

Community Connection

SUGGESTED MINIMUM DONATION: ONE DOLLAR (\$1)

THE VOICE, THE PULSE, OF OUR VILLAGE

More Violence Under "Safer Cities" Initiative



OFFICERS SHOOT SKID ROW RESIDENT

LAPD officers shot a Skid Row resident on Tuesday, October 28, 2008. According to witnesses, Benny Allen, a longtime Skid Row resident, was compliant with the officers' orders when they stopped him on his bicycle on the corner of 6th and Stanford streets. Allen survived the shooting.

Unfortunately, this latest unprovoked incident comes as no surprise to those of us who have watched the escalating violence and intimidation by officers under the Safer Cities Initiative in the past two years.

LAPD spokesman Paul Vernon told reporters on the scene that Allen "charged at the officers holding an open 6-inch folding knife. The officers ordered him to get back and he continued to charge at them. One officer fired." LAPD representatives apparently made a conclusion about this officer's use of deadly force within an hour of the occurrence.

According to numerous witnesses who spoke with LA CAN, Allen did not charge the officer with a knife. In fact, he was told to get off his bike and complied. He had his hands in plain sight when he was shot by the officer, who was standing at least 15 - 20 feet away. Witnesses also said the shooting happened quickly and without verbal warnings of any kind.

Allen is now facing criminal charges and, to the best of our knowledge, the LAPD has yet to conduct a thorough and fair investigation of the incident.

Photo courtesy of Charles Porter.

Community Stops Traffic on 1st and Main to Protest the Occupation of Skid Row

Marchers from San Julian Park were greeted with cheers as they joined neighbors and friends from Skid Row and across Los Angeles gathered in an empty parking lot on Main Street, across from LA CAN. The rally and protest against LAPD's occupation of our community, known as the Safer Cities Initiative or SCI, had begun. The large crowd assembled on September 25, 2008 was multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-generational - shattering age-old attempts to keep us divided in the quest for justice.

LA CAN member Pam Walls opened with an unforgettable and slightly revised version of "We Shall Overcome," while everyone locked hands and held them high in unity. LA CAN member Al Sabo spoke about his experience as a resident of downtown and the injustices he has suffered and witnessed under SCI.

Pete White of LA CAN gave a speech to ignite the crowd and launch our march. He said, "I look out at you and see historic beauty. As our country is reeling from economic instability and uncertainty, you unselfishly are here. As the government ponders using our resources to bailout those that have sucked our communities dry, further bankrupting our communities into the foreseeable future, you again are here.....The Mayor, masquerading as a Progressive, is single-handedly responsible for the destruction of thousands of lives. He has stood steadfast behind an LAPD surge that parallels the occupation in Iraq; you are now standing in the green-zone. He has allowed the arrest of human rights defenders and organizers simply attempting to document his heinous occupation-in full contradiction of who he says he is, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But just as the Iraq occupation has failed, so too will Villaraigosa's domestic occupation."

From the parking lot, about 300 united people marched up Main Street to City Hall. The mood reflected anger about SCI atrocities, but also a festive spirit of solidarity and the belief that people power can create change. The crowd received honks of support from passersby, and loudly expressed its views through chants.

On First and Main Streets, marchers decided to hold court in the intersection. At first, about 25 people entered the crosswalks and began to use their signs, banners and bodies to stop traffic. Within minutes, at least 100 protesters were chanting and singing -- exercising our power and collective voice for change for about 10 minutes in the intersection.

This action, of course, was just one step toward ending SCI, but with more than 30 organizations joined together, our influence is growing.

(See page 2 for follow-up actions and information.)



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After Six Months of Resident Demands, and Two Years of Devastation, Police Commission Holds Public Hearing on the Safer Cities Initiative

On November 18, 2008, community residents, workers, and organizations from downtown and around the City of Los Angeles came together at Parker Center to oppose the so-called "Safer Cities Initiative." The Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) is a program that was launched in 2006 that brought between 50 and 110 extra police officers to the 50 blocks of Skid Row. LA CAN opposed this initiative from the very beginning, largely because we believed the police initiative was intended to continue efforts to displace long-term residents and promote gentrification.

LA CAN members have been speaking out against SCI by giving testimony to the Police Commission and City Council, bringing delegations to the Mayor's office, and holding other public actions. For the past six months, we targeted our opposition of SCI primarily on the Police Commission because they have both the power and the responsibility to evaluate this initiative and demand changes. As a first step, one of our demands was for the Police Commission to hold a public hearing to get better informed about the devastation caused by SCI. That finally happened on November 18th.

There were about 15 organizations or individuals invited to give 10 minutes of testimony to the Commission. The presenters were pre-selected, likely in order to provide equal time for opponents and supporters of SCI. Presenters who opposed SCI included LA CAN, Lamp Community, Downtown Women's Center, ACLU of Southern California, Civil Rights Attorney Carol Sobel, UCLA Law Professor Gary Blasi, Skid Row Housing Trust and Public Counsel. However, during general public comment, many more people gave testimony and about 90% of them opposed Safer Cities.

The presenters who supported SCI included Councilmember Jan Perry, a representative of Mayor Villaraigosa, Carol Schatz of the Central City Association, Estela Lopez of the Central City East Association, developer Tom Gilmore, Midnight Mission, and Union Rescue Mission. The presenters who supported SCI clearly represented downtown developers and those who are primarily funded by the business community.

This is not a new divide in the fight over gentrification and the business and elected representatives' attempts to remove poor people from downtown. In fact, Tom Gilmore stated repeatedly that "my community" (the SCI area) would

crumble without the extra police. There is a clear battle between rich and poor and SCI policing only intensifies that.

Many powerful presentations were given by SCI opponents, especially Lamp Community, ACLU and Carol Sobel. A Lamp member named KK addressed Chief Bratton personally, calling LAPD's tactics racist. He criticized Central Division for using brutal police tactics on the east side of downtown, in the "bottoms." KK also asked, given the brutality of LAPD, how they "have the audacity to call us predators."

Peter Bibring, an attorney with the ACLU, testified about data and research conducted by the ACLU on the high incidence of racial profiling by LAPD. He also stated that while SCI is given credit for cleaning up Skid Row, unless it is known exactly where all of the homeless people went and what their situation is, there can be no claims of success. Carol Sobel, Civil Rights Attorney, testified about the street lights on 6th and San Julian Streets, as well as 6th and Gladys Streets. She said that the timers on both lights were intentionally shortened so that elderly and disabled people would likely only be able to get halfway across the street before the lights turn yellow or red. As a result, thousands of tickets have been issued to people who cannot pay the fines, largely for walking while the "don't walk" sign is flashing.

More powerful testimony came during public comment, where primarily skid row residents came up one by one to testify about problems and victims of SCI policing. Many Skid Row residents and LA CAN members shared experiences and demanded a Citizen's Review Board to oversee police misconduct complaints, an immediate end to citations to reduce the level of ticketing to match the rest of the City, and an immediate end to SCI.

After everyone had presented and public comment ended, there was an expectation that the Commissioners would give us some kind of feedback or engage in discussion. Instead they just jumped up and said thank you for coming and ran out the back door. Many people in attendance thought that the purpose of the hearing was to evaluate SCI and give direction to LAPD. The hearing raised numerous issues, and many people felt disrespected by the abrupt end to the meeting.

LA CAN members decided to return to the Commission the following week to demand that SCI be placed on a new agenda for a public response to the hearing. Many opposing organizations sent a letter to the Commission requesting the same thing. We refuse to sit back and wait quietly while our community is being

terrorized and under siege.

We cannot wait for someone else to come into our community and solve our problems for us. We are the ones who are getting beat over the head so we need to be the ones who are standing up on the front line fighting for our rights. We need folks to join our SCI/civil rights committee which meets every Monday at LA CAN at 1pm. You can also come to our Residential Organizing Meetings every 1st and 3rd Fridays at 6pm at LA CAN. Whatever you decide - get involved! Doing nothing is the worst thing you can do.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

Two Years of the Safer Cities Initiative

In September 2006, the Los Angeles Police Department, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo launched the Safer Cities Initiative (SCI) in the Skid Row community. At the SCI launch, 50 additional uniformed officers were deployed to a 50-square block area (0.85 square miles) -- the equivalent of adding 470 new officers to the Rampart Division or 700 officers to the 77th Street Division in South LA.

This punitive approach of the Safer Cities Initiative has damaged our community and residents for the long-term, forced poor people of color out of downtown, and is a human rights tragedy. For example:

** More than 750 arrests have been made PER MONTH, or about 19,000 arrests in the first two years.

** In the first year of SCI, LAPD issued about 12,000 citations, primarily for pedestrian violations. This is 48 to 69 times the rate of citations issued City-wide.

** The human rights of poor people, African Americans, women, and people with disabilities have been trampled upon, including numerous incidences of police abuse and brutality.

** State-level sentence enhancements and the District Attorney's "5th Street Corridor" policies have created a separate and unequal criminal "justice" system for the Skid Row community. Punishment is not determined by the type and severity of the crime, but rather solely by the neighborhood in which the arrest took place.

** The majority of arrests are drug related and there have been obvious efforts by LAPD and the District Attorney to escalate possession charges to "possession with intent to sell." The intentional practice of escalating these charges results in incarceration of those struggling with the disease of addiction instead of the treatment required by Proposition 36 and supported by 61% of California voters.

A Second Go-Around for a New Ordinance to Increase Affordable Housing

On November 19, 2008 a joint committee meeting of the Los Angeles City Council was held. The Housing and Economic Development Committee and the Planning and Land Use Committee heard public comment about a Mixed Income Housing Ordinance motion that was introduced by Councilmembers Reyes, Wesson and Garcetti. A similar motion was introduced about three years ago, but an ordinance was never passed. Mixed Income Housing generally means that all new developments must include a percentage of affordable housing units. However, the definition of affordable can vary from very poor people to people making up to \$100,000 per year.

During the hearing, the committee members listened to constituents from all over the City, most of whom supported a Mixed Income Ordinance. Members from LA CAN, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (South downtown and South LA), POWER (Westside), Coalition LA (MacArthur Park and Mid-City) and Union de Vecinos (Boyle Heights) testified on two very specific points. First, a Mixed-Income Ordinance MUST include housing affordable to LA's lowest income residents - those making 30 percent of the area median and below. Oftentimes, extremely low-income people are excluded from affordable housing policy, although they are the most in need.

The second key message of LA CAN and our partners was that the Mixed Income Ordinance must not allow any existing affordable housing to be lost. All the current low-income housing that Los Angeles has must be preserved and that should be specified in all of LA's housing policies. Therefore, the proposed Ordinance should ensure that any existing affordable units that would be lost due to a new development are replaced, one-for-one, at the existing rent levels.

LA will never build its way out of this housing crisis - the City also needs to save every unit it has. It is going to take a number of different approaches to finally meet LA's housing needs and a Mixed Income Ordinance that includes extremely low-income people and housing preservation could be one step forward.

In the coming months, LA CAN and our partners will be continuing to work to ensure that a strong ordinance comes before the City Council. Contact us to get involved!

Attention: Former Tenants of the Alexandria Hotel

In response to an article in the last Community Connection, many recently displaced Alexandria tenants came forward to apply for benefits. **As of December 18, 2008, IF YOU HAVE ALREADY SUBMITTED YOUR INFORMATION TO PARAGON PARTNERS, you need to contact LA CAN as soon as possible.** If you qualify, some benefits may be available immediately. Contact Becky at LA CAN (456 S. Main Street).

If you were displaced from the Alexandria Hotel between August 2006 and May 2008, you are VERY LIKELY eligible for benefits from the City and Community Redevelopment Agency. **But you need to come forward and apply!! Call LA CAN at 213-228-0024 or Paragon Partners at 888-899-7498 to submit your application for benefits.**

Cecil Hotel - Preliminary Good News!

As reported in the Community Connection previously, the owners of the Cecil Hotel filed a lawsuit against the City claiming that the Cecil is NOT a residential hotel. The formal complaint actually seems to claim that the Cecil Hotel has NEVER been a residential hotel and that they never engaged in the 28-day shuffle.

Subsequently, two long-term Cecil tenants came forward to attempt to legally intervene in this lawsuit, since tenants have so much at stake in this issue - their homes! Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and the law firm of Stroock, Stroock & Lavan are representing tenants in this legal action.

The first step toward saving this hotel came when the federal judge approved Cecil tenants and LA CAN as intervenors in this lawsuit.

That means that LA CAN and members who live at the Cecil Hotel can help prove to the judge that the Cecil is a residential hotel and provide direct evidence to support our claims that the Cecil has violated numerous laws in its attempts to convert to a tourist hotel.

The federal court will determine the status and outcome for the Cecil Hotel and its tenants. The time is now to get involved - no one will fight for us, we must fight ourselves. Come to LA CAN to find out how to get involved and how to protect your tenant rights and your homes.

Huntington Hotel

Although the City has completed a claims process for much-deserved rent rebates for Huntington tenants, with distribution of rebates expected in the Spring of 2009, tenants continue to face terrible living conditions. Huntington tenants have long struggles with infestation, resulting in rashes, bites and other health issues. LA CAN has formed a new partnership with St. John's health clinic, which specializes in treating conditions caused by slum housing. If you would like to access this program, come to LA CAN at 456 S. Main Street for more information.

Join Huntington tenants who have been working together to improve health and safety conditions. We have been successful in the past couple of months in fighting evictions, but we need more people active on the tenant committee to make change.

Check out LA CAN's blog at cangress.wordpress.com for updated community news.





PAM JERNAGIN, SKID ROW RESIDENT AND
LA CAN CORE MEMBER

LA CAN would like to recognize the contributions of one of our newest core members, Pam Jernagin.

Pam has been a downtown resident since September 2006 and has been a member of LA CAN since early 2007. She first got involved with LA CAN because she was interested in helping with the Legal Clinic.

Pam is an enthusiastic, active member who is now involved with the Legal Clinic, the Housing Team, and Community Watch. She has also recruited dozens of new members through regular community outreach among her friends and neighbors.

Pam is a native Angelino and is a Los Angeles Lakers fan - adding fuel to the Lakers-Celtics rivalry within the LA CAN office! She is also a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, likes to cook, and enjoys playing cards with her family. Pam is the proud mother of two and grandmother of five.

Note: This member highlight is a return to a Community Connection tradition that has been lost over the past couple of years. If you have an LA CAN member you would like to highlight in the next edition, let us know who and why!

Police Harassment, Giving Voice to the Poor

By Jeremy Rosen, Skidrowpress

Being a recovering addict living in the Skid Row section of Downtown Los Angeles has not been easy. Every day I am faced with reduced circumstances, meager resources and limited potential. I deal with indignities on a daily basis and have felt my humbler status more acutely. I have suffered many humiliations yet I continue to persevere in the face of adversity, doing my best to comply, to practice understanding, mindfulness and right conduct, to keep my composure and not let people and circumstances complicate me.

Each day is a test to keep my cool and sometimes it is difficult because I must witness the brutality, harassment and negligence going on all around me. The victims are usually the indigent, beset by uncertainties, having nowhere to lie down and nowhere to rest their heads. And what is especially bothersome is the fact that their bullies are the same ones that are supposed to be helping them.

I am talking about the police who are generally put on pedestal by Society and paid a good salary for "protecting and serving" the community. A fatal prejudice has clouded their eyes as they think how they are "taught" to think, viewing things through tinted glasses, letting perceptions of self-importance get to their heads as they develop a wanna-be tough guy and bully the "homeless" in the streets. Immense in the singleness of their ideas and placed ignorance of others troubles, they adapt easily to inefficiencies and the need to impose the law even when it is unreasonable (e.g. 125\$ jaywalking tickets to homeless people with dire financial difficulties). The average standing member of society does not witness the unseen everyday affairs of their 'heroes' in uniform who often ignore people in distress and treat others with an abundant lack of respect. They do not see the police trying to affect the manner of outlaws, ridiculing others and cracking weak jokes aimed only to diminish a person's dignity. They don't see destructive police conduct as being a common thing. In fact, it is the poor and the troubled people needing direction and encouragement the most that see this on a daily basis, instilling in them the fact that they are inferior and that they will never encounter justice or success. Poor people have been wronged by a corrupt and distant power structure and many do not entrust their problems to the police anymore. This lack of basic human respect is keeping people locked in the spirit of bitterness and has made the contempt for the law great.

The indigent are caught in a cycle where money is recognized more than justice. They are harassed on the streets and arrested, guilty or not. What they are charged with and what they did are sometimes two different things. Scared of the brutal prison sentence they will get if they lose a jury trial, many are coerced into pleading guilty for crimes they did not even commit.

Then they are sent to places that are supposed to "rehabilitate" but instead "dehumanize" them. Deputies in the Los Angeles County Jail exhibit some of the worst attitudes and actions towards inmates, especially sick ones. Prisoners are bullied around for no reason other than to amuse the guards. I have seen deputies punch and stomp on inmates for no reason, call people names like "Caveman" and "Hype" and laugh about it. I have seen inmates having seizures and then ignored and left for dead by the deputies who take their time about having to do something about anything. And these are just some of the degrading processes of dehumanization along with the cold showers, destruction of personal property, and people sleeping on concrete floors. That's the lesson you learn in jail: that you're an animal in a cage, no more than that.

Law enforcement departments lack the will to hold their employees accountable. The prison guard union is accomplished at buying off politicians. The California Correctional Peace Officers Association spends millions to elect friendly politicians and sponsor ballot initiatives that toughen up sentencing laws. The state needs to give more funding to drug treatment, housing, job training and other social service organizations to help get people off the streets instead of in institutions that help keep them locked in a negative cycle. The indigent are being overwhelmed and sucked back into cycles they seem unable to fend off. They are being crushed by a crooked law and stepped upon like sacrificial lambs, all so that law enforcement will remain in high demand and judges, prosecutors, and lawyers can advance their careers.

Bad choices, I've made more than a few. But today I am doing my best to make them right. Yes I may have, at one time, used drugs to cope with negative feelings such as frustration, sadness, boredom and anger but I have always had respect for my fellow human beings, especially those more unfortunate than myself.

The penal system seems determined to ignore and waste the human potential of so large a portion of its population in order to provide paychecks for those employed in it. The police are not my "heroes." My true heroes are those that struggle in their day to day existence to do what is right. They maintain an indomitable spirit under oppressive conditions and embrace whatever humiliation the world offers with good grace. It is these people together that will help to bring about positive change in the future. Utopia must spring from within before it can flower in social virtue, inner reforms will lead naturally to outer ones.

Best of Downtown, from a Skid Row Perspective

By Brooke Lykins

In response to the "Best Ways to Help the Community" appearing in the "Best of Downtown" Issue of the Downtown News:

While we can all agree that "diverse stakeholders are linked by a common... desire to see [Downtown] become as vibrant as possible," nothing in the article, or even the entire "Best Of Downtown" Issue, includes homeless residents as "stakeholders" or suggests that building community with these individuals would help downtown be "vibrant."

The article decries the high concentration homeless people downtown, a fact we have repeatedly heard as politicians and high-end developers profit from moving homeless and low-income folks somewhere-anywhere-other than the streets and hotels they call home. The homeless community is one that is admittedly struggling but will be stronger if individuals can draw on the support of one another, an existing infrastructure of service providers, and an increasing force of loft-dwelling volunteers.

For example, downtown resident Julie W. did not flee when she was facing homelessness. She was given a home at the Downtown Women's Center and with the support of others who shared her experience, stabilized her mental illness. This past spring she completed the LA Marathon.

"Twenty Years of Downtown's Best" (appearing on Page 6 of the Issue) also celebrated downtown's quickly fleeing low-income tenants-pointing out 4th and Main as "the epicenter of the Downtown's new residential hub." In the eyes of a homeless person this intersection could easily be called "The Best Place to Receive a Frivolous Citation." Since the introduction of the Safer Cities Initiative our pricey police have issued thousands of citations to low-income people who cannot afford to pay them. When these go to warrant our community is not thriving.

Figuring out the Best Free Breakfast, the Best Public Restroom, or the Best Case Managers is problem-solving Downtown's homeless residents do every day. Perhaps next year's "Best Of" can support that work instead of pointing to the vanishing support networks for the homeless as a manifestation of how "vibrant" we are. The best way to help the community is to embrace the place we've chosen to call home and include our neighbors in efforts to improve it.

Best of Downtown from homeless and low-income women visiting the Downtown Women's Center:

- ¢ Best Case Managers - Downtown Women's Center
- ¢ Best Public Restroom - Weingart Access Center
- ¢ Best Legal Help - LACAN on Thursday Nights
- ¢ Best Free Clinic - JWCH Clinic
- ¢ Best Free Breakfast - Downtown Women's Center
- ¢ Best Place to Spend a Hot Afternoon - Central Library
- ¢ Best Place to go When It's Raining - Downtown Women's Center
- ¢ Best Computer Access - WorkSource

Our roving reporter asked,

"What changes would you like to see in Skid Row in 2009?"

"I'd like to see fair business practices in the Skid Row community. Store owners are treating patrons like they are back in slavery times - by the way they kick us out of the store and yell at us just because they feel like it. This has got to stop!"



Pamela

"I'd like to see more low income housing downtown for everyone that needs it."

Cassandra

"I'd like to see the name Skid Row changed to Opportunity Lanes and I would like to see a positive attitude change for everyone."

Elma

"I'd like to see less racial profiling by the purple shirts. The purple shirts posting up only around black residents has got to stop."

Tommy

"As a downtown resident, I would like to see LAPD officers stop harassing us in the new year."

Paula



Please Take Note!!

The LA CAN Legal Clinic is moving to WEDNESDAY nights starting in Jan. 2009!

Intake for citations, housing and other issues will still be at 6:00 PM.

Looking For Justice?



WE MIGHT JUST HAVE WHAT YOU NEED AT THE
COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINIC

Have you recently received a "quality of life" citation? Some examples include jaywalking, sitting on a crate, littering, recycling, etc.

Has the LAPD, Sheriff's Dept., Highway Patrol, BID Security, City Clean-Up Crew or any other government employee taken or destroyed your property?

Has your landlord told you to leave; makes you change rooms every twenty-eight days; served you with eviction papers; or simply to respond to your requests for repairs?

Every Wednesday Night
at 6:00 pm.
456 S. Main St.
for more info call:213-228-0024

3rd Annual "Take Back the Night"

The Downtown Women's Action Coalition hosted its 3rd annual Take Back the Night march and ceremony on Wednesday, October 15, 2008. Dozens of downtown residents and workers came together to raise awareness and continue the collective work to end and prevent violence against women.

The roots of Take Back the Night may lie in 1877 when women protested the fear and violence they experienced in the night-time streets of London, England. That was a long time ago. But women today are still living with and experiencing violence in the day and night - but especially at night. It's important that we remove the fear that so many of us face.

This year's theme for downtown's Take Back the Night was Shatter the Silence: Breaking the Silence through Storytelling. The march and rally began at 6:00 pm outside the Los Angeles Community Action Network office. Linda Valverde opened the ceremony with an overview and purpose for the march. As women and men walked the route, we chanted and at some areas we stopped to take a moment to honor our fallen sisters in the community with a poem or song.

The final stop was at the Downtown Women's Center. We had a candlelight vigil and Survivors' Speak Out to break the silence and remind ourselves that we are not alone. Our strength and courage will help other survivors know that they are not alone, and that we not tolerate these crimes or let them go silently into the night. Together, our voices will help our community work toward eliminating violence against women in all its forms.

After the event, most everyone felt empowered and a little more at peace. But, of course, this is not the end. The Downtown Women's Action Coalition is committed to continuing the fight for the women's rights and justice in our community. Join us on the third Tuesday of each month at 2:30 pm at 456 S. Main Street to get involved in events and activities in 2009!



Participants in Take Back the Night
Candlelight Vigil and Speak Out

A Call for Re-Prioritizing of LAPD Resources

In October 2008, Los Angeles City Controller Laura Chick released an audit that highlighted a backlog of more than 7,000 rape kits that have not been analyzed for DNA by the LA Police Department. This backlog included cases going back more than 10 years. In fact, because of the lack of timely testing, more than 200 of the kits have exceeded the 10 year statute of limitations and are totally useless. Chief Bratton has formed a task force to address this issue, which he has known about for over a year, but neither the Chief nor any elected or appointed public officials have proposed a real action plan or solution.

While there has been some public outcry in response to the audit, there hasn't been enough. This isn't just a bureaucratic bottleneck to be addressed. It's not simply a budget or resource issue. It's a 10-year symbol of systemic sexism, of who law enforcement really protects and serves, and the failing leadership of elected and appointed officials in Los Angeles.

At an October 10, 2008 Police Commission meeting, Chief Bratton acknowledged this audit, but said that it was not news to him. He and the Police Commission have known about it for over a year. However, neither the Chief nor any Commission members spoke about any progress that had been made in the past year to seek justice for rape survivors by analyzing this crucial evidence. Instead, the Chief said that the Department has the expertise to do it, but not the resources.

We would argue, as others have, that the resources ARE available, they are just allocated to more politically popular areas. For example, the Chief and the Mayor have been adamant about putting more officers on our streets and have done so - on pace to help the Mayor keep his campaign promise to add 1,000 new officers in his first term. Yet, only 16 people were requested to work in this area of the crime lab, and were not funded. The Chief says he needs \$7 million to fix this problem that he seemingly cannot find, yet more than \$400 million is being spent to build the new, state-of-the-art LAPD headquarters. These facts tell us that rape survivors, women and children are simply not a priority in this City.

In Laura Chick's memo on this issue, she points out:

"How is it possible that we are in this situation? The answer is simple and obvious: The City, its elected leadership as well as the Police Department, has not given this issue the attention, resources and priority it deserves."

Rape is a crime that steals your soul. It rips at every fiber of your being. It impairs your ability to simply laugh or smile, sometimes at the most unexpected times. FOREVER. The Downtown Women's Action Coalition is calling on allies, organizations and concerned individuals to speak out against this unacceptable situation. The City MUST make this a priority by immediately providing the staffing and other resources to eliminate this backlog. New York City eliminated a backlog of 17,000 rape kits within three years in the late 1990s. Based on that rate, LA's backlog could be eliminated within 15 months.

Visit http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/Unacceptable_Rape_Kit_Backlog/ to sign on to support the demand to LA's elected leaders and the LA Police Department to immediately allocate the resources needed to eliminate this backlog by January 2010. Encourage your colleagues, friends, and others to sign on too. Visit LA CAN or Downtown Women's Center to sign on and/or get more involved!

You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.

--Maya Angelou, Poet/Writer/Artist

LA CAN Joins in Mourning John McGraham, Murder Victim

On October 18, 2008, LA CAN members attended a memorial service for John McGraham, who was murdered on October 9, 2008. Mr. McGraham was homeless at the time of his murder, one of several homeless murder victims in the Los Angeles region this fall. His was the most widely publicized and, perhaps, the most brutal. His body was doused with gasoline and then he was set on fire.

Although we didn't know Mr. McGraham, we were saddened by his brutal murder. LA CAN members reflected on the ongoing dangers facing homeless people at an October meeting, and shared our feelings about Mr. McGraham's and other recent murders. The dehumanization of homelessness by the media and other sources has helped to create an environment where human lives are perceived as insignificant, something to fear, or disposable. We know our work to change the misperceptions, stereotypes, and degrading media coverage of homelessness must continue, as we raise our voices together for change.

Below, we reprint a letter from his family that was distributed at the memorial. Our thoughts and sympathy go out to all of his family and friends.

To All Concerned Citizens Present,

As you know, our brother, John McGraham, was murdered in a most gruesome and cowardly manner near 3rd and Berendo in Los Angeles. The detectives investigating his murder have suggested that some people may have witnessed what took place and may have information that would help them solve this terrible crime. The detectives understand that people may be reluctant to come forward for fear of their own safety. The detectives think that if a witness were assured that their identity would not be revealed to the police they might come forward.

My sister and myself request that any person having important knowledge of this cowardly act contact us either by phone or e-mail. If you reach us by phone then, of course, you can remain anonymous. If you choose to reach us by email then we absolutely give you our word that your identity will never be revealed to the police and the police have assured us they will never ask for it. All they want is the information. If you want to remain unknown, you can go to a public library and use their computers to send us information anonymously.

This terrible crime must be solved. Not just for our brother's sake, but for the damage this despicable act has done to other individuals. For instance, we understand that some children witnessed the terrible sight of our brother dying by fire. These are images that these children may keep in their minds for the rest of their lives.

They, too, deserve justice. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

David Mcgraham
Davidmcgraham@comcast.net

Susanne Mcgraham-Paisley
Susanne501957@gmail.com or HealtheHomeless@gmail.com

It could have been me!

By Yvonne Michelle Autry

It has been (one year and some weeks) since the police beat down that little black lady in the streets
It could have been me y'all, it could have been me!
That little black lady that the police beat to death in the middle of the street.
(If anything she should have been subdued appropriately)

That could've been me y'all that could've been me!
I just keep on thinking, that could have been me!
Ya! I heard that they choked her to death and later on she died while in their custody. That was a lynch... she was choked without a rope!

I just keep on thinking, it could have been me that the police beat down in the street! I mean what are they trying to do go back to slavery? With all this white supremacy and police brutality; Where the lives of black people (poor people) don't mean anything.

After all she wasn't a white woman.... She wasn't even a Mexican; not that it would have been any more or less of a sin. No I ain't hating! This message I am simply communicating!

But the police and those who choose to believe in white supremacy say that she was a # 2; probably a crackhead or a

prostitute (so we can do whatever that we want to do)

She ain't a #1 she's a #2 (that is the code that they choose to use)
And you know what we are supposed to do!
We are supposed to take everything from them....
Their jobs, their homes. Their children and their men!
And then we get to kill them! They even got black men to commit their sin!

They would lie to justify the homicide!
Just like I said, They even got some brother men to commit the sin!

Please, tell me how could they sell their souls, receive a lie and believe that it could make them whole?

Just think that could have been me Y'all; I think about that repeatedly! Because I walk down the same street daily!
The police beat that little black in the street for everyone to see!
She looked just like me!
The only difference is that she claimed Cuban as her Nationality!
I am American, but I am not proud to be!

But I ain't trippin! Cause then they would call me mad, black, sad and angry black lady!

Please tell me just what kind of fear, jealousy and hatred drives them? I heard that she was beat down by about 6 or 7 big strong men!

Using lies to justify or to hide the homicides and desecration of our civil rights!

She was just dancing in the streets!
They said she was a crackhead and that she was crazy
That still don't mean that they had to beat down that little black lady in the street!
(for the whole community to see; what they really wanted to do was to instill fear, can you feel me?)

Again, that could have been me!

And I'll bet you that she wasn't pretty, well, she's not supposed to be!
Tell me, what did she threaten some white lady feeling jealousy?
They probably said that she was a devil, a witch, a stalker, a weirdo, a crazy ho' sex demon who takes off all of her clothes!
Yes! I know because they say the same thing about me, daily!

Yea! That could have been me that little Black lady that the police beat down in the street! Was another that did not die! But the police sent her to jail behind some crooked cops lies and evil tales.

Yea, that could have been me. Tomorrow it could be you! So, what you gon' do? To stop the abuse?

(Note: a condensed version is printed here due to Community Connection space limits - hear Michelle live on the second Thursday of each month at LA CAN at 6 pm)

Housing IS Economic Stimulus

By Paul Boden, Western Regional Advocacy Project

Change is certainly in the air these days. A President who understands that the phrase "economic recovery" is more than just a buzzword for tax cuts and bail outs for corporations and/or wealthy people is perhaps the biggest, and some would argue the most important change to impact local communities struggling to get by.

On December 6, 2008, President-elect Obama promised to create the largest public works construction project "since the creation of the federal highway system in the 1950s." According to an article in the New York Times by Peter Baker and John M. Broder, some lawmakers estimate the cost from 400 billion to 700 billion dollars, with others suggesting it could be much more. When talking with the National Governors Association, Mr. Obama talked about funding work on "schools, sewer systems, mass transit, electrical grids, dams and other public utilities as well as green jobs dedicated to creating alternative fuels, windmills and solar panels; building energy efficient appliances or installing fuel-efficient heating or cooling systems."

All of this, as well as his advocacy to ensure "every American" a college education and wiring the entire country for Internet access, will be a major change from the conservative economic practices of the Bush Administration and is truly incredibly good news for the country as a whole.

The one troubling factor in all of this is the context in which these proposals are being discussed. There seems to be a total dearth of planning and discussion as to how these programs will impact poverty and homelessness. In looking at the Obama-Biden website (www.change.gov), I found 23 issue areas, plus a link to "additional issues" at the bottom of the homepage. I looked at Poverty, Urban, Rural, Veteran and additional issues; only the Veteran link has any specific mention of homelessness. None has any clear plan (or even mention) of utilizing the programs of "economic recovery" to restore the cuts in HUD and USDA affordable housing funding or to include addressing homelessness as part of the economic revitalization of local communities.

This is not written to be casting the first stones. Quite the contrary, this is written to raise the first voices!!

It is way too early to be accusing the Obama Administration of ignoring the needs of poor and homeless people, and equally important, the contributions of poor and homeless people (be they veterans or not). Yes, many of us watched in despair as our issues were ignored during the campaign debates and in the party platforms. The continuation of homelessness was the #1 issue locally and yet all but ignored nationally. This was as true in 2008 as it was in 2004, 2000, 1996and on and on.

But this time we have elected somebody who understands what it means to listen to what people have to say, to respect true community organizations, in their organizing and their work, and to allow for local voices to be at the table when decisions are made that impact their lives.

Affordable Housing development MUST and SHOULD be a part of any economic recovery program. Affordable housing significantly impacts local communities and when properly funded and held accountable becomes can be a vital nexus in improving the lives of the whole community. With the devastating local and State cuts we are all seeing in our treatment, housing, shelter and service programs, our call to the Federal Government needs to be focused, cross cultural, multi-community and immediate. Economic recovery plans are being made NOW, when Department positions are being filled and priorities are being set.

Communities coming together to petition the federal government may yet continue to be ignored; we may once again find ourselves on the outside looking in while "experts" decide what we need. That could happen. What is definite is that it WILL happen if we don't come together around shared goals and concerns and address our issues directly to "the feds." No more leaving our representation to our Mayors, State representatives or even National Advocates. Direct calls from the local communities to our federal government are needed. Calls that demand a share of the estimated \$700 billion in economic recovery funding to come directly to local organizations to hire local community members to develop desperately needed housing, community spaces and businesses that use sustainable green technology and have accountable local hire requirements at all levels of development and implementation.

By bringing federal money directly into local communities, ensuring it circulates throughout the local community and is used to address the greatest priorities of those communities is economic stimulus that benefits everyone in the community.

Taken at their word, we now have an administration that says it will listen. It's on all of us locally to work together and make the call.

Paul Boden is the Executive Director of the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP), of which LA CAN is a member.

Election 2008

LA CAN has long operated a civic engagement project, which includes voter registration, education and mobilization efforts. A group of 15 members coordinated our efforts from August through November 2008, registering hundreds of voters and providing educational materials and forums for thousands.

November's election was definitely exciting, no matter your political positions. LA CAN provided space for a polling place, and there was a line down the street for the majority of the day. Many new and longtime downtown residents mingled in line and expressed excitement and interest in voting. One LA CAN member in her 70s voted for the very first time!

LA CAN members worked on several California propositions, although there were mixed results. For example, we worked in a broad coalition to defeat Propositions 6 and 9, both of which were law enforcement-driven propositions to increase penalties for youth offenders, keep people in prison longer, and other punitive measures. Proposition 6 was defeated by California voters, but Proposition 9 passed.

Many LA CAN members also worked with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force campaign to defeat Proposition 8, which repealed the right to marry for same-sex couples. Unfortunately, this proposition also narrowly passed - a civil rights defeat for all Californians.

Although LA CAN does not work on campaigns to elect individuals, we have taken time since the election to reflect on those who were elected. Of course, the most significant and historic election resulted in the first African American President of the United States, Barack Obama. Members have expressed a variety of emotions and thoughts on this result: pride, happiness, high expectations, low expectations, apprehension for a variety of reasons, and the list goes on and on.

Most people, though, have expressed hope that at least some fundamental changes will take place in Washington DC over the next four years. However, we know that change rarely comes without struggle; power concedes nothing; and people power is the strongest resource we have in the Skid Row community.

We look forward to continuing to organize low-income people to build power and strengthen our coalition relationships across Los Angeles and the country - we plan to remind President-elect Obama often of his organizer roots and what low-income people in this country really need!

Reflections on 2008: LA CAN's Work

As 2008 comes to a close and we prepare for new campaigns in 2009, LA CAN members have spent time reflecting on community victories in the past year. Although there are many challenges facing Skid Row, residents working together, organized for change can and do make a positive difference.....

City-Wide Residential Hotel Preservation Ordinance

In May 2008, the LA City Council passed what was called the most comprehensive housing protection ordinance in LA's history. After five years of laborious efforts by LA CAN members and supporting organizations, Councilmembers unanimously passed an ordinance to protect almost 19,000 housing units in residential hotels. The ordinance protects approximately 30,000 low-income tenants, about 10,000 of whom live in downtown Los Angeles.

LA CAN is proud that several hundred very poor and homeless people were able to lead the successful effort to completely reverse the plans of big money developers and elected officials to remove these buildings from our use. It is one of many David vs. Goliath stories throughout the country where poor people are defeating the investors eyeing our communities. The people do have power, it is being exercised, and developers should watch out.

Frontier Hotel

In March 2008, the City Attorney announced a \$1 million settlement agreement with Rob Frontiera, former owner of the Frontier Hotel. A minimum of \$700,000 was set aside to ensure that tenants that were illegally vacated from the building were paid relocation benefits. The City Attorney filed the suit in 2006, after LA CAN worked with them to gather evidence of the 28-day shuffle - a practice long used by Mr. Frontiera and other downtown landlords to attempt to prevent residents from establishing tenant rights.

While the suit was originally intended to stop the practice of the 28-day shuffle, other violations were found during the course of investigation. Most importantly, records showed that the landlord avoided his obligation to pay tenants proper relocation, as required under the Ellis Act, as he planned to remove affordable units and convert to high-end lofts. Tenants who were displaced during this process, between approximately late 2005 and early 2007, received relocation benefits in the fall of 2008.

Alexandria Hotel

Although the publicly-funded renovation project at the Alexandria Hotel was designed so that no one would be displaced, over 100 people were displaced

in the first year of operation by new ownership and management. Tenants were also without hot water, elevators, heat, and other basic needs for substantial amounts of time. After months of public requests for intervention by the City on these urgent matters, Alexandria Hotel tenants and LA CAN filed a federal lawsuit against the owners and managers of the Alexandria and the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

The United States District Court issued a temporary restraining order in February 2008 prohibiting the Alexandria Hotel from permanently or temporarily displacing any tenants until a decision was entered on Plaintiffs' Motion for Preliminary Injunction. In May 2008, the Court issued a Preliminary Injunction which, among other things, ordered the CRA to find all evicted tenants and provide them relocation benefits.

These court decisions validated the public complaints of tenants who had been ignored and in some cases ridiculed by elected officials and City agencies. The developers have since made numerous improvements to the building and have resolved many tenants' complaints. We also expect and hope that benefits to former tenants will be available in early 2009.

Huntington Hotel

In March 2008, the City Attorney announced a \$10 million settlement with Landmark Equity Management, Inc. for engaging in a scheme to drive low-income tenants out of more than 800 rent-controlled units in the City of Los Angeles. About 200 of these units were at the Huntington Hotel, which was covered by the settlement. Huntington tenants became eligible for a 70% rent rebate for the entire period of Landmark Equity ownership, beginning in February 2003 and continuing until the building meets safety and habitability standards. Dozens of tenants applied for these rebates, which should be in tenants' hands before spring of 2009.

Civil Rights

Although we were not able to end SCI policing, we still made progress in the defense of civil rights during 2008. Fifteen new LA CAN members became trained for CommunityWatch teams, increasing our monitoring and video presence in the community. More than 200 residents were trained to defend their own civil rights when CommunityWatch teams are unavailable. Also, we were able to work with the ACLU and Carol Sobel to change LAPD policies and training to ensure that people on parole or probation cannot be unfairly targeted and fewer people can be handcuffed and searched. Lastly, we were able to provide videotape and witnesses for the defense of residents who had been unfairly arrested or wrongfully charged.

Health and Safety

With our Downtown Women's Action Coalition partners, LA CAN helped implement a number of educational and awareness events to work to end violence against women. For example, in February, we produced a Vagina Monologues performance as part of the worldwide V-Day campaign. Also, in March, we held our second annual Women's Summit to highlight our community-based research and discuss solutions with a diverse group of panelists and attendees.

In June 2008, LA CAN started a weekly self-defense class targeted toward women's safety. Minda Panelo, a 3rd Degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do, is our amazing volunteer teacher. The class is free and open to all on Saturday mornings at 10:00 am. In November, LA CAN members also started a weekly walking group. Although we fight daily to make the structural and institutional changes needed to improve our community, we also can make improvements in our health right now. The walking group is one way to socialize and exercise all in one! Join us on Monday mornings at 10:00 am.

New Members

Along with the tireless and brave work of longtime members, LA CAN increased our membership by over 150 residents in 2008. An organized, unified front is unstoppable. We need our community to rise up to demand more positive change, force the passage of more historic legislation, create more accountability from our landlords, and the list goes on and on. Each and every person in our community has extreme value. Join LA CAN in 2009. If you're already a member, get more involved. Together we will make history.

*In the end,
we will
remember not
the words of
our enemies,
but the silence
of our friends.*

**Martin Luther
King Jr.**

Poetic Voices From the Community

*All great movements were joined by powerful arts, music & poetry.
This page is dedicated to our community poets who are seeking Poetic Justice*

I'VE

I've counted over 100 grand
in Baldwin Hills, understand?
I've been on San Julian
waiting on the Dollar Man.
I've been in Hollywood
With a key getting higher as a kite
I've been on Skid Row
Wishing to get high pushing my pipe.
I've had Staceys, Gators, and Ramos on my feet
I've had Jap flaps, athletics and canvas on my feet.
I've ate hot steak, hot lobster, and chicken on a plate.
I've ate cold cheese, top ramen, juke balls on my plate.
I've robbed many folks, an' taken all their stuff.
I've been arrested by the police who took all my stuff.
I've shot many folks and saw fear in their eyes.
I've been shot many times and had fear in my eyes.
I've been to many parties laughing all day and all night.
I've seen sunshine, heavy rain, happiness and pain.
Victory, defeat, MVP's, ER's, gold teeth, toothache, heaven and hell.
I've finally known the question and the answer.
I'm seeking someone greater than me, God, Allah, Jehovah,
Jesus, Buddha, Yahweh, Mary, Lord, Creator, Higher Power.

Please, Please. Help me.

By Timothy Mackey
"aka" Big Mack

SAFER CITIES INITIATIVE

Safer Cities Initiative, who's it for?
Safe for the rich, dangerous for the poor

They say it's good, but not for me
As far as they're concerned I'm the enemy
They prowl the street, looking for me
They pervert the law to please the city

Who are they?
The police, the Gestapo, the KGB?

They want me out of the way to impose the laws
But their instigation will be their fall
I'm not going to stand for it, only to run
Giving the Pig an opportunity to use his gun

They harass me to intimidate me,
To invoke the law
They want me off the streets,
But that's not all
They'd like to put me in prison
To shut my mouth
But I'm a keep on talking,
Let me scream and shout

Get up, stand up, and stand up for your rights
Let's get down, now's the time to fight
Know your rights and protect your freedom
SCI we don't need 'em.

Billy Shaw, September 2008

DOGS

You can't put a leash around my neck
A muzzle on my mouth

You can't tell me what to spit or where to shit
If you come at me wrong I go into my mind kit

I'll pull out a mental weapon that will destroy your racist game
Will burn you up and make you tame

You thought you had a dog but you made a mistake
I was born a lion to fight your racist hate

You thought you had a slave to say the least
Now you realize I'm the KING OF BEASTS

KING GERALD

Please Submit All

Poetry Articles & Other Materials

Editor:

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**"What's right isn't
always popular, and
what's popular isn't
always right."**

Lovely Afternoon Tea Party

In response to food insecurities and chronic health conditions in the Skid Row community, LA CAN members have conducted nutritional workshops throughout the community for the past three years. Workshops are held at various locations such as: Downtown Women's Center, Volunteers of America, James Wood Center, St. Vincent Cardinal Manning Center, and more.

Residents have a great time at our nutritional workshops. There are games, prizes and healthy fruits and vegetables available at most of our workshops. LA CAN is on a mission to increase the health and well-being of residents through education and increased access to healthy foods. We define good health as more than just the absence of disease, but also the ability to grow, to soar and to use our strength and our power as women and men to pursue a healthy life and community.

As a celebration of community and to culminate the most recent year of workshops, we held our 2nd Annual Tea Party for workshop participants.

Tea is an ideal drink; it has no calories, no sodium, no sugar, and no fat. In cooking, tea is a vibrant, innovative and extremely versatile ingredient, and there is compelling evidence of its antioxidant properties.

There were a variety of teas at the party, from savory to sweet along with the traditional tea sandwiches: watercress and cream cheese, egg salad, chicken and walnut, ever so delicious pastries. Of course, traditional hats were also worn.

Juan Carlos Gallegas, Case Manager at the Eugene Hotel and one of the guests, said, "the guys were very pleased to be invited and to be exposed to the unique opportunities in the community, and the values that LA CAN set."

Why a Tea Party, you ask? As the "Boston Tea Act" of 1773 revived American passions about the issue of taxation without representation, our community comes together and brings passion about common experiences and problems. We also begin to develop solutions for our community. The Tea Party is a perfect place for all of this.

LA CAN is looking forward to offering new workshops in the coming year, as well as increasing physical activities in the area. Visit us at 456 S. Main Street to get involved!



LA CAN Tea Party Guests in beautiful new hats!

Getting Active!!



Self Defense Class Participants

LA CAN has committed to increasing free physical activity and exercise opportunities in the downtown community in 2009. Many of the changes we fight for on a daily basis are long-term fights to improve conditions in Skid Row. However, some changes we can implement in our community ourselves and increasing physical activity is one of those!

We all know that exercise can improve our physical and mental health - we just need to do it! To date, we have started two physical activity programs:

We have a self-defense class that meets every Saturday morning at 10:00 am. It is focused on women's safety, but is open to anyone who is interested. Participants love this class - it leaves them feeling strong and energized.

We also recently started a Monday morning walking group. The group meets at LA CAN at 10:00 am, and selects a route based on how far people would like to go. It's a great opportunity to get to know your neighbors, get some fresh air, and feel better!

If you have ideas about new, free physical activity programs, bring them to LA CAN Resident Organizing Meetings on the first and third Friday of each month at 6 PM!

LET'S GET ACTIVE!
LA CAN Walking Group
Every Monday at 10 am
456 S. Main St

Come and join your friends in the community for a walk party
Healthy Snack Provided!
 For more information contact
 Linda Valverde or Steve Diaz at LA CAN
 213.228.0024
 456 S. Main St



BECOME A
COMMUNITY CONNECTION
VENDOR

EARN DOLLARS. DIGNITY. RESPECT.

✓ EARN THAT MUCH NEEDED EXTRA CASH

✓ GIVE ANGELENO'S THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THE REAL STORIES SURROUNDING THE IMPACTS OF BAD POLICY AND THE RESULTING POVERTY

✓ OBTAIN FREE VENDOR TRAINING IN SUBJECTS SUCH AS SELLING TIPS, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND POPULAR EDUCATION

✓ INFORM RESIDENTS ABOUT CRITICAL PROGRAM AND POLICY CHANGES.



PROJECT OF THE LA COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK

Call LA CAN (213) 228-0024 and ask for Pete White or just come to 456 S. Main Street on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m.

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Become A Community Connection Sponsor

While LA CAN has been quite successful in framing our work in a way that is frequently highlighted in mainstream media, these "sound-bites" only scratch the surface of the real work and the real stories of our community. Following the tradition of all major social movements, LA CAN created a community-based newspaper with the sole purpose of telling the whole story from the perspectives of those living it. The newspaper shares LA CAN's philosophy that people are best suited to tell their own stories; therefore, all stories are written by LA CAN members and supporters. The Community Connection is LA CAN's rendition of the North Star, the Liberator and other historical examples of community-based press used to advance social change.

Our Community Connection Sponsor Campaign asks sponsors to pledge a \$50 monthly donation. Sponsors will be highlighted in each issue unless anonymity is requested.

Your support for the Community Connection:

- ◆ Provides critical information on available services, program and policy changes that affect downtown's low-income and homeless residents.
- ◆ Tells the untold stories of impacts created by policy
- ◆ Coordinates a training program for vendors which includes leadership development, popular education, conflict resolution techniques and selling tips.
- ◆ Provides extremely poor and homeless vendors an opportunity to earn much needed money with dignity

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Yes, I want to become a COMMUNITY CONNECTION Underwriter @ \$50 a month for _____ months.

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I want to support the work of the Los Angeles Community Action Network with a single tax-deductible* contribution in the amount of: (circle amount) \$25 \$40 \$55 \$70 \$100 Other \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: **Los Angeles Community Action Network** and send to: LA CAN, 456 S. Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

You can also make an online donation at www.cangress.org utilizing the donate now button.



*All donations are tax-deductible as permitted by law. The Los Angeles Community Action Network is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Editorial Policy

The Los Angeles Community Action Network is a membership organization comprised of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless residents in the Central City East community of downtown Los Angeles [Skid Row]. LA CAN's staff and core members, more than 95% of whom live in Skid Row and/or have been homeless, write the lion's share of articles that appear in the Community Connection. These appear without a byline. Articles by people who are not LA CAN core members and extremely personal articles receive a byline. These articles do not necessarily represent the views, opinions and perspectives of the Los Angeles Community Action Network.

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