to the challenges presented by Skid Row. Despite what the Trust has achieved over 20 years, we still work in the epicenter of the largest recovery community in the world. We acknowledge that we have not yet succeeded in eliminating homelessness in Skid Row, but we are not resigned. We will continue to innovate, renovate, build, provide treatment, foster, and forge human connections to create the homes that are the first step to another chance for men and women who have exhausted all other options. And we will continue to show Los Angeles the amazing results of unlocking possibilities otherwise hidden, trapped, overlooked, or undeveloped.

A RENAISSANCE ON SKID ROW

Ernesto *6 years*



Stephanie *5 years*



Over the years of our work with Skid Row Housing Trust, we have adopted many innovations in our approach. But one thing has remained constant since this organization was founded two decades ago: our commitment to help the homeless men and women who suffer most under the burden of multiple, recurring disabilities. Although the hardest cases require the greatest investment of attention and assistance, we believe it is a moral imperative not to leave the most vulnerable of our society behind.

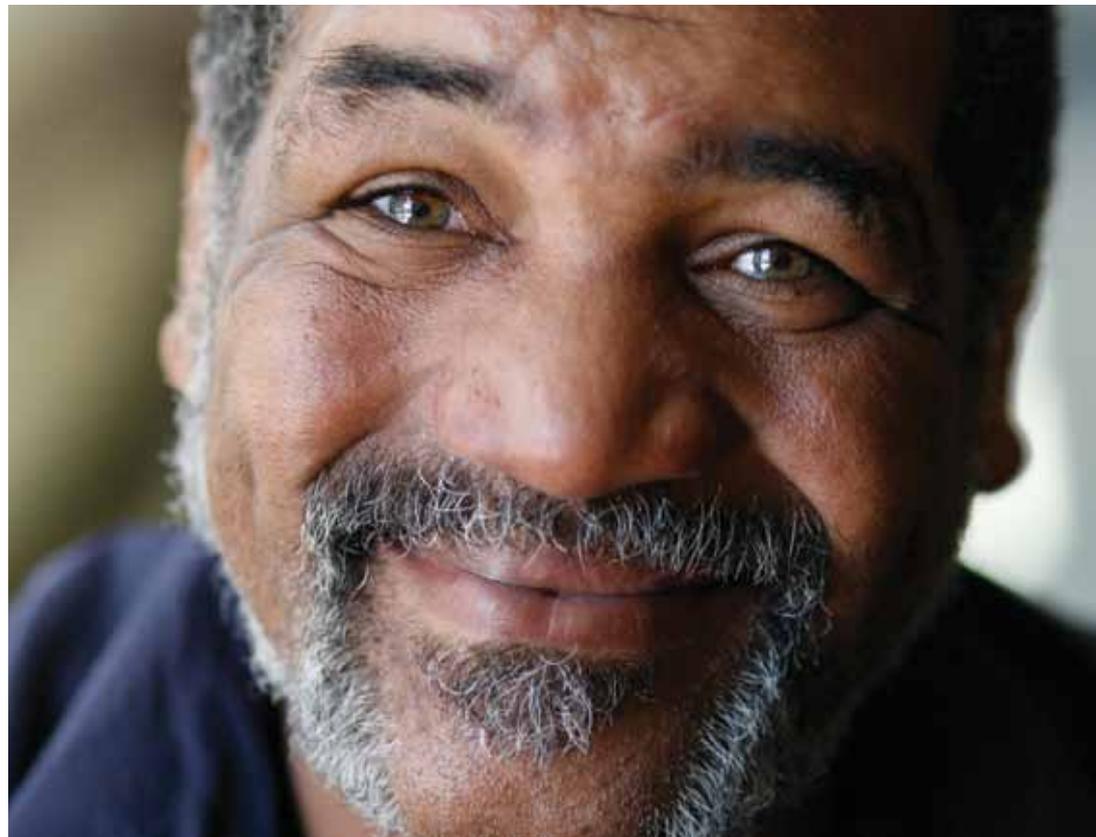
We also know from experience that it is far more cost-effective and efficacious to use supportive housing with integrated on-site physical and mental health services than consign this population to access these services through emergency room visits and incarceration. Our work is far from done, but we are confident that we can and will solve the largest problem of homelessness in the country with fidelity to the guiding principle that no one is beyond help.

Mike Alvidrez, Executive Director
Marc Hayutin, Board Chairman

Mary *3 years*



Reginald *3 years*



HOW IT ALL WORKS

The solution to ending homelessness is permanent supportive housing, which involves providing stable homes and immediate, critical intervention with ongoing care. The final component is the creation of a community — both inside and outside the building walls — to which the residents of Skid Row Housing Trust belong. Here's how the solution works:



DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

- **DEVELOPMENT**

Skid Row Housing Trust identifies underutilized land or existing buildings that can be rehabilitated. Public and private sources fund the acquisition, development, design, rehabilitation or new construction. The Trust's developments serve as economic drivers to the local community, generating hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in local economic activity.

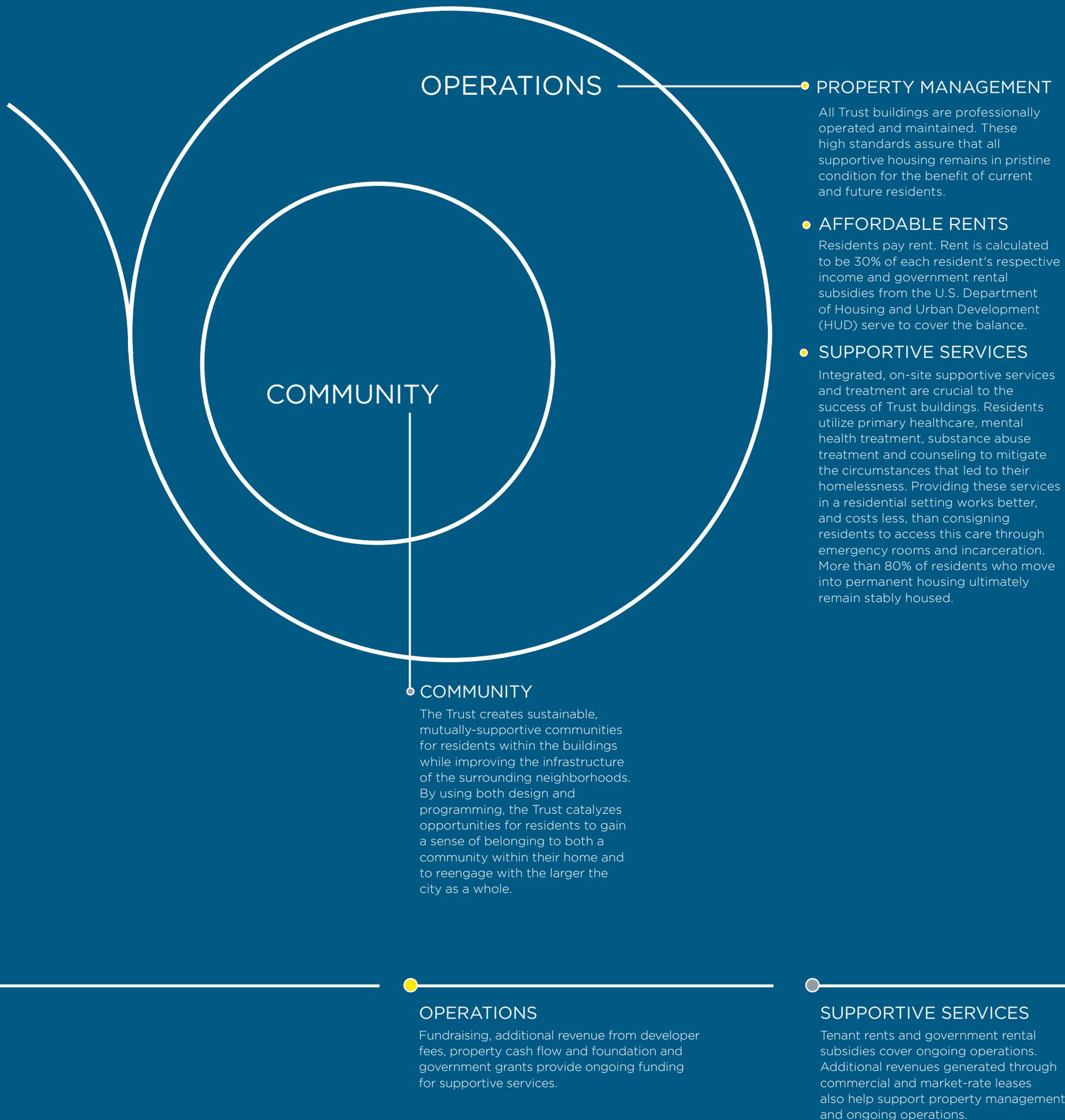
- **PERMANENT HOMES**

Residents move into Trust buildings and lease their own apartments for as long as they wish. Some stay a year and others stay decades. All residents benefit by having a home of their own for as long as they need it.

FUNDING

- **DEVELOPMENT**

Tax credits, public and private loans and government programs provide capital for development.



20 YEARS. 24 BUILDINGS.



PERSHING HOTEL

Architect: Cavaedium
Completed: 1989
Residents: 67



CRESCENT HOTEL

Architect: Cavaedium
Completed: 1992
Residents: 54



HART HOTEL

Architect: Killefer Flammang Purtil
Completed: 1992
Residents: 38



LAS AMERICAS HOTEL

Architect: Los Angeles Community Design Center
Completed: 1992
Residents: 58



PRODUCE PLACE

Architect: Cavaedium
Completed: 1994
Residents: 108



SENATOR HOTEL

Architect: Killefer Flammang Purtil
Completed: 1994
Residents: 51



EDWARD HOTEL

Architect: Killefer Flammang Purtil
Completed: 1995
Residents: 46



BOYD HOTEL

Architect: Koning Eizenberg Architecture
Completed: 1996
Residents: 47



LINCOLN HOTEL

Architect: Kaplan Chen Kaplan
Completed: 2001
Residents: 40



ST. GEORGE HOTEL

Architect: Richard Barron Architects
Completed: 2004
Residents: 86



RAINBOW APARTMENTS

Architect: Michael Maltzan Architecture
Completed: 2006
Residents: 87



ABBEY APARTMENTS

Architect: Koning Eizenberg Architecture
Completed: 2008
Residents: 113

THOUSANDS OF **CHANGED** LIVES.



SIMONE HOTEL

Architect: Koning Eizenberg Architecture
Completed: 1992
Residents: 121



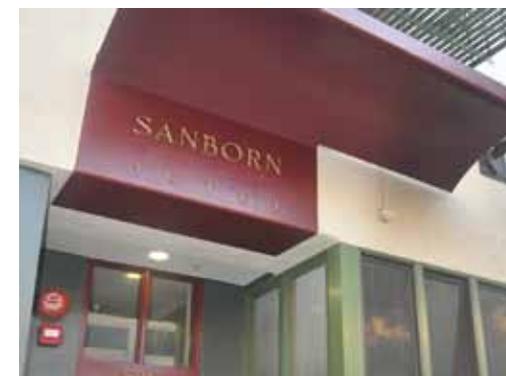
ST. MARK'S HOTEL

Architect: Cavaedium
Completed: 1992
Residents: 89



OLYMPIA HOTEL

Architect: Killefer Flammang Purtil
Completed: 1993
Residents: 47



SANBORN HOTEL

Architect: Barron Fitzgerald Architects
Completed: 1993
Residents: 46



WELDON HOTEL

Architect: Cavaedium
Completed: 1996
Residents: 56



ROSSMORE HOTEL

Architect: Cavaedium
Completed: 1996
Residents: 58



SAN PEDRO HOUSE

Architect: Dvoretzky Bardovi Bunnell
Completed: 1999
Residents: 18



DEWEY HOTEL

Architect: Koning Eizenberg Architecture
Completed: 2001
Residents: 42



NEW CARVER APARTMENTS

Architect: Michael Maltzan Architecture
Completed: 2009
Residents: 95



CHARLES COBB APARTMENTS

Architect: Kivotos Montenegro Partners, Inc.
Estimated Completion: 2010
Residents: 74



NEW GENESIS APARTMENTS

Architect: Killefer Flammang Architects
Estimated Completion: 2011
Residents: 106



STAR APARTMENTS

Architect: Michael Maltzan Architecture
Estimated Completion: In planning
Residents: In planning



PAST



st. george hotel

Jim Bonar, then Skid Row Housing Trust's executive director, knew the rehabilitation of the St. George was complete. "An elderly Japanese woman was walking east past the building, presumably to her apartment in Little Tokyo. She stopped and inquired whether there were units available to rent in the building." That encounter underscored the value and visible success of the Trust's mission: to reclaim vulnerable housing resources from the private market and preserve and maintain them in perpetuity for the community.

For more than a century, the St. George Hotel has been a part of life in Downtown Los Angeles. It first opened in 1906 as a residential hotel. In its heyday during the 1920's and 1930's it was home to many vaudeville performers and the neighborhood, two blocks north and west of — and separate from — Skid Row, was actually a fashionable address. Movie stars including Rudolph Valentino had apartments at the nearby Alexandria Hotel. Hipsters of the day shopped and entertained themselves in the businesses, restaurants, and theaters on Main and Spring Streets.

By the 1940's, developments to the west of Downtown drew upscale residents and shoppers away. The theaters, restaurants, and residential buildings devolved into an adult entertainment zone, with burlesque houses replacing the vaudeville theaters. By the 1970's, the area was still busy, but the theaters were largely dark and the entertainment district housed mostly seedy, dilapidated bars, many of which were entirely open to the streets. The St. George Hotel had become a slum building — renting rooms by the day and even the hour, with drug dealers and prostitutes openly plying their trades throughout the building. Still, the St. George operated this way for decades, generating outsized slumlord profits from nonexistent investment in maintenance and upkeep.

When the building located in the middle of a rundown block became available in 2001, Bonar and the Trust immediately seized the opportunity. The building would enable Trust residents to live right downtown but outside of the overwhelming environment of Skid Row. The Trust selected Richard Barron, a local architect known for sensitive historic rehabilitation projects, to design the

building. Barron reintroduced bright natural light into the formerly enclosed first floor, which is now an open, inviting reception area with a large community kitchen and meeting space. The façade restoration even incorporated recreated decorative glass tiles designed by Frank Lloyd Wright found in the building.

In addition to its impact on the neighborhood and residents, the St. George marked an important leap forward in the Trust's building design and operations: it was the first property to offer integrated supportive services on site, dedicating significant space for the work of medical and social service providers. This approach of providing homes along with a range of support services yielded tremendous success, and has become the paradigm of the Trust's work, as well as a model for others working on ameliorating chronic homelessness throughout the country.



olympia hotel

The Olympia was one of the earliest new construction buildings developed by the Trust. Completed in 1993, it features smaller 120 square foot rooms (compared to the 300 square foot average that is typical today) with community bathrooms and kitchens located on each floor, rather than in each apartment. Architect Wade Killefer led the design on the Olympia and numerous other Trust properties and continues to be gratified by how the kitchen's open and bright plan promotes involvement and community among the residents. The layout, which includes a community kitchen and lounge, enables its residents to strike a needed balance between enjoying the privacy of their homes and coming out of their rooms to take advantage of shared, structured social activities.

Erin Law and Paul Zawacki serve as the resident services coordinators at the Trust's Las Americas Hotel and the Olympia. Together they are responsible for supervising the activity groups that encourage social interaction. The Las Americas and Olympia are located a couple blocks apart but are inexorably linked through their service programs. There are five groups offered each week, including exercise (flexibility, yoga), gardening, cooking, movie screenings, and Drama-Free, a support group that stresses positive thinking and outcomes.

Some residents attend each class, each day and others pick and choose the groups they like best.

Cooking classes consistently attract avid interest among the residents. Erin and Paul collaborate to pose novel culinary challenges to the group and frequently enlist residents to encourage a wide variety of cuisines. After developing a roster of appropriate recipes, they shop for the ingredients and then assign cooking duties based on resident interest and projected attendance. Sometimes the group is so popular that there are even more potential participants than available cooking tasks, which the residents don't like; they like actively participating in the cooking and perhaps more importantly, the group has a rule that you have to cook if you want to eat! This dynamic also helps encourage early signups.

Paul believes in the power of the cooking class and other groups because they provide a chance for the residents, some of them mentally disabled, to participate in normalcy. "They're just being a normal part of society for that one hour they are focused on doing or creating something." Although Erin has no sort of culinary background, she came up with the idea for the cooking group. She says she has always wanted to learn how to cook, so

in essence, she is a student too. "I think of something I'd like to learn to make, research the recipe, buy the ingredients and we all just figure it out together." The group has made pizza, salmon over rice, fruit drinks, hamburgers, pies, breakfast foods, and much more. Once the cooking class made bagels from scratch and after the toil of kneading and hand rolling the dough was complete, the group all agreed they were the best bagels they had ever eaten.

Richard Joyce lives at Las Americas and is a frequent member of the popular cooking class held at Olympia each week. "Around here, wherever you have food, people show up." The group has helped him form friendships with his neighbors. "We talk about everything when we cook. Last week we were making caramel popcorn and you have to bake it for an hour and all that time we were talking to each other." Activities and groups have proven invaluable in building solidarity and continuity among the residents in the buildings. Case managers notice people who wouldn't normally associate with each other come together and work collectively in a positive way. In the case of the cooking class, "they unite over food and it's really cool."

**"THEY UNITE OVER
FOOD AND IT'S
REALLY COOL."**

- PAUL ZAWACKI,
RESIDENT SERVICES
COORDINATOR





Delores Cooper was born in Savannah, GA and raised in Cleveland, OH by her grandmother and aunts. At a very young age, Delores began abusing alcohol.

Delores had a daughter of her own and moved to California when she was in her 30's. She continued to use and abuse drugs and alcohol and eventually found herself living on Skid Row — a place where “you can find everything you want, and everything you don't want.” An addict, Delores was homeless for three years, sleeping under freeways until the day she happened to walk into the Anne Douglas Center for Women.

Delores entered a residential recovery program and graduated from the Center during the fall of 2007. She remained living there and began the long process and hard work of rebuilding her self-esteem. Eventually Delores heard from a friend who was a resident in the Skid Row Housing Trust that the Abbey Apartments would soon be opening. She applied and moved into her own apartment in January of 2009.

Clean and sober for nearly three years, Delores benefits from the continuum of medical and therapy support services provided at the Abbey. She takes cooking

and exercise classes and enjoys the bright colors and warm, cozy feeling of her home. She believes her success is a direct result of the integrated support and services she received. She believes it is also tremendously important simply to know that someone cares. She volunteers at La Casa de Las Amigas and is the official chip-giver at the Abbey's Monday night recovery meetings.

From her apartment window, Delores can still see others less fortunate visiting the Volunteers of America Drop in Center. She knows she never wants to go there again. Today, Delores has regained her sense

of self-esteem. Her caseworkers notice it in the way she now carries herself. Standing tall, with an easy elegance, she speaks softly, but with deliberation and conviction. She has her own, cheerful apartment to go home to every day and says she has no need to escape through alcohol and drugs.

“They make you feel
that you are somebody;
that you matter.”

– *Delores Cooper*

Homeless 3 Years, Abbey Apartments Resident, 8 Months

A photograph of a multi-level parking garage. The structure features multiple levels with metal railings. A prominent red-painted section runs along the side of the building, with several long, narrow fluorescent lights mounted on it. The upper levels are also lit with similar lights. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the primary light sources being the artificial lights within the structure. The perspective is from a lower level looking up and across the building.

PRESENT

rainbow apartments

The story of the Rainbow Apartments is one of many miracles and leaps of faith. First there was the property seller, a garment industry businessowner who decided it was better to retire and sell his two-story building to a nonprofit, rather than hold onto it in the hopes that some day it would be worth more. There was the council member's aide who convinced the planning department to expedite processing of environmental reviews so the project could apply for County funding without waiting an extra year.

Then there was the architecture. While Skid Row Housing Trust has always made good design a centerpiece of its operating philosophy, this was elevated to a new level with the hiring in 2003 of architect Michael Maltzan. A nationally renowned architect who at the time was working on plans for the temporary home in Queens for New York's Museum of Modern Art, Maltzan was persuaded by Jim Bonar that designing the first really distinctive building in Skid Row for a fraction of his typical fee would be his best next career move.

A perfect storm brewed as the November 2004 construction start date approached. The housing boom started driving the cost of construction materials through the roof, and as the closing approached, the general contractor called every day to say the cost would be higher and something else needed to be cut from the design. Without every detail worked out, the Trust finally signed a contract it could

afford and construction proceeded. While an ornamental ironwork screen across the façade was never added back into the design, much of the original vision was preserved through the Trust finding more funds, and the ability of the contractor and architect to work together creatively to find less expensive ways to retain the building's distinctive architectural significance.

"It was hard for the architect because we were stripping out so many of his interesting details," said Trust Housing Director Cristian Ahumada. "When we got to the end, we said all we really have left is color." A broad staircase with risers painted red draws residents from the ground level entryway up to the first floor courtyard. Open air walkways that overlook the courtyard and connect to an open, sunny kitchen and community room foster interactions among residents. One detail that has attracted a lot of attention is the asymmetrical window arrangement, and the galvanized metal light shades around the windows that are painted red on the bottom and pique interest from the street level. The tops, which are pummeled by the sun and would require scaffolding to repaint, were left in their natural color.



GARDENING GROUP

Every Thursday morning, a group of 10 to 15 residents of Rainbow Apartments gather on the patio to examine together the growth of their vegetables, to water, pull weeds, and prune plants. Some participants pick the fruit to eat, but more come to experience the miracle of growth, the healing power of successfully nurturing something, and to get out of their apartments to socialize. After finishing with planters called Agbins on the patio, the group moves down to the back parking lot, where a green wall of planters are mounted vertically on a south-facing wall. Miraculously sprouting from the wall are tomatoes, chilies, strawberries, cucumbers, and countless herbs. The group has a lot of work to do, watering and pruning what's still growing, and clearing out the plants whose season has passed, conditioning the soil and adding new seed for the next season.

With support from a local nonprofit organization, Farmlab, case managers at the Rainbow incubated the gardening group with the specific goal of providing mentally disabled residents with an outlet that is both social and therapeutic. It has turned out to be this . . . and so much more. "I lived in New York and I'm used to seeing concrete," said one group participant. "So, it's kind of nice to see something green. Plus it's interesting to see growth — you come out and you don't recognize the plant!"

“Finally, we have places that provide special services for special people. And I call the homeless special people.”

– *Pamela Parker*

Homeless 4 Years, Abbey Apartments Resident, 6 Months

Pamela Parker remembers the precise moment she became homeless. She returned to her mobile home on April 23, 2005 to find that she was locked out of her home. She later learned that her romantic and business partner of more than 12 years had set her up. He had her arrested on false pretenses, and while she cleared up the matter with the authorities, her partner absconded with all of her worldly possessions and the mobile home.

Pamela went four days with no food or shelter. She was starving and destitute until she met an older gentleman who bought her a meal from McDonald's and invited her to use his truck to sleep in

during the night. Pamela began to meet others who taught her the rudiments of life on the streets, including how to find a perch near a freeway exit ramp where she could ask for money by holding up a sign — or “flying her flag” as it is called on the street.

With the money she saved from panhandling, Pamela bought a bus ticket to Santa Monica. One night as she slept on the beach she was arrested for illegal lodging and thrown in jail for three days. She left jail and Santa Monica. Moving downtown, Pamela quickly realized that she had to be careful in this new frightening neighborhood. Surviving on

Skid Row, she eventually heard about the Abbey Apartments. She quickly completed an application and was thunderstruck during her interview when her case manager closed her file and simply wrote, “OK. Approved.” She was able to move in immediately and was so overwhelmed with relief and joy that she didn't even return to the Union Rescue Mission locker to retrieve her belongings. It was the first night in years that Pamela was able to sleep with both eyes closed.

Of all the highlights of her new life at the Abbey, Pamela loves that the minute you walk into the lobby, you are comforted by a sense of safety. And when she enters

her apartment, she sighs with a reassuring feeling of being home. Pamela benefits from the integrated services readily available to her, including an in-house doctor, a full-time RN, case managers and the group sessions that remind her she isn't alone in her struggle.

Pamela never imagined — and certainly never planned — that she'd be homeless in her 60's. Fortunately, she says, there are more places like the Abbey and Carver to help people like her find their way with the promise of a new beginning when everything else in their lives has gone wrong.



Pamela Parker's Story



abbey apartments

Visitors to Abbey Apartments are invariably struck by the stark contrasts that surround this oasis in the heart of Skid Row. Although the bright lights of the Downtown Los Angeles skyline beckon not far away from Bunker Hill, the Abbey entrance on San Pedro Street reveals the unrelenting reality of life on the streets of Skid Row: the noise of incessantly honking horns, the smell of urine, the sight of many, many poor men and women relegated to the sidewalk. Yet the Abbey lobby is a world apart.

Quiet. Calm. Cool. Sleek concrete walls, exposed ductwork, splashes of bright green paint, and colorful window graphics make this open space — with clear views at either end onto two tough inner-city streets — feel like a tranquil sanctuary.

In fact, this reception area is the gateway to the extensive services that make this building work. Skid Row Housing Trust developed a model for the delivery of an intensive array of social services, and with the opening of Abbey Apartments, designed by Koning Eizenberg, the Trust created an opportunity to offer these integrated services across three buildings with 218 apartments. The adjacent property, Rainbow Apartments, opened in 2006, also includes significant space on its first floor for social services delivery. A smaller property, San Pedro House, which has no space for social service provision, connects to the Rainbow through an internal door enabling its residents to fully participate in the services as well.

The Trust incubated the integrated service model at the St. George Hotel, which opened in 2004, through a federal grant from the Bush administration's new Interagency Council on Homelessness. The grant enabled the Trust to form the Skid Row Collaborative, bringing together 12 agencies involved in serving homeless people. The integration of medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment, and social services in one program providing a continuum of services on site to residents, resulted in immediate improvement in housing retention. It has now become the model for how services are provided throughout the Trust's portfolio. Combining

convenience with therapeutic efficacy, the integrated services model offers residents the best and most comprehensive care, not only to help them retain their homes, but to improve their quality of life. The final ingredient for its success is a low staff to client ratio that allows for personalized services and attention to detail restoring residents' health, stability, and dignity.

Between the Abbey and the Rainbow buildings, 12 offices and three conference rooms provide ample space for medical and social service providers to meet one-on-one and in small groups with residents. "There is a wide array of activities and groups," said Molly Rysman, Trust Director of Special Projects. "The Trust has developed a new model where this cluster of supportive housing sites are operated like a community college campus with all of the residents provided the opportunity to pick and choose from a large selection of recreational classes, support groups, and therapeutic meetings." The offerings include groups for substance abuse recovery, art therapy, movie showings and exercise classes — even yoga.

The services are typically voluntary, so residents can move in without feeling like they have to earn the right to be housed. Once people have a home of their own, they typically see the value of taking advantage of services. Trust Executive Director Mike Alvidrez notes: "You have to engage people in such a way that they want those services. The key is having the support services on site. If you can provide the services, it works."





Although there is no one “typical” path to chronic homelessness, it is often surprising how fast and how far one can fall. Will Robey knows that where you start in life doesn’t always dictate where you end up. For many years, Will lived a comfortable, fulfilling — even enviable — life. He grew up with his mother and father in West Los Angeles and graduated from Santa Monica College with an AA degree in Literature & Economics. Will continued his studies abroad at Worcester College in England and eventually began a career in job recruiting in Southern California.

Will worked his way up the corporate ladder, and enjoyed significant success placing professionals in high-level positions. Will was well on his way to making a six-figure salary for himself through a combination of talent, tenacity, and hard work. His unexpected and

devastating downward spiral came not from any single event, but through a series of crises that pulled Will down again, and again.

Will had lost his mother at a young age. When his father passed in 2003, Will was devastated. He moved into a rental home, but in 2005 the homeowners decided to sell and began eviction proceedings. Around the same time, Will lost his job and became clinically depressed. Dealing with additional mental health issues, Will began experiencing a frequent shortness of breath, symptoms he continued to ignore until he found himself in the emergency room, where he was told his heart was failing.

Will spent a week in the hospital, but after his health was somewhat stabilized, he was forced to leave because he no longer had health insurance. Exhausted and far

from fully recovered, Will returned to his home. The stress of fighting his eviction proved too much for his weakened condition; he landed back in the hospital, and while hospitalized, lost his home. Will had nowhere to go.

Will was referred to a shelter program in Skid Row, and was terrified to have to sleep in large rooms with up to 70 other men, some of them ex-convicts. Cots were arranged in rows right next to each other. There was no privacy and Will constantly feared for his safety. After three months, Will was able to secure an apartment at the Skid Row Housing Trust’s Simone Hotel.

After the difficult experiences and setbacks he had, Will was initially reluctant to leave his new home other than when he absolutely had to. Although he struggled for a couple of years, Will

continued to receive medical treatment for his heart ailment and counseling for his depression. With persistent encouragement from his case manager, he began to attend meetings and become more involved in the Simone community.

At 58 years of age, Will is much stronger — and happier — today. To reciprocate for all the assistance and kindness he received from the community that nursed him back to health, Will is always looking for ways to motivate his fellow residents. He is now even using his academic training to help teach a creative writing class at the Simone.

“It sneaks up on you.
A lot of things can go wrong
at the same time.
Overnight you can end up
on the streets.”

- *Will Robey*

Homeless 5 Months, Simone Hotel Resident, 2½ Years



PROGRESS

“The buildings we’re designing for Skid Row Housing Trust I see as an incredibly essential component to the life and sustainability of the metropolis. For me, these projects are not any different or less important than market-rate work or institutional projects.”

– *Michael Maltzan, Architect*

new carver apartments

Finding land suitable for housing development remains one of the Trust’s perennial challenges. Available sites outside of Skid Row often have significant downsides. The building site for New Carver Apartments featured a curve cutting off one corner, and was directly adjacent to the Santa Monica Freeway. But it didn’t take long for the Trust and architect Michael Maltzan to turn these disadvantages into opportunities. The odd shape of the lot led to a dramatic design — the building curves around a central core and its sawtooth design creates flat panels that are nearly perpendicular to the freeway and function to repel some of its noise.

Unlike supportive housing developments in the heart of Skid Row most Angelenos never see, New Carver Apartments will showcase the new possibilities in supportive housing to hundreds of thousands of commuters each day. It is visible to drivers on the freeway, and from the glassed-in community and laundry rooms, residents will be able to make eye contact with commuters inching by at rush hour.

The five-story building has a central courtyard that is open to the sky. The circular design establishes a trapezoidal interior plan that creates a series of distinct angular spaces within each residence. Communal spaces include kitchens, gathering areas, and gardens, as well as offices where medical, mental health, and other social service providers can work directly with the residents. Residents are immersed in an environment that encourages interaction and greater connectivity to the city.

In his review of New Carver Apartments, New York Times architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff said, “It is possible to push for innovative and humane design. [In Maltzan’s design] architecture is used as a tool not only for aesthetic upliftment but also to forge both a strong sense of community and a visual presence for the poor in a city that often seems to have forgotten them.”

This new step forward in integrated supportive housing serendipitously coincides with the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Skid Row Housing Trust’s work. The building represents a culmination of all the lessons the Trust has learned to date: People need homes that provide dignity, security, well-being, and comfort; buildings must include inspiring, light-filled community areas; and, good building design can optimize efficacy and connectivity between residents and communities.

“The Trust has always been interested in producing the best-designed buildings possible,” said Executive Director Mike Alvidrez. “We believe good design accomplishes three things: one, good design promotes a healthy atmosphere in the building; two, our buildings are attractive additions to the community; and three, good design helps facilitate connection to the larger city for the people who live in these homes.”

“If it wasn’t for Project 50,
I’d be dead out there —
I can tell you that.”

– *Jimbo Howell*

Homeless 5 Years, Senator Hotel, Resident 2 Years

Ronald James Howell, affectionately known as “Jimbo” was born in Kentucky in 1947 to a large family. He had numerous siblings, including a twin brother. After having lived in many homes up and down the East Coast, Jimbo came to Los Angeles by himself when he was 22 years old because he heard LA was a good place to live. He ultimately married and settled in Alhambra.

Jimbo and his wife later moved to the Bristol Hotel in Downtown LA. Jimbo supported them working as a maintenance man. Jimbo lost touch with his family on the East Coast, and even though he had not spoken to them since

the 80’s, he could still recite their address and phone number by heart. In the 90’s Jimbo separated from his wife. At the same time his health began to fail, and before long Jimbo became homeless.

Jimbo was sick and had trouble breathing, making it hard for him to find work. He eventually spent three months in a hospital, but he returned to the streets, homeless and struggling with alcoholism.

Jimbo was alone and living on the sidewalk at Third and Wall Streets for five years, until he was identified by the Project 50 program as one of the 50 most vulnerable people sleeping on the streets of Skid Row.

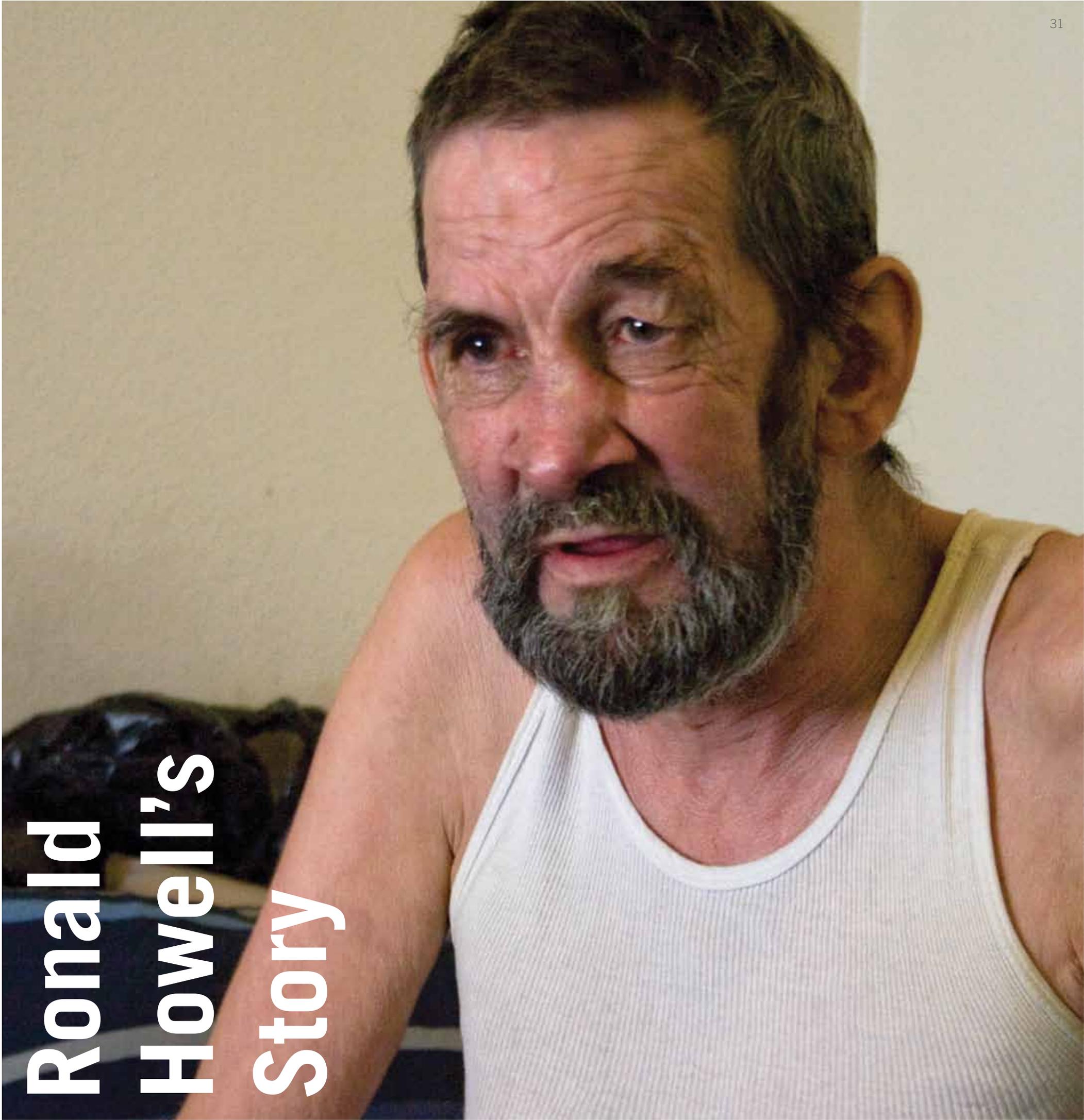
Project 50 helped Jimbo through the difficult process of qualifying for subsidized housing. The program provided integrated healthcare, substance abuse treatment and counseling to help improve his health. His case manager helped him move into an apartment in the Trust’s Senator Hotel. He moved into his home in February of 2008, and lived there until his death in April 2010.

While at the Senator Hotel, Jimbo was no longer homeless or alone. He had an in-home healthcare worker who helped cook and clean for him and a doctor who made house calls. Project 50 assisted Jimbo to qualify for disability assistance and

helped him receive Supplemental Security Income. The Senator and Project 50 even became a new kind of extended family for Jimbo; neighbors and staff members would frequently knock on his door just to check in and make sure he is doing well.

Epilog: Ronald James Howell passed away as a result of terminal cancer in April 2010. He maintained his home at the Senator Hotel until his death, received in-home hospice services and died with dignity in the home that he was so deeply proud of.

Ronald Howell's Story





star apartments

The site for the Star Apartments at 6th and Maple Streets presented the Trust with a unique set of challenges. The site's one-story concrete frame building has a busy existing retail center on the first floor, a parking lot on the roof, and draws heavy pedestrian traffic. Despite the building's appropriate size and location, and the practicality of repurposing the existing structure's concrete frame, the Trust had a challenging time securing an adequate, well-priced loan to buy the building. Ultimately the only way to fund the Star was to rely in part on commercial income generated from the property.

The Trust hired Michael Maltzan to design the Star and together they set out to match the site's advantages — a strong foundation

and already successful commercial activity — with the Trust's goals. The result is a bold architectural statement that will serve residents and the community alike. The final design includes commercial and community spaces on the ground floor. The second floor will be a vibrant hub of activity with social services, healthcare, and recreational areas benefiting all residents, in addition to the lobby and building manager's office. The outer bands of the second floor will be air decks for recreational and physical activity.

To maximize light and air on the second level deck, the four residential floors above constitute a shape like a cube tipped on its end. Innovative construction materials and techniques,

including stacked, prefabricated units manufactured off-site will provide cost efficiency and accelerate construction time.

"The Trust's objective is to improve neighborhoods, while capitalizing on underutilized structures and land," noted Trust Housing Director Cristian Ahumada. "We looked at ways to meld these benefits to our purposes: a beautiful building, a substantial number of new homes, open space, and sustainable building practices with a commercial shopping center that benefits everyone in the community."

new genesis apartments

With the pending development of the New Genesis, the Trust is simultaneously returning to its origins and embarking on a new journey.

When the Genesis Hotel on Main Street was first renovated in 1989, it was a bold new development in that it used Low Income Housing Tax Credits to provide homes for the extremely poor. The Genesis had previously been a typical rundown residential hotel in the Historic Core of Downtown LA. Once rehabilitation was complete in 1989 the new residents had safe, clean rooms at low rents, but they still lacked community areas, green spaces, and desperately needed social services. As is typical in SROs, the units also did not have private bathrooms or kitchens. Instead residents had to walk down the hall to use common facilities. Nonetheless, at the time the Genesis represented a cost-effective way to provide decent housing to single adults who would otherwise be living on the streets.

Today, the 29-unit Genesis Hotel precludes economies of scale needed

to operate a self-sustaining building. The SRO layout is out-dated. Without room to offer social services on site, it is difficult to help residents move beyond the causes of poverty, illness, and homelessness. As a result, the building lacked a cohesive sense of community among residents. To ameliorate these problems, the Trust identified the Genesis as the first building to be redeveloped in the organization's portfolio. By acquiring an adjacent parking lot, the combined Genesis site can now support 104 efficiency apartments and ample community, green, and services areas.

The Trust selected noted Los Angeles architect Wade Killefer, of Killefer Flammang Architects, to whom it had turned for a variety of other earlier redevelopment projects. The Trust wanted to tap Killefer's experience in the neighborhood and his relationship with community stakeholders who had an interest in the neighborhood's future. The Trust conducted a series of meetings with the building's neighbors, which included upscale loft dwellers, developers,

restaurants, and gallery owners. Accordingly, the final design provides commercial space for businesses that will serve the eclectic neighborhood in its entirety, not just the building's residents. Rather than place social services offices at the front of the building, they will be located well inside the building.

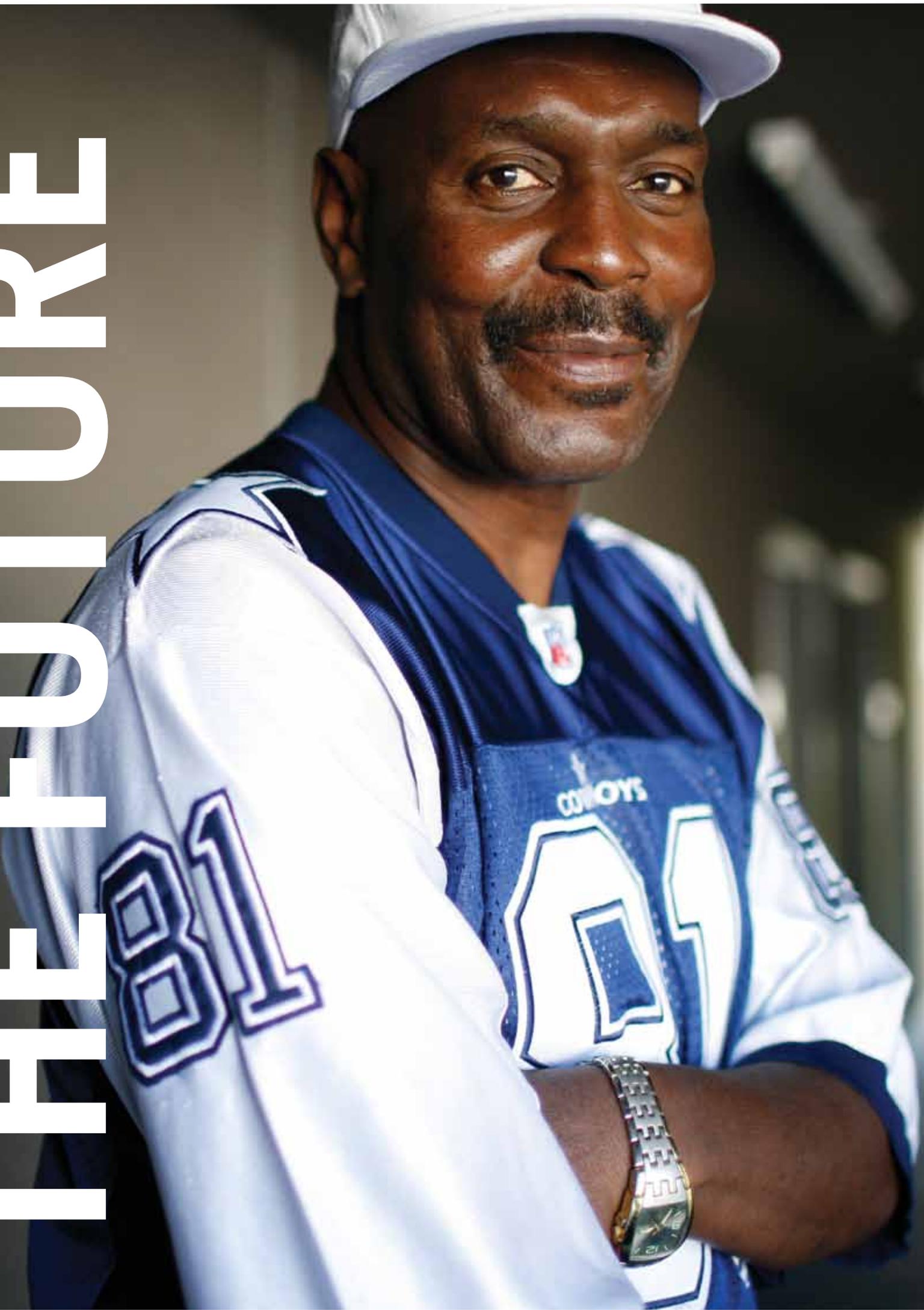
The goal of the New Genesis is not only to provide a beautiful building for the community and the Trust's residents, but to design a building that will provide for true integration between the many different groups in the neighborhood. The Historic Core is the line between the old and the new Downtown. It tells the story of many cycles of investment and abandonment over many years. The New Genesis demonstrates an evolved model for future developments that not only provides for the needs of the most vulnerable, but which invites all members of the community to live together for many years.

“OUR FIRST ACT
AS ARCHITECTS
IS TO LISTEN.
FROM LISTENING
WELL COMES THE
UNDERSTANDING
THAT INSTRUCTS
AND GUIDES DESIGN.”

- WADE KILLEFER,
ARCHITECT



THE FUTURE



“My dream is that one day I’ll walk out of the Rainbow and there won’t be any tents, or shopping carts, or homeless people; and I’ll have to take my grandchildren to a museum to see what homelessness was.”

– *Tyrone Taylor*

Homeless 20 years, Rainbow Apartments resident 3 years

skid row housing trust — the next 20 years

Skid Row Housing Trust’s work is far from complete. Thousands of chronically homeless and disabled men and women continue to sleep on the streets of Los Angeles each night. The demand for supportive housing has only increased as other social safety nets have deteriorated; heightened demand has also fueled increased expectations and responsibilities.

The Trust remains committed to tackling the greatest challenges of homelessness by creating communities that are sustainable socially, environmentally and financially. Our ultimate goal is nothing short of ensuring that all Angelenos have a home that is affordable and safe. While we cannot predict what the next 20 years will bring, we have committed to achieving five strategic priorities during the next three years:

1. Assure long-term financial sustainability of the Trust on behalf of our residents
2. Optimize all resources to support residents’ community reintegration
3. Expand the number of people who have homes
4. Create public will, policy and systems to prevent and end homelessness
5. Improve our internal structures and systems

Although the challenges are many, we are confident that we will succeed by being undaunted by the ambitiousness of seeking to end homelessness, creative in our approach, collaborative in our implementation and inspired by the successes we see every day.

THE PEOPLE OF

Executive Staff

Mike Alvidrez

Executive Director

Cristian Ahumada

Housing Development Director

Jo-Anne Cohen

Financial Operations Director

LaCheryl Porter

Housing Operations Director

Suzanne Snell

Human Resources Director

Board of Directors

Marc Hayutin

Curtis Hessler

Patrick Spillane

David Armitage

Robert E. Carlson

Jennifer Caspar

Paul Gregerson

Adam Handler

Steve Hatter

Cheryl Hayward

Vivienne Lee

Dan Leibsohn

Elsa Luna

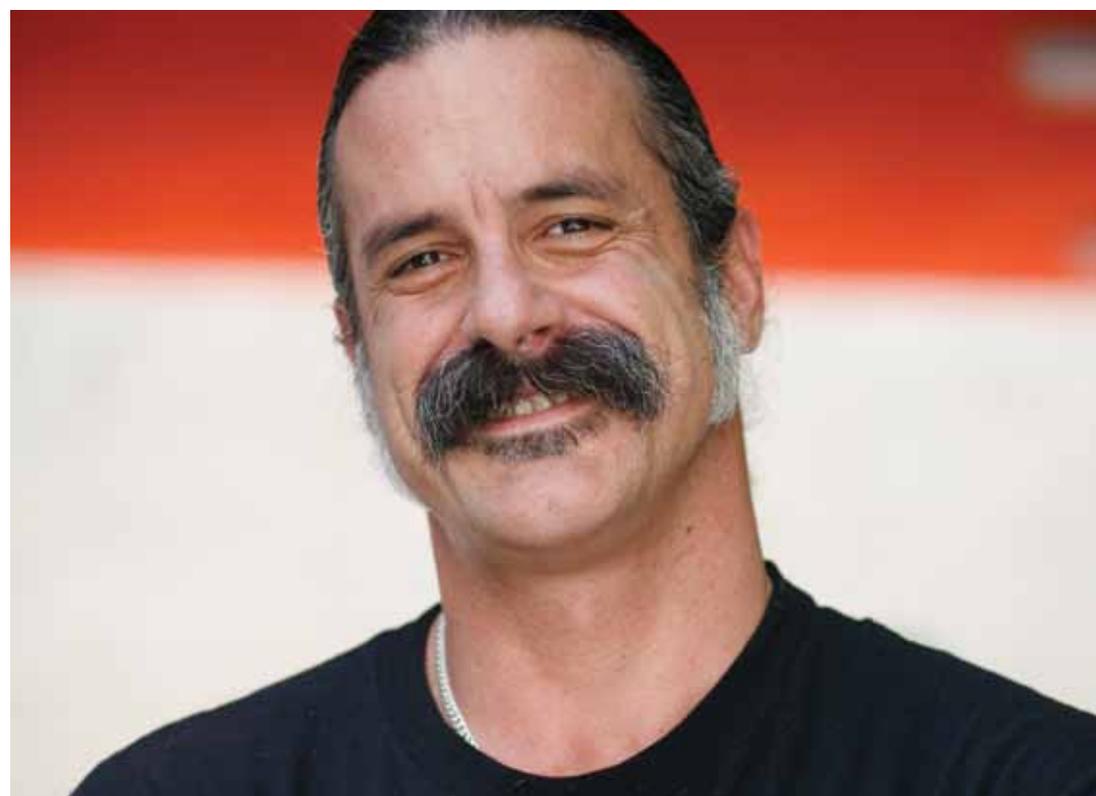
Bob Morse

Vanessa Rodriguez



SKID ROW HOUSING TRUST

No group is more responsible for the Trust's success, than that of the residents the Trust exists to serve. In utter contrast to all of the stereotypes placed upon them, the men and women who live in the Trust's homes are determined to turn their lives around. They fight tirelessly to pull themselves out of poverty, to overcome brutal illnesses, but most of all to retain their humanity and goodness. Through small acts such as opening doors for strangers, checking on a sick neighbor, caring for stray animals, or sharing what little they have with others less fortunate, they remind us how resilient the human spirit is.



special thanks

SKID ROW HOUSING TRUST WISHES TO THANK OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS FOR THEIR GENEROSITY AND COMMITMENT TO ENDING HOMELESSNESS IN LOS ANGELES.

TITLE SPONSORS

Bank of America
Enterprise

PRESENTING SPONSORS

Citibank
GB Construction, Inc.
IDS Real Estate Group
Sidley Austin Foundation /
Sidley Austin LLP
Westport Construction /
ICON Builders

GOLD SPONSORS

David Geffen Foundation
Holthouse Carlin and Van Trigt LLP

SILVER SPONSORS

Alston & Bird LLP
California Community Foundation
Killefer Flammang Architects

BRONZE SPONSORS

Binney, Chase and Van Horne Inc.
Koning Eizenberg Architecture
Maureen and Bob Carlson
Michael Maltzan Architecture, Inc.
Munger Tolles & Olson
NBC Universal

MEDIA SPONSOR

Angeleno Magazine

EVENT COMMITTEE

Mary Anne Campagna
Jennifer Caspar
Jen Duplass
Bryan Furst

HONORARY DINNER COMMITTEE

Elise Buik
Maureen & Bob Carlson
Anya Baum Davis
Katie & Mark Duplass
Shahrouz Golshani
Suzanne & Howard Furst
Stephanie & Marc Hayutin
Oliver Hudson
Jennifer & Tobey Maguire
Katherine Perez
The Honorable Jan Perry
Carol E. Schatz
Patrick D. Spillane
Jim Suhr
Gary Toebben
Robert Wycoff

DESIGNER SHOWCASE PARTICIPANTS

Molly Luetkemeyer
Ruthie Sommers
Estee Stanley
Katie Fine

COMMEMORATIVE BOOK CONTENT AND DESIGN

Brand Culture Company, LLC

Homes.
Support.
Success.



Our commemorative logo pays homage to residences that project radially off a centralized circular courtyard at New Carver Apartments, the award-winning building by Michael Maltzan Architecture for Skid Row Housing Trust.

Skid Row Housing Trust
1317 E. 7th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90021
Phone (213) 683-0522
www.skidrow.org

Publisher & Creative Direction:
Brand Culture Company, LLC
www.brandculture.com

Managing Directors:
Eric Pinckert and Jon Hutson

Content Development:
Eric Pinckert, Jon Hutson,
Jennifer Caspar, Roxana Janka,
Christina Gotuaco, and Molly Rysman

Creative Direction:
Emily King

Designer:
Amanda Hovest

Skid Row Housing Trust 20th Anniversary
Second Edition, Fall 2012

Copyright © 2012 Skid Row Housing Trust and
Brand Culture Company, LLC. All rights reserved.