



A Main Street Success Story

Meet Patricia Lewis. She is a 41 year-old resident of the Trust's Sanborn Hotel Apartments on Main Street.

Patricia's story begins in Los Angeles – where she was born and raised, the youngest of 11 children. Her mother and father separated at a very young age, so she never developed a strong bond with her mother. The relationship with her father was a defining one though.

She says, "My daddy was always there, every day after school, to be with me. My dad made sure I had everything I ever wanted! Everything!! And he was always there for me – no matter what. He used to tell me he was 'gonna live forever.'"

Patricia's childhood was not particularly difficult either, and there were no horrible or traumatic experiences. In fact, her childhood was pretty good.

"I lived like a middle-class rich kid in the ghetto – all my life."

Patricia's tightly knit extended family and of course, her father, were her greatest gifts.

Unfortunately, they also became her greatest crutch.

Coming out of high school, Patricia was young, unemployed and without any real direction. By the time she was 20 she had two children. Being a mother was not a role she wanted. She was still living with her father, and it was her father who usually cared for her children. Patricia was caught up in drugs and gangs, which led to numerous arrests.

"My sister, my mother and my father were my biggest enablers," she says.

On June 12, 1996, Patricia had a chilling moment. While walking to a dealer's place, Patricia swears she heard her son's voice call out to her, saying "Mama!" She was left deeply unsettled, since her children were at her sisters house on the other side of town.

Tragedy struck the next day, when a truck, swerving to avoid a dog, lost control and hit her

son. He was left in a coma. His injuries were so severe that all Patricia could do was pray.

"I asked God, if you spare my son's life, I will never touch another drug in my life," she says.

Miraculously, her son did survive and Patricia kept her promise to God for nearly a year. She even got her first apartment.

In June of 1997 though, Patricia was faced with another traumatic event. Brain cancer had taken the life of her brother. Overwhelmed, she turned to drugs again, almost immediately following her brother's funeral.

When Child Protective Services found out, Patricia's children were removed from her care and placed in foster care. During this period she dove even deeper into the drug pool, as a means of escape.

Throughout this time, her father was still there to support his little girl. He only asked one thing of Patricia. Her father wanted his grandkids back. They were his only biological grandkids.

Patricia tried to get her life together. She went through 12-step programs, inpatient and outpatient programs, 0 but none of them worked for her.

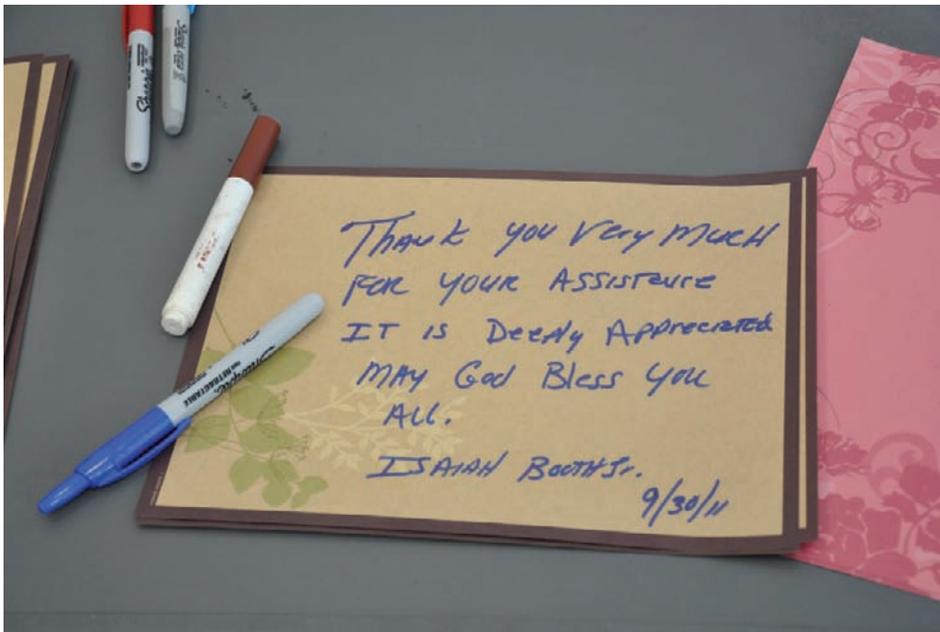
In 2000, her father had finally had it with Patricia, and kicked her out of his house. Patricia was devastated and lost. For 3 weeks, Patricia spent her days at the local grocery store, sitting outside on the kiddie pony, hoping to see her father, while her nights were filled with drugs and alcohol.

It was her sister who found Patricia there, and delivered the news that her father had died of prostate cancer. Patricia was devastated because she knew would not get to say 'I'm sorry' ever again.

"They had found my daddy dead in his house. My world came to an end. I lost faith. My world really spiraled after that. 2000-2009 was hell for me. I had so many people in the world who loved me – but *I didn't love me*. I felt like a failure at everything. I failed as a mom. I failed as a good daughter. I failed as a sister. When my kids were taken I lost a little bit of footing – but when my dad died, I lost all grounding. That was who I felt loved me more than anything. I just wanted to die," she says.

[Continued on page 6.]

Executive Director's Corner



Residents who attend the Dish Depot were given the opportunity to leave messages of gratitude for our friends at Heath Ceramics. This is just one of the many messages of thanks that were written.

Dear Friends,
Here at the Trust, we love the spring edition of the Trust News because this is our opportunity to say, "Thank you." Thank you for making a commitment to ending homelessness in Los Angeles. Thank you for seeing the humanity in those of us who have lost homes. Thank you for believing that recovery is possible. Thank you for knowing the true power of a home. And, thank you for giving through Skid Row Housing Trust.

You are transforming Los Angeles when you give your time or make in-kind or financial contributions. Your investment in ending homelessness, not only helps individuals move from the streets back into the community, but it strengthens the network of connections for our cause. Ending homelessness creates a healthier city through civic engagement and improves the city for everyone. As a Trust contributor and/or volunteer you are on the front lines with us, shaping a better Los Angeles. Thank You!

Three years ago, our Board of Directors made it a strategic priority to increase our community of contributors. At the time, that priority was seen primarily as financial. Since then, we have learned that while financial contributions do help our bottom line,

there is an even greater value in bringing new people and ideas into our community. Volunteers bring energy, compassion, kindness and fresh insights to our work. They challenge us to create new opportunities, take another run at an issue that has stymied us in the past, and increase transparency and accountability. But most importantly, they enter into community with us.

Our community includes staff, board, residents, contributors, volunteers and supporters from near and far. One of the most inspirational common values within this community is choosing to acknowledge what unites us all as human beings, rather than what divides us. We have learned that when we bring others into our community, everyone benefits. When residents, volunteers

and contributors have the opportunity to interact through tours or community suppers, we hear a unanimous chorus of how deeply gratifying the experience is. We are certain that this is due to the values that we share and the reciprocal inspiration and belonging that come from choosing to acknowledge ourselves in each other.

The expansion of our community remains a priority and we place a high premium on the number of contributors and volunteers we are sustaining and adding. Last year the number of contributions to the Trust doubled. This year we want to ensure that every contributor and volunteer has the opportunity to experience what my colleagues and I experience, which is that we receive much more than we give. Whether you're a one-time event volunteer or a long-term supporter, we invite you increase your involvement with the Trust in 2012. Consider being of service by joining the host committee for an upcoming community supper, attending a tour or building a Welcome Home Kit with friends, family or professional colleagues. Our Fund Development Director, Renee Smith (213.683.0522 x139), is always happy to take some time to discuss how contributors and volunteers can increase their participation.



Sheila Shaffer is one of the volunteers who helped make our domino tournament a big success.

Some people scoff at the idea of "ending" homelessness, but when we come together as a community – believing that recovery is possible for every member of our community – anything is possible.

Sincerely,

Mike Alvidrez
Executive Director



Contributors' Corner

Make a Difference

1. Give

Make a contribution to help provide the vital supportive services that help residents succeed. Sign up for your employer's matching gift program or consider the Trust in your will. Contact Renee at 213.683.0522 x139.

2. Become a Community Supper Host

The Trust is planning several Community Suppers this year. Become a member of the Host Committee and help us open our community to new people. The next Supper is scheduled, April 10th at Portofino's on Main Street. Contact Jennifer at 213.683.0522 x181 to join the committee.



3. Take a Tour

Take a tour and see what the Trust does first hand. A Trust Resident Ambassador will accompany the tour and provide their personal insights. Tours are held monthly on the first Wednesday and the third Tuesday. For info on tours, contact Patryk at 213.683.0522 x152.

4. Volunteer

Register to become a Trust volunteer. Be first on our list to take action when volunteer opportunities emerge. Visit skidrow.org to complete a volunteer profile and be added to our database of willing workers or call Jennifer at 213.683.0522 x181.

5. Build Welcome Home Kits or Mini-Kits

Welcome Home kits make starting over easier. You can help by building a welcome home kit or a mini-kit.



The Board Corner

Skid Row Housing Trust's Board of Directors is comprised of committed volunteers who ensure the Trust continues to contribute to ending homelessness in Los Angeles. Our board ensures the fiscal health of the organization and serves as a critical tie to the larger community.

This year we will be introducing you to our board beginning with two of our newest board members: Vanessa Rodriguez and Cheryl Hayward.



Vanessa Rodriguez works in politics and spends her free time visiting the city's museums and theatres. She is a resident of downtown Los Angeles. Vanessa learned about the Trust's critical role in solving homelessness in Los Angeles after working on local land use and housing issues. It was her commitment to people who have experienced homelessness that led her to humbly accept a position on the Board of Directors.

Cheryl Hayward dedicates time to her four passions: Faith, Family, Philanthropy and Sailing. Cheryl explains why she joined the Trust by saying, "I joined the Trust Board because we believe in transforming lives through supportive housing."



Save The Date

Tuesday, April 10th at 6 pm

Join us for our next
Community Supper at

Portofino Cucina Italiana

Meet your neighbors, chat and
share a few laughs over a delicious
three-course meal

Space is limited, so register today

*RSVP Jennifer Kim
at 213.683.0522 x181*

Thank you!

Community of Contributors

For cash and in-kind gifts to our work.



* Dave Bullock, Crowrise

"I support the Skid Row Housing Trust because they serve an important need in the Downtown community. Their mission to provide housing changes lives on a daily basis. There is no better time than now to support the Trust so they can continue to help those in Los Angeles who need it most."

Leah Abeles
Cristian Ahumada
Mike Alvidrez and Diane Bumford
Anthony Anderson
Jeff Andrews
David Armitage
Arroyo Insurance Services*
John Arroyo
Michal Ashley
Handy Atmali
Mr. and Mrs. Guilford Babcock
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Blu Dot Furniture
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Jill Brooks-Garnett
Marilyn Bruce
David Bullock*
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Jenny Castro
David Caswell
Citibank (West) FSB
Gary Cohen
Jo-Anne Cohen
Greg Cohn
Community Bank
Jamie Connelly
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Stephen and Madeline Contopulos
Chad and Christina Conwell
Ellyce Cooper
Corporation for Supportive Housing

Shaun Davies
John Dennem
Jay R. Deuby and Julie A. Howard
Frank A. and Jennifer L. Dolce
James Donlan
Kimberly Dunne
Gabor Ekecs
Bradley and Grace Ellis
Ann English
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.
Hossein and Dalia Fateh Fund
Neal Ferrazzani
Bruce and Kari Fraser
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Rev. Richard C. Hall, Ph.D.
Adam Handler
Joel and Betsy Handler
Thomas and Amy Hanrahan
Douglas Hart
Marc Hayutin
Cheryl and Bob Hayward



* Arroyo Insurance Services

"There are vast numbers of people out on the street today who don't have the basics of life. We don't have the ability to recognize those who both need and want help, but we know people who do. Skid Row Housing Trust responds to these needs every day and we are glad to be a supporter of their great work."

Heath Ceramics
Zach Hench
Curt Hessler
Bruce Hirsch
Kris Hopfenbeck
Icon Builders
Joel Israel
Peter Jaeschke
Paul Gregerson, M.D.
Admas Kanyagia
Michael C. and Sharon S. Kelley
John Kelly
Joan Kincaid
Koning Eizenberg Architecture
Moshe and Arlene Kupietzky
Amy Lally
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Stefan Parro
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LaCheryl Porter
Neidy Portillo-Tseng
Merrilee Proffitt
Thomas Rau
Pam Rector
Robert Richards II and Marvel Richards



*** GE Capital Real Estate**

"We are excited that we have been able to assist Skid Row Housing Trust in making the community a better place for all of its residents."

David Roberts
 Vanessa Rodriguez
 Jeremy Rosenthal
 Juan Rosillo
 Howard and Terry Rubinroit
 Candy Rupp
 Molly Rysman
 Robert San Martin
 Jeff and Reina Schaffer
 Kristen Schaffer
 Allison Schulnik
 Mary Ellen Shay - In Memory of
 Bonjonnie Comstales
 Bobby Shing-Lai-Ho and Alexander Mackie
 Sleep E-Z Mattress Co.
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 Renee and Nathan Smith
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 Greg Spiegel
 Patrick D. Spillane
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 Glenn Wasserman and Allyne Winderman
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 Thomas Webber
 Louise Weil
 Judy Weinstein
 Eliza Wheeler
 Renaldo Wiggins
 Jeffery Wolfe
 Rosten Woo
 Employee Contributors to United Way
 Campaigns in Los Angeles,
 (Sacramento) Capital Region,
 Metropolitan Dallas, General Electric
 and Wells Fargo

Volunteers

For investing your time in order to make a difference.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ellen Abramson | Katherine McNenny |
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| Donald Bernard | David Merideth |
| Michael Bethea | Paul Mitchell |
| Lollett Boyce | Ben Newman |
| Sandy Brooks | Terin Ngo |
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| Maureen Malone | |
| Mary McBride & Band | |
| Jeffrey C. McLellan | |



*** Akili Shine & Propaganda Champs**

"To live elevated is to search for greatness in all areas of one's life. To us, you can't be great if you are not sharing with others. Volunteering for the Trust and getting involved in the solution to end homelessness is a part of participating with the community of humankind. Our hope it to leave a mark that says, we were here, we cared and we contributed."

Development Corner

Patricia Lewis [continued from page 1.]



Crack was the only thing that she knew would numb the pain and shame. The crack pipe also led her to jail countless times.

"I've sold dope, smoked dope and panhandled for dope. Besides losing my kids and my dad, I lost all sense of hope. Crack had a hold on me!"

In 2009, Patricia found herself in the midst of a destructive relationship. Patricia and her long time boyfriend and primary enabler at the time, were on the brink of disaster.

"Any time you want to buy 25 cents worth of gasoline and set him on fire in a tent – OVER \$10, we need to separate! For real!"

The relationship ended, but her dependence on crack did not. In late 2009, Patricia was arrested and jailed again. Upon her release, she was sent to LATC (Los Angeles Transition Center).

"This time was different though. This time everything clicked. The Bible, prayer, the 12-steps – it all clicked for me," she says. "When he [God] opened that door for me I took advantage and I haven't looked back."

After LATC, Patricia continued to attend meetings at the James M. Woods Center in Skid Row. Those meetings led her to a new sponsor, who recommended applying for a home with the Trust.

Patricia followed her sponsor's advice and was eventually able to secure an apartment at the Trust's Sanborn Hotel Apartments.

She says, "I went down and put my name on that list every week! I even stayed in drug treatment an extra 3 months until I got my place."

August 21, 2010 was Patricia's first day in her new home. She has since built a solid foundation, giving her the stability to get back what she now wanted most – her children. They are now 20 and 22 years old, and are not holding grudges against their mother.

"They understand that mama was sick."

Her newfound stability has also given rise to something that had previously been missing from Patricia's life – dreams and aspirations of doing something more for the community.

Patricia is now attending school at LA Community College, studying Human Services, with the goal of becoming a drug and alcohol counselor.

In Construction

An exceptionally mild winter in Los Angeles has allowed construction on the **New Genesis Apartments** to continue without any delays. Construction now stands at 88% of completion, with a target opening slated for June. The New Genesis Apartments are designed by Killefer Flammang Architects (kfarchitects.com) with interiors by Collaborative House (collaborativehouse.com). The bottom floor retail spaces are designed by Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects (loharchitects.com).

The Star Apartments are now in the construction phase. Interior demolition officially got under way in the final days of 2011. The Star Apartments were designed by Michael Maltzan (mmaltzan.com) and are scheduled to be ready for move-in in 2014.

In Development

We have big news - but we are saving it for our next newsletter... Stay tuned.



Excitement is building for the June opening of the New Genesis Apartments.

"I want to be able to tell people, 'if you've never been to prison, you don't have to go!'"

This new sense of community is also the reason Patricia became a member of the Resident Ambassador Program with the Trust. She learned about the program by attending the Community Supper last August.

As a member of the 2012 class, she is now using her life experiences to educate others.

"They allowed me to do what I needed to do, in order to get where I am today. I got a bed. I got a refrigerator full of food. I got clean clothes. I can wash when I feel like it. It's mine. I pay the rent. It's mine."

Policy Corner: Eviction Prevention

Outside audiences are often intrigued by the housing development and supportive services components of permanent supportive housing, but anyone who has lived or worked in supportive housing will tell you that the true secret to success is property management.

Six years after the Trust was founded, we created an affiliate nonprofit known as the SRHT Property Management Company (PMC) to manage the Trust's properties. The Trust created the PMC to improve customer service, facilities management, resident housing retention and our bottom-line. After working with third-party property management companies, we found them to be lacking in the skills and motivation needed to provide excellence in management, and we knew that our residents deserved nothing less.

Property management is not easy; in fact it is *the hardest job* at the Trust. There is no Master's Degree in Property Management programs. Yet, maintaining a clean, safe and efficient apartment building while promoting a healthy community among dozens of people is complex. One of the few tools that property managers have in their toolbox is the power of eviction. You can ask a resident to pay the rent on time, but may not be taken seriously until you issue a 3-day notice to evict.

Our mission is residential stability and recovery, neither of which are aided by being put back in the street. But despite the common commitment to limiting evictions, among staff the procedures and policies around eviction were not always crystal clear.

In 2011, the Trust made a commitment to reduce evictions. Not because any funder asked us to – in fact none of our funders including the Housing Authority even ask us to track evictions. Not because community groups asked us to – our community partners knew that the Trust has a strong commitment to providing homes for people in need and ensuring that they continue to remain stable in their homes. Rather, the Trust took up the issue of evictions simply because we knew that our staff and our residents deserved



The SRHT Property Management Company leadership team from left to right: Vimal Singh, *Property Supervisor*; LaCheryl Porter, *Housing Operations Director*; James Turner, *Property Supervisor*; Terri Long, *Manager of Property Management*; Robert Newman, *Property Supervisor*; Sonny Earvin, *Inspection Supervisor*.

increased clarity around when evictions were necessary and when they were not.

The result? In 2011 we reduced our eviction rate by 24%.

Here's how we did it. The Trust began by developing and streamlining Standard Operating Procedures (emergency, inspection protocols, training manuals, etc.). This allowed more procedural consistency throughout the PMC. We then worked with funders, including the Corporation for Supportive Housing, to provide resources to increase automation in electronic reporting between properties and the corporate office.

A focus on improving rent receivables through better tracking and communication, helped residents not fall behind on their rent – one of the leading causes of eviction. The PMC worked with outside partners to provide opportunities for residents who did fall behind on their rent to receive assistance from programs like the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program, with rent payments.

Additionally, PMC Staff worked with Resident Services in a more coordinated way to keep residents in their homes. The PMC works collaboratively with residents and service providers to develop individualized

eviction prevention plans, including negotiation of creative alternatives and lease addenda.

Recently, the Trust created an Eviction Prevention Committee to formalize and further support the goal to maximize housing stability. The Eviction Prevention Committee addresses individual cases, where there is the possibility of eviction and it assists property management and services staff with implementing interventions. The committee will evaluate evictions for common denominators and identify methods to minimize their impact. The committee includes residents, as well as staff from the PMC and Resident Services.

Skid Row Housing Trust is committed to providing homes for men and women who have faced challenges in maintaining stable housing as a result of both financial means and disabling conditions. While the Trust recognizes there are times when eviction is the only feasible outcome, returning a resident to homelessness is inconsistent with the Trust's mission and a poor use of resources. We have found that it is more efficient to put resources into supporting our frontline staff when there is a risk of eviction and investing in understanding the causes and patterns around eviction.

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**SKID ROW
HOUSING
TRUST** **HOMES
SUPPORT
SUCCESS**

Inside



Coming out of high school, Patricia's life was not headed in a good direction, but her uplifting story demonstrates that **HOMES** coupled with the right **SUPPORT** can mean **SUCCESS**.

Skid Row Housing Trust's philosophy is simple:
Homes + Support = Success

The Trust solves homelessness by developing, managing and maintaining permanent supportive housing. The Trust provides **HOMES** for the most vulnerable homeless men and women on the streets. The Trust ensures that our residents have access to the critical **SUPPORT** services needed to achieve stability, good health, and dignity. The Trust ensures **SUCCESS** by reducing homelessness through opportunity for our residents and better neighborhoods for our communities.

Board Of Directors

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Skid Row Housing Trust is a 501c(3) organization to which contributions are tax-deductible.

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