



# St. Joseph Center

*Spring Newsletter 2005*



*Depending on the time of day, this cramped space is a living, dining, and bedroom area for 8 people.*

## Not Enough Living Space

What is it like to not have enough living space to accommodate one's basic needs for healthy and constructive activity, recreation, and mere privacy? How would your family grow and flourish, if each member was unable to move about freely and was forced to simply sit or lie in one position, while they were in your apartment or house?

**Mirabel** came to St. Joseph Center (SJC) in December 2004 with just such a problem. She rents a bedroom with her husband and three small children in a 500 sq. ft. 2-bedroom apartment with a tiny kitchen-living area. Another couple lives in the other bedroom, and a brother-in-law sleeps on the couch in the living area. **Diego**, Mirabel's 11-month-old son, has barely enough space to crawl and is often told to be quiet out of consideration for the other people in the apartment. "The children can only sit and watch TV," Mirabel says.

### Work in Progress

"When Diego came to us, he was 9 months-old," says Betsy White, Manager of SJC's **Infant Toddler Development Center** (ITDC), "and he demonstrated developmental problems due to lack of space for interactive

play and learning." ITDC teachers now provide Diego with special attention on interactive play, focusing, and movement to develop motor skills. Diego is also provided with talking activities and his own specially designed educational picture book to encourage literacy. Mirabel benefits from parenting meetings and child care, and through SJC's **Family Center and Food Pantry**, case management and supplemental groceries.

SJC's new "Alternative Housing Forum" completes SJC's continuum of services to Mirabel by providing her with access to various alternative housing resources, including the Community Corporation of Santa Monica's application process, the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing's Directory, and various other lists and information regarding housing. Mirabel recently obtained employment and will now, along with her husband's salary, be able to consider obtaining a larger living space for her family.

### Current Housing Situation

"Overcrowding" is a common survival strategy for many low-income families St. Joseph Center serves on the Westside. In 2003, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles County was \$1,259 per month. Using standards developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a household needs to earn \$50,350 per year to afford the average Los Angeles apartment. In contrast, a family with two wage earners, working full-time at minimum wage, nets less than \$23,000 per year after taxes. Obviously, many families deal with this rent/income discrepancy by paying a much larger portion of their income for rent or by sharing an apartment with other families, such as the case with Mirabel's family. In 2004, reductions in Section 8 housing subsidies have put even more low-income families at risk of homelessness; and those who are currently homeless face severe challenges in obtaining permanent housing.

In the meantime, St. Joseph Center is working to help low-income families obtain affordable housing, food, child care, health services, and employment, so that each family member can thrive and work toward self-sufficiency.



## President's Faith-Based Initiatives Director Serves Meals at St. Joseph Center



(L/R): Rhonda Meister, St. Joseph Center Executive Director; Jim Towey, Director, White House Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives; Joe Towey, his son.

One hundred homeless men, women, and children at St. Joseph Center's (SJC's) **Bread & Roses Café** were served hot, nutritious meals on June 18, 2004 by Jim Towey, Director of President George W. Bush's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI). Representatives from the Center in Washington, D.C. visited St. Joseph Center in November 2003, as a model of innovative and comprehensive human services provided by faith-based social service agencies in Los Angeles County.

"I've never seen anything like this before, and it's great," says Director Towey, who brought his 9 year-old son, Joe, to help him serve the meals. "The sense of community at the Café and the gratitude from the clients is tremendous."

In August 2004, St. Joseph Center received a Compassion Capital Fund Capacity-building grant of \$50,000 through CFBCI, to implement a strategic planning process and to upgrade the Center's donor database software.

## Gimme Shelter Bands Raise Over \$12,500

More than 500 alternative pop music fans showed up to see bands including Jason Mraz and The Like bring down the house on December 8, 2004 at the historic Roxy Theater on the Sunset Strip. Funds collected by the Gimme Shelter event benefited the students of New West Charter Middle School and homeless and low-income clients at St. Joseph Center.

"As a musician, I, too, have been broke and homeless," says headliner Jason Mraz, "so when I can give back just by showing up, I'm there."

The Like's lead singer and guitarist, Z Berg, is a student at Crossroads School; and drummer, Tennessee Thomas, attends Santa Monica High School. "St. Joseph Center does great work, and we're happy to be here again to do whatever we can to help," says Berg. "We hope to be here again next year."

## New Dinner Dance Chair

Saying goodbye is not always easy, but Dan Schwala, Dinner Dance Chair *extra-ordinaire* for the past 10 years, is making it easier by giving a hand to Robyn Ross, who is the new Chair for the 2005 St. Joseph Center



Dan Schwala



Robyn Ross

Dinner Dance and Auctions. This year's theme is "Everybody Shines," and we have certainly seen that to be the case with Dan and his wife, Denise Hart, who received the 2001 "Special Recognition Award" for their tireless and abundant support of the Center since 1993.

Robyn and her husband, Rick Ross, have been supporting St. Joseph Center for the past 13 years, first becoming involved by holding fundraisers for our **Bread & Roses Café**; and then in April 2002, Robyn became a Board Member. She has since been active on the Capital Campaign Committee and was Co-Chair of the very successful Skirball Campaign Kickoff Event in October 2003. St. Joseph Center is very happy to have someone as talented and creative as Robyn as our new Dinner Dance Chair in 2005.

**"Snail Mail"** is so-o-o-o slow-w-w-w!!!  
Send us your latest **E-Mail Address**, so we can keep you updated on the latest news, events, and happenings at **St. Joseph Center**.  
Contact: UpdateUs@stjosephctr.org.



Come celebrate the reason that **"Everybody Shines"** – A gala event to benefit St. Joseph Center on Saturday, May 7th, 2005 in the Crystal Ballroom of the Beverly Hills Hotel. **Everyone is invited!!!**

Evening Includes: A cocktail reception, silent auction, dinner, awards, live auction, live music, and dancing. Starts at 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$275 per person.

*Buy a ticket or buy a table!!!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form & check payable to: St. Joseph Center,  
204 Hampton Drive, Room 7, Venice, CA 90291-8633.



*Welcome Aboard! In the past year, St. Joseph Center has been very fortunate to receive the following new additions to the Board of Directors, (L/R): Helen Huang, Board Fellow, Junior League of Los Angeles; Kevin McCardle, Anderson School of Management, UCLA; Sister Mary Sevilla, CSJ, Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet; Rick Sizemore, First Federal Bank; and Susan Neisloss, Big Bite Productions. Thank you all for your very talented and enthusiastic support!*

## Reaching Our Goals

The Capital Campaign and the building project are both moving steadily forward. In January 2005, the California Coastal Commission unanimously approved St. Joseph Center's (SJC's) plans to rebuild its Hampton Drive site. Soon, we will develop architectural drawings and apply for construction permits.

Concurrently, the Capital Campaign made major strides when Campaign Co-Chair Joan Payden increased her commitment from \$600,000 to \$1.1 million. Her generosity prompted several other major donors to double their own pledges.

With 281 gifts totaling \$6,876,167 (67.25% of our \$10,225,000 target), we must still raise another \$1,723,833 by May 1, 2005 to meet the Kresge Foundation's challenge. At this crucial time, every dollar counts!

Please call or email Catherine Wagar, to learn how you can get involved, and a hearty thank you to all the SJC friends and neighbors who have supported the campaign, the building project, and our past efforts. Your strength has helped us come this far. With your continued help, we will achieve our goal! (310) 396-6468 ext. 303 or cwagar@stjosephctr.org.

## The Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation

Recently, the Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation has been among St. Joseph Center's most generous supporters. The Foundation backs projects and programs that provide direct services to underserved Los Angeles and Orange County children and youth. At St. Joseph Center, this has meant providing grants of \$100,000 annually in 2003 and 2004 to support the **Early Learning Center (ELC)**, After School, and Mentoring programs. This year the Foundation has focused on ELC with a grant of \$50,000. This significant contribution will help pay for aspects of the program that elevate it above simple daycare, such as a stimulating curriculum, parenting classes, and consultations with a child development specialist. Dwight Stuart, Jr., Trustee of the Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, said, "We think it's important that there are places like the Early Learning Center that give boys and girls from impoverished families a running start at kindergarten that they wouldn't otherwise have."



*April Wright, Early Learning Center Manager, teaches toddlers about Prehistoric History.*

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## Higher Quality Merchandise



*Springtime Chic Hits Thrift Store.*

Looking for undamaged vintage boutique items: paintings, lamps, tables, chairs, cabinets, and beds? David Kyle, Manager of the St. Joseph Center Thrift Store, wants you to know you can purchase such items at the “new look” Thrift Store.

“We handle it with care,” David says. “Come by and take a look at our many new pieces. You’ll be pleasantly surprised.”

Or, consider our store when you have vintage items to donate. Every dollar of profit goes toward supporting the Center’s ten programs.

### ***St. Joseph Center Thrift Store***

404 Lincoln Blvd.  
(Corner of Lincoln & Flower)  
Venice, CA 90291  
Mon. – Sat. 9-5 Sun. 10-5  
(310) 399-1713

**Call (310) 396-6468 ext. 321 for donation pickup.**

## ☆ **Wish List for New Items** ☆

- ☆ Non-perishable foods for the pantry
- ☆ Art supplies
- ☆ Diapers
- ☆ Socks and underwear (all sizes)
- ☆ Toiletries and hygiene kits
- ☆ Gift certificates for fast foods and movies
- ☆ High chairs, strollers, and car seats
- ☆ Square dining room tables for Bread and Roses
- ☆ Cots and wooden chairs for the Early Learning Center

*If you would like to donate one of these items or organize a collection of these supplies, please call Maria Alderete at (310) 396-6468 ext. 325.*

## **You can reach St. Joseph Center at:**

|                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Main Phone:         | (310) 396-6468                  |
| Administration:     | Ext. 301                        |
| Donor Relations:    | Ext. 329                        |
| Volunteers:         | Ext. 325                        |
| Community Relations | (310) 804-1101                  |
| Fax:                | (310) 392-8402                  |
| E-Mail:             | publicrelations@stjosephctr.org |
| Website:            | www.stjosephctr.org             |

## **St. Joseph Center**

204 Hampton Drive  
Venice, CA 90291-8633  
(310) 396-6468



St. Joseph Center is an independent 501(C)(3) organization affiliated with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

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