



ImagineLA

FACT SHEET

A city where no child sleeps on the street

Vision

Imagine LA is a non-profit organization whose vision is to mobilize the faith community to help make Los Angeles a city where no child sleeps on the street.

Imagine LA's efforts are focused on the Los Angeles County homeless family population, which is growing at an alarming rate – 35% in the last year alone. Currently there are nearly 8,000 homeless families with over 18,000 children in Los Angeles. In Los Angeles there are also over 8,000 churches, synagogues and mosques. *Just imagine if each one of these faith-based organizations helped a homeless family achieve long-term housing, self-sufficiency and helped the children thrive...*

Mission

Imagine LA's primary mission is to provide homeless families with the support and resources they need to help themselves move into permanent housing, obtain the life skills needed to sustain self-sufficiency, and access resources to ensure that their children thrive long-term.

Imagine LA's secondary mission is to provide faith communities with a volunteer led program that enables them to participate in a comprehensive solution to family homelessness, not just another band aid service project. To fulfill both missions, Imagine LA has developed the Supportive Sustainable Family Housing (SSFH) program.

Background

In the world of family homelessness today, besides employment, the three largest barriers to achieving lasting independence are the initial cost of obtaining housing, securing housing (especially with a record of an eviction or bad credit), and acquiring and maintaining the basic skills and discipline of a self-sufficient life. Imagine LA seeks to break through these barriers by working with a combination of faith communities, existing homeless service agencies and a variety of financial resources.

Approach

Imagine LA's Supportive, Sustainable Family Housing (SSFH) program is a two-year program that that engages faith communities and existing service providers and other stakeholders to address and eliminate family homelessness one family at time. It is a comprehensive program of rapid re-housing, mentorship and professional case management that empowers families to exit homelessness, achieve sustainable self-sufficiency and help their children thrive.

It does not re-create the wheel, but rather harnesses the volunteer resources of faith communities to provide a continuum of care and services, to effectively and economically address gaps in service that in the past have been major barriers to families struggling to truly exit homelessness. In addition, because the program is a step-by-step process from homelessness to a sustainable exit, the outcomes are clear and measurable.

Process

The SSFH Program begins with the matching of a Faith Partner with a qualified homeless family currently residing in a nearby Transitional Housing Partner facility. Next, under Imagine LA's guidance, the Transitional Housing Partner's Case Manager, the Family and the Faith Partner's Family Support Team creates a two-year

Independent Living Plan and Budget for the Family. This Plan is based on the family's goals and includes: budgets, services, training, health, nutrition, wellbeing and home economics. It identifies specific areas where the Family Support Team can provide services, educational and employment opportunities, and mentoring for every family member. Once the ILP is mutually agreed upon the Family is placed into long-term housing. The Faith Partner, via Imagine LA, provides the funds to cover the initial lease costs to secure housing (first and last months rent plus a security deposit). The Faith Partner also furnishes the apartment through donations from the congregation.

Once the family is settled the Faith Partner Support Team volunteers work with the Family members as mentors and coaches to build the life skills and knowledge, and achieve their Plan goals. This is a gradual step-by-step process that builds lasting relationships and self-esteem.

Supportive Sustainable Family Housing (SSFH) program features:

- Faith-based organizations become Imagine LA Faith Partners and agree to provide both a Family Support Team and Sponsorship Funds ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 depending upon ability. These funds are used primarily for rental deposits and Plan specified items as well as a safety net.
- Homeless Families are identified by our Transitional Housing Partners early in a Family's transitional housing process. A family must be working, at least part-time prior to their becoming an Imagine LA Family.
- Case Management provided by Transitional Housing Provider and Beyond Shelter.
- Independent Living Plans and Budgets are developed and agreed to prior to a Family being moved to long-term housing.
- Rental Deposits are provided directly to the landlord.
- Faith-based Family Support Teams are involved with the Family for a minimum of two years. The Support Teams agree to:
 - Attend Homelessness sensitivity and mentorship training
 - Furnish the Family's home through donations from the congregation
 - Not to pressure or require any religious activities
 - Maintain confidentiality about the Family and if working extensively with any member of the family, obtain background checks
 - Not to give money or gift cards directly to the Family.

History / Current Status / Goals

Imagine LA began as an initiative of the Bel Air Presbyterian Church in 2006. In 2007, Imagine LA became a separate 501(c)3 and began working with our first homeless family and developing the SSFH program. In 2008, Imagine LA completed its pilot program in West Los Angeles with five families and Faith Partners (Bel Air Presbyterian Church, Thad's, Malibu Presbyterian Church, Leo Baeck Temple, and B'Nai David Judea). In 2009 - 2010, we are expanding into the San Fernando Valley, Hollywood mid-city, Pasadena and Whittier areas of Los Angeles. In tandem we are refining our program to be portable to other communities across the nation.

Board of Directors

Rev. Dr. Mark Brewer *Founder*. Brad Rosenberg *Chair*, John Emerson *Vice Chair*, Gary Hunt *Treasurer*, Michael Greer *Secretary*; Members: Ken Braskamp, Paul Freese, Rafer Johnson, Dana Kiesel PhD, Rev. Donn Moomaw, David Rognlien and Lee Silver.

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Funding Partners

California Community Foundation, Capital Group Foundation, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, United Way of Greater Los Angeles (PATHWay Home Initiative), Karisma, Weingart, The Carl & Roberta Deutsch and Goldhirsh Foundations.

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