



## 2018 Pioneer Women of the Year Awards

### Presentation by CSW President, Jessica Postigo, in Los Angeles City Council

- Good Morning – Thank you Councilmember Nury Martinez for leading today’s City Council presentation and for your commitment to positively addressing issues that perpetuate gender inequality in the City of Los Angeles. The Commission on the Status of Women is grateful for your support and applaud your tireless efforts to improve the lives of women and girls.
- I also want to thank Mayor Eric Garcetti and members of the City Council for your efforts to recognize and address the different needs of women and men, girls and boys, and for choosing the remarkable women we are celebrating today.
- Lastly, thank you to the Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment Department and the Commissions and Community Engagement unit that currently houses the staff of the Commission on the Status of Women.
- The Pioneer Women’s Awards is a signature event for the Commission on the Status of Women and on behalf of the Commission, I want to congratulate the incredible group of leaders being recognized today, representing communities across Los Angeles.
- The Commission is especially proud to recognize Oree Freman – an award winning advocate, trainer, survivor, and leader in the movement to end human trafficking.
- Ms. Freeman serves on the California Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Advisory Board and trains the FBI, law enforcement, prisons, colleges and hospitals across the nation to become more effective in preventing and eliminating human trafficking.
- Ms. Freeman has also lent her story to the anti-human trafficking campaign “[Look Again](#),” which the Commission produced in partnership with the Los Angeles Police

Department, with support from Mayor Eric Garcetti, Councilmember Nury Martinez and David Ryu.

- The intention of “Look Again” is to capture public attention and make the Los Angeles community aware of the realities surrounding child sex trafficking - a 150 billion dollar per year industry and the fastest growing criminal enterprise of the 21st Century, second only to drugs.
- Human trafficking affects over 45 million people around the world. In Los Angeles alone, service providers estimate that 10,000 people live in slavery-like conditions every year, of those, close to 1,000 are children
- Through the campaign, we hope to engage Angelenos in the fight against trafficking by learning how to spot the signs of trafficking and how to report it. This is an issue that is not happening "somewhere else" – it is right here in our neighborhoods.
- Oree’s story and courageous work is part of a set of issues that we want to address at this year’s Pioneer Women’s Awards – issues that meet at the *Intersection of Female Homelessness: [that is] Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking*.
- By sharing our Awardees’ stories and bringing together the City Council, the Mayor’s Office, Departments, Commissions, Law Enforcement and Service Providers, we hope to mobilize our collective efforts and highlight the linkages and interdependence between the issues we respectively work on.
- Over the past years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of unsheltered women [70% from 2009 to 2016], who are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and human trafficking. <sup>1</sup>
- National research show that domestic violence is one of the main drivers into homelessness for women. When women leave their homes to escape a violent environment, they often have nowhere else to turn. They are left with the choice of becoming homeless or return to their abuser.
- In 2018, the Commission on the Status of Women has resolved to make this cross-sectional issue a focal point and to increase our support to those who are working hard to address these issues.

---

<sup>1</sup> LAHSA Ad Hoc Committee on Women and Homelessness: The 2017 Homeless Count showed that compared to men, nearly twice as many women experiencing homelessness on any given night had experienced domestic violence or intimate partner violence in their lifetime. 28% percent women, compared to 6% men, reported a history of sex trafficking.

- Given the staggering rates of violence against women, it is time to acknowledge women as a specific sub-set of the homeless population. This would not only ensure that appropriate resources are allocated, it would also help us identify gaps and develop comprehensive, gender-sensitive programs, ultimately empowering women to transition to a safe, healthy, and independent lives, no matter what part of the City they live in.
- Equality between the sexes is a question of a fair and equitable distribution of power, influence and resources in everyday life and in society as a whole.
- Studies continue to prove that programs providing women opportunities to better their health, education, and well-being have effects far beyond a single individual. In fact, Women multiply the impact of investments in their future by extending benefits to the world around them, creating a better life for their family, and building strong communities.<sup>2</sup>
- This is why we are committed to building the City's capacity to apply a gender lens to policies, budgets, and programs - an effective strategy to advance the welfare of women and girls and build thriving communities.
- We are proud to stand with this group of resilient and innovative leaders, who have selflessly contributed to the City of Los Angeles and we look forward to build on our success and work together with you all to build a city that addresses different needs and gives everyone the power to shape their own lives.
- Thank you.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.usaid.gov/infographics/50th/why-invest-in-women>