



Public Relations

By Lucy V. Pedregon, Chairman
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WOMEN'S SHELTER

I am hungry, I am cold, I am scared! Words commonly spoken at home and immediately addressed without thought and effort. These are expression re-iterated on a daily basis from the homeless community everywhere. What do they do? Where can they go? What if this happened to you?

On February 20, 2020 – Thursday, Janice Hahn – Supervisor of Los Angeles County 4th District sponsored funds and hosted a special dinner for the Women's Shelter located at Steinmetz Park in Hacienda Heights. The Hacienda Heights Improvement Association participated at the event by purchasing twenty five duffle bags stuffed with hygiene products and a snack bag for each of the women living at the shelter. Those Board Members who participated from HHIA were Scott Martin – President, Randy Black – Treasurer, Lucy Pedregon – Public Relations and Adriana Quinones – Community Relations. Other VIP attendees were the following; Maggie Rodriguez – Shelter Manager and Reggie Clarke – Program Manager who both represent Volunteers of America (VOA), Kimberly Barnette leader of Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and other representatives. From Supervisor Hahn's office, Louisa Ollague – Assistant Chief of Staff and Ivan Sulic – Homeless Services Deputy. Also partnering on this occasion was the Los Angeles County Department of Parks & Recreation – Steinmetz Park. Director Margaret Trujillo-Foote, Recreation Service Supervisor and Khatija Gulhiane, Recreation Leader, prepared the shelter room with tables and chairs a decorated with a beautiful red theme table setting of red glitter overlays and red rose centerpieces! The special dinner served was chicken, rice, beans, salad, tortilla chips with red or green salsa for that zesty taste! Thank you Pollo Loco! Punch and/or coffee were available to complete dinner with Bundt cake, cookies/cupcakes to satisfy the sweet tooth! At 5:30 P.M. the homeless women began to arrive in awe of what was about to take place for them. At 6:00 P.M. Supervisor Hahn, HHIA Board Members and volunteers stood behind the food tables to serve the sheltered women. After "breaking bread" with the women, Supervisor Hahn thanked all who assisted toward the dinner but most importantly encourage the women to share information about the shelter to other homeless women living in the streets. She also encouraged them to share what their needs are and how the county could improve the outreach.

I had the opportunity to speak with the sheltered women. Each had a story of surviving abuse, hitting rock bottom after losing their job, home and car. One homeless woman was battling cancer. They are displaced survivors lost in the shuffle in any community. At the end of the evening, the sheltered women were overwhelmed by the dinner, stuffed duffle bags and comradery they have established which they now refer to each other as family. They are no longer hungry, cold or threatened but rather feel the love that has been bestowed to them by Hacienda Heights.

Four years ago, Supervisor Hahn brought to our attention the need to address the homelessness issue in all communities with the support of Measure H. Some communities did not support that idea but Hacienda Heights has embraced the Women's Shelter which opened last year in November, sooner than expected due to the heavy rains. These women are Moms, a sister, aunt, grandmother to someone. Let's take care of them. It is not a crime to be homeless. Let's keep working together Hacienda Heights!!! Thank you.