S H I F T I N G
N A R R A T I V E S

T h e S t r e n g t h o f
W o m e n S u r v i v o r s

March 8, 2019
International Women’s Day
Time: 9:00 – 11 a.m.
Los Angeles City Hall

On behalf of the Los Angeles City Commission on the Status of Women (LACSW) it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Shifting Narratives: The Strength of Women Survivors Art Exhibit and 2019 Pioneer Women Awards. It is important that we bring attention to the intersection of domestic violence, human trafficking, and homelessness, which disproportionately impacts Los Angeles’ women and girls. During the 2019 Women’s History Month, LACSW offers encouragement and support to women survivors through the sharing of their artwork and stories which touch on domestic abuse, modern slavery, motherhood, and the unbreakable spirit of sisterhood. We also honor the 2019 Pioneer Women who are brave survivors and advocates who work tirelessly to assist others in overcoming the obstacles that lead women down the path to homelessness. LACSW would like to thank Service Providers and Community Partners for their partnership and efforts. LACSW invites all who visit the art exhibit to get involved and assist women and girls seeking a path to a safe home in our city. We are truly inspired by all who participated in the exhibit and by our awardees. Congratulations to the artists and activists featured in the program.

In solidarity,

Jackie Filla, President of the Los Angeles City Commission on the Status of Women
Order of Events

IN THE CITY HALL ROTUNDA
9:00 – 9:30 a.m.
Networking and light breakfast

9:30 – 9:35 a.m.
Opening remarks by Jackie Filla,
President of LACSW

9:35 – 9:40 a.m.
Remarks by Elizabeth Eastlund,
Chair of LA City Domestic Violence Alliance

9:40 – 9:50 a.m.
Award ceremony lead by Nancy Perlman,
LACSW Vice President

9:50 – 9:55 a.m.
Overview of Urban Voices

9:55 – 10:15 a.m.
Performance by Urban Voices

10:15 – 10:17 a.m.
Jackie Filla introduces Mayor Eric Garcetti

10:17 – 10:22 a.m.
Remarks by Mayor Eric Garcetti

10:22 – 10:24 a.m.
Jackie Filla provides closing remarks
and further instructions

10:24 – 10:30 a.m.
TRANSFER TO COUNCIL CHAMBERS

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.
Presentation to the Los Angeles City Council

11:00 – Onward
Guests are encouraged to visit the art exhibit
at the City Hall Bridge and the WOMEN ON
THE MOVE mobile board and resource center
parked outside of City Hall

“Freedom Wings.”
Courtesy of Haven Hills

Please visit our sister art exhibit at the Jose Drudis-
Biada Art Gallery at Mount Saint Mary’s University:
12001 Chalon Road,
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Opening Reception:
April 14, 2019, 1-3 PM

Exhibit Dates:
April 14 - April 26, 2019

Exhibit Times:
Thursdays & Saturdays,
12 - 5PM
IN COMMEMORATION OF WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH 2019

Shifting Narratives: The Strength of Women Survivors portrays the journey, strength and resilience of women surviving homelessness, domestic violence, and human trafficking. While the City of Los Angeles is working to end homelessness, more than 31,000 individuals still experience homelessness of which more than 9,000 are women.

Women have unique stories and different needs when it comes to homelessness. Many are survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. When these women try to escape their violent environment they often have nowhere else to turn and are forced to make the impossible decision between becoming homeless or remaining with their abusers. Specifically, an estimated 9,920 women experiencing homelessness are also survivors of domestic violence. In Los Angeles County, 3,050 homeless women report a history of sex trafficking, compared to 1,666 men.

As the number of women impacted remains high, the City of Los Angeles is committed to elevating the voices of survivors and listening with open hearts and minds to end homelessness together.

When someone asks, “why didn’t she leave,” we will ask, “where would she go if she did” and “why is someone causing harm”?

When someone says “it isn’t happening here” we will reply “it is happening right here in our backyards.”

This art exhibit is presented to you by a cohort of government and community groups committed to achieving gender equality in the City of Los Angeles and beyond. Preventing more women from becoming homeless requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach that addresses the
long-term effects of institutionalized and structural gender and racial discrimination. Through policies, programs, and services, the City of Los Angeles is working tirelessly to address factors such as the wage gap, occupational gender segregation, harassment and discrimination in the workplace, City contracting opportunities, discrimination in housing and employment opportunities, the gender-investment gap, and any gender-blind services that obstruct women's opportunities and power to shape their own lives.
The Intersection of Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, and Homelessness

In the City of Los Angeles, an estimated 9,577 women are homeless. Of those more than 30% have experienced domestic violence. In Los Angeles County, an estimated 28% of the female homeless population report a history of sex trafficking, compared to 6% of men.

Due to lack of affordable housing options and women experiencing domestic violence and human trafficking, many women are forced to choose between becoming homeless or remaining with their abuser.

African–American Women

African–American women are significantly overrepresented in the homeless population and are far more likely to experience chronic homelessness and violence. In a 2016 needs assessment by the Downtown Women’s Center, 37.7% of African–American women had faced sexual assault, domestic violence, or interpersonal violence within the last year, compared to 25% of Latina respondents and 27.3% of White respondents. African–American women living on the streets are more likely to experience harassment and discrimination. In 2018, there was a 13% increase in recorded hate crimes
“SOMEONE WHO IS BEING ABUSED CAN AND SHOULD WALK AWAY FROM THE RELATIONSHIP”
Survivors often lack a place to go where they will be safe from their abuser. It takes money, a support network, and time for detailed planning to ensure that a survivor can escape to a safe place as abusers often threaten to kill them if they leave. Survivors are three times more likely to be killed the first year after leaving their relationship.

“DOMESTIC ABUSE IS ONLY PHYSICAL”
Coverage of domestic violence overwhelmingly focuses on physical abuse and therefore misrepresents the extensiveness of the issue. In addition to physical abuse, survivors of domestic violence often experience isolation, coercion, verbal and sexual abuse, stalking, economic control, abuse of trust, threats, intimidation, emotional withholding, property destruction,
two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent in any state. This national trend impacts Los Angeles significantly.

Older Women
The number of older women experiencing homelessness in the County of Los Angeles continues to rise. Between 2017 - 2018, there was a 22% increase in the homeless population aged 62 and older. Due to their unique vulnerabilities, older women are more likely to experience harassment than other women experiencing homelessness. They also report having poorer health and live with significant health issues.

Students
Housing insecurity is a harsh reality for many students. The City of Los Angeles Board of Education estimates that the Los Angeles Unified School District serves 16,200 students who identify as “homeless, living in shelters, motels, abandoned buildings, cars, doubled up with other families, or unsheltered.”

MYTHS & MISLEADING PERCEPTIONS

and harm to pets. It is important to understand and recognize the signs of all types of domestic abuse.

“DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ONLY HAPPENS IN POOR FAMILIES”
Domestic violence occurs at all levels of society. While it can be exacerbated by stressful economic situations, there is no evidence to suggest that people of any income level, occupation, social class, or culture are immune from domestic violence.

“GETTING A JOB WILL KEEP SOMEONE OUT OF HOMELESSNESS”
A full-time minimum wage worker would have to work between 69 and 174 hours a week, depending on the state, to pay for an “affordable” two-bedroom rental unit. According to research by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a full-time minimum wage worker couldn’t afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent in any state. This national trend impacts Los Angeles significantly.

‘HOMELESS HOUSING WILL DECREASE MY PROPERTY VALUE”
Housing for people experiencing homelessness, such as Supportive Housing, transforms communities by helping people live stable, productive lives. The buildings are designed to look like market rate housing and for this reason, surrounding property values often increase. In addition, Supportive Housing developments frequently lower crime rates as tenants have immediate access to need of support and services, many avoid seeking help because of fear of deportation.
services and treatment provided by on-site caseworkers and security personnel.

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“EVICTIONS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT”
Incomplete data on evictions continues to be a problem nationwide. Research by Apartment List finds “one in five renters recently struggled or were unable to pay their rent, and 3.7 million renters nationwide have experienced an eviction in their lifetime as a renter.” African American, low-income households are most likely to be evicted. Other vulnerable populations include women and families with children. Within the past three months, twice as many households with kids experienced difficulties with paying rent, compared to those without.

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“IT IS NOT HAPPENING HERE”
Los Angeles experiences significant human trafficking. In 2017,
In 2019, the City of Los Angeles raised its financial support of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking shelter beds from $2.2M to $5.6M, adding a much needed increase in beds and trauma-informed resources available to clients.

In July 2018, the City of Los Angeles opened the first dedicated Human Trafficking Emergency Shelter in the U.S. with trauma-informed care services. Survivors of trafficking now have an immediate place to go with trained staff to support them.

The City and County of Los Angeles continues to expand its Family Justice Center Network and now has three Centers in the County that offer co-located services for survivors to make access easier.

In 2019, the City of Los Angeles is piloting a City-funded hotel voucher program for survivors that are in need of shelter.

WHAT’S BEING DONE

MYTHS & MISLEADING PERCEPTIONS

1,305 cases of human trafficking were reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Of those, 89% of the survivors identified as female. Some of the most recognizable corridors in Los Angeles - Western Avenue, Century Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Figueroa Street - are where most trafficking take place. Common recruitment spots include bus and train stations.

"VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WILL IMMEDIATELY ASK FOR HELP OR ASSISTANCE AND WILL SELF-IDENTIFY AS A VICTIM OF A CRIME"

Survivors of human trafficking often do not immediately seek help or self-identify as survivors of a crime due to a variety of factors, including lack of trust, self-blame, or specific instructions by the traffickers regarding how to behave when talking to law enforcement or social services. It is important to avoid making a snap judgment about who is or is not a trafficking victim based on first encounters. Trust often takes time to develop. Continued trust-building and patient interviewing is often required to get to the whole story and uncover the full experience of what a victim has gone through.
immediate need of a short term, safe place to go. First responders will have access to immediate resources to place victims at a hotel for a few nights while they decide their next steps. These survivors will also be connected with a trained case manager that can help design a safety plan that meets their needs.

The Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority and the Los Angeles Domestic Violence and Homelessness Coalition are working on new protocols to ensure that survivors have access to housing through the Coordinated Entry System — a system that helps connect people to interventions that aim to rapidly resolve their housing crisis.

The City of Los Angeles, Domestic Violence Alliance, Abuse in Later Life Committee continues to develop best practices for specialized care and services for older and disabled women.

The Los Angeles Workforce Development Board, the Hospitality Training Academy, and the Los Angeles Housing & Community Investment Department are partnering to develop a pilot program aimed at connecting survivors of homelessness, domestic violence, and human trafficking to workforce development training and job opportunities.

With Measure H funding, the City of Los Angeles funds legal service organizations to help survivors with eviction prevention.

**Domestic Violence Court Support:**
For any crime victim, navigating the legal process can be intimidating. In a domestic violence case, the process usually feels even more overwhelming because of the close relationship between the victim and the defendant, and the complicated nature of the impact of the abuse. The Los Angeles City Court Support Program ensures that a person does not have to go through this process alone.

Through funding provided by Citi Community Development, the Los Angeles Housing & Community Investment Department is partnering with FreeFrom to integrate financial counseling and financial empowerment services to the City of Los Angeles Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence, and Shelter Operations System. The pilot will launch in May 2019 and will include Rainbow Services and the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Human Trafficking in the initial cohort.

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**“THIS IS A CRIME THAT ONLY AFFECTS IMMIGRANTS”**

The federal definition of human trafficking includes both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. Both are protected under the federal trafficking statutes and have been since the Trafficking Victim Preventions Act of 2000. Human trafficking within the U.S. affects victims who are U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, visa holders, and undocumented workers.
Thank you to all the artists and contributors of Shifting Narratives: The Strength of Women Survivors Art Exhibit.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

LOS ANGELES CITY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The Los Angeles City Commission on the Status of Women (LACSW) was established in 1975 and re-launched by Mayor Garcetti in 2015 to advance the welfare of women and girls in the City. The mission of LACSW is to inform and advise the Mayor and City Council on the challenges that women and girls face locally. Through policy recommendations, awareness-raising activities, and force-multiplying partnerships, LACSW strives to remove obstacles that prevent women from reaching their full potential.