

Walk the Talk

Skid Row Visionaries Celebrated

May 24, 2014

Los Angeles Poverty Department



Photo: Avishay Artsy

WALK THE TALK is a project that combines performance, visual art, music and community conversations about some of the extraordinary people and groups that have made community on Skid Row. Walk the Talk 2014 is the second installment of the Los Angeles Poverty Department's biennial, on-going chronicle of the accomplishments of Skid Row people and their visionary initiatives. Walk the Talk 2014 includes three events: **A peripatetic performance parade on May 24** and a **"Come Together"**, community conversation event on May 14, and an exhibition on the history of Skid Row May 29 - June 16.

Walk the Talk PARADE: A fire truck from Skid Row's LAFD Station #9, one of this year's honorees, will lead the parade. A brass band, **The Mudbug Brass Band** (plus pick up musicians), will blow New Orleans jazz as we travel the route. LA Poverty Department will bring the neighborhood to life with **performances along the parade route that pay tribute to neighborhood initiatives** of men and women whose contributions to the community call for a big, blaring celebration. **It's visual art dancing down the street!** That's right, we'll be holding high unbelievable gorgeous portraits of these hardworking people that have been created by LA artist, Brian Dick. **It's YOU!** Join the parade. Be part of the New Orleans style 2nd Line. Bring your tambourine, your kazoo, your cowbell, your laughter, your attention. This traveling performance will celebrate the current day vibrancy of Skid Row and will bring the history of the community to life.

Along the route, we'll make 7 stops to tell the stories of those we're honoring. The parade starts at 11 AM at Gladys Park, 6th St. and Gladys Avenue, where we'll hear the story of community activist **General Jeff Page** and how he jump-started the regeneration of the park. Then the band will blow, and we'll head up the other end of the block where **Zelene Cardenas, Charles Porter** and UCEPP, United Coalition East Prevention Project have employed community building techniques to shut down liquor stores, open up dialog and understanding and dislodge drug dealers from the corner. We'll stop at The Midnight Mission, 6th and San Pedro St., to celebrate **Clancy Imislund** and his 55 years of sobriety, in this the 100th anniversary year of the Midnight Mission. We'll zag over to 7th St. and San Julian St. to the home of Skid Row's own **fire station LAFD #9**, to celebrate the men and women who are out and about the community saving people every day. On San Julian St. we'll visit the Simone Hotel, former home of **Michael Blaze**, who started the Skid Row Photography Club and Unified Fathers for Life. We'll stop at St. Vincent de Paul Cardinal Manning Center, to relate the exceptional listening prowess of its long time director, **Joan Sotiros**. On 5th St. and Main St., we'll celebrate poet about downtown, **Dr. Mongo** and shout out one of his deep, dense poems.

SKID ROW MOVERS, SHAKERS, DIFFERENCE MAKERS

Convene for

Come Together Community Conversation

When: May 14 from 6:30 to 8:30pm

Where: The Los Angeles Mission, 3 E. 5th Street, LA 90013

Los Angeles Poverty Department members were asked to identify and invite someone they know who is doing something laudable, and important, something that represents the best of the current and future Skid Row. The people they invited will make 10-minute presentations about what they are doing in downtown. The presentations can take the form of a performance, a demonstration or a lecture. May 14 Come Together presenters will include a downtown business owner, a pastor / community activist, a visual artist, and former staffers from some of Skid Row's innovative social service programs chosen for their wisdom and compassion by former clients. A Come Together is a community curated performance strategy conceived by LAPD pal, and 2006 Alpert Award winning visual artist Harrell Fletcher (www.harrellfletcher.com).

Mike Kelley's Mobile Homestead will bring up the rear of the parade in spectacular fashion. An exhibition inside the Mobile Homestead will feature an installation from LAPD's Skid Row history timeline, portraits of 36 previous Walk the Talk honorees and other historical materials, which are currently installed at New York's Queens Museum retrospective exhibition on the work of Los Angeles Poverty Department, **"Do You Want the Cosmetic Version or the Real Deal?: Los Angeles Poverty Department 1985 - 2014."**

After the parade, this installation curated by LAPD will continue to be on view at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art), 152 N. Central Avenue, Los Angeles, 90012 from **May 29 - June 16**.

LAPD
LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT

COME TOGETHER!

at
The Los Angeles Mission
 303 East 5th Street
 Ample parking is available at a lot located at 316 Winston, LA, CA 90013.
Wednesday, May 14 from 6:30 to 8:30pm

A Come Together is a Community Conversation Event. LAPD members were asked to identify and invite someone they know who is doing something laudable and important, something that represents the best of the current and future downtown. The people invited will make 10-minute presentations, in any form they see as appropriate, about what they are doing in Skid Row. The presentations can take the form of a performance, a demonstration or a lecture. The presentations happen back to back, combining the insight and passion of both inviters and presenters.



PRESENTER Denise Corneleus is the Program Manager for the Women's Renaissances Program and Hope Row Resource Center at the Weingart Center Association. Denise has worked in Skid Row for 7 years. She explains: "Women's Renaissances' functions to give women the stability that they need in a short amount of time. We have wrap around services: case management, job training, resume help, clinical and/or substance services, linkages to community referrals; clothing, whatever it is that they need, we try to provide those services here. The Weingart Center offers ten different programs with ten different goals. But our mission is to combat homelessness, that's the ultimate goal for all programs. For instance, the Epic program is a parolee program. The longer the parolee remains in the program it combats recidivism (they don't go back to incarceration). For the Women's Renaissance, its goal is to boost self esteem, self worth; giving women the courage to be able to maintain, and get their integrity and confidence back so that can go out and live life.

I invited Denise Corneleus because she is an amazingly compassionate and insightful person who has helped countless women through the truly empowering Women's Renaissance program. The presentation will be about her work commitment and dedication to an under-served population.



SELECTOR Carmen Vega is an actor and poet-performer, who resides Skid Row "adjacent" and is active in its community.



PRESENTER Stephen "Cue" Jn-Marie is the Pastor of The Row LA, aka The Church Without Walls, in downtown Los Angeles' Skid Row community. Cue is a former Virgin records recording artist with the rap group College Boyz. He is also a community activist, addressing public policies issues, including homelessness in Los Angeles. Under the tutelage of Rev. Cecil Murray, he graduated from the Passing the Mantle Program at the University of Southern California. Cue has also completed a two-year program at USC's Institute for Violence Prevention, and currently serves as a member of the Black and Brown Clergy Coalition.

May 30 and 31, Pastor Cue will convene an informational session and two day prayer vigil, about our Feed and Clean Proposal with numerous faith-based groups at the Central City Community Church of the Nazarene. The Church Without Walls will be celebrating its 8th year in Skid Row with a Gala Red Carpet Dinner in Gladys Park on Saturday, Aug 8th, 2014.

Leading by example, he is not just a "talk the talk" man but a "walk the walk" man. He is self-driven with a "get'er done" attitude. He is unpretentious, humble and a manly man with grace. Pastor Cue is the type of leader that is needed here on Skid Row, and as far as I'm concerned, worthy of leading on a larger scale; he is the type of leader that is missing in our society at large.



SELECTOR Suzette Shaw: I'm a basically a newbie to Skid Row, only here about 1 1/2 yrs. However, I myself was raised by a community activist, therefore, community involvement has basically been a given for me all of my life. Those who have a passion of community rights have a desire for human rights, and I suppose that is the passion about Pastor Cue which resonated with me.



PRESENTER Sarah Espinosa is the Vocational Education and Enrichment Coordinator responsible for the management of Downtown Women Center's vocational education programming. This includes developing job readiness and educational curricula, coordinating and managing volunteer facilitators, and collaborating with internal and external partners to connect women to further learning and advancement opportunities. Working alongside the dedicated staff and participating women of DWC has proven to be very inspiring for Sarah. She has nine years of teaching experience in both public and private organizations throughout Los Angeles. She focuses on developing and facilitating vocational and educational curricula to improve the social, educational and economic realities relevant to the unique needs of her students.

I chose Sara Espinoza, because I saw her true passion for helping women to find their path to a new life with her work at Downtown Women's Center.



SELECTOR Silvia Hernández became part of the Skid Row community when she became homeless in 2011. Silvia got involved wotj different groups and organizations that helped her to find her recovery and ways to give back to the community at the same time. Currently, she is a member of both Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) and LA CAN.



PRESENTER Rory White is an oil painter, draughtsman, printmaker, photographer, writer and advocate for social justice advocate through art. I have worked in art and social justice my entire life, first at the Santa Cruz Women's Prison Project where I designed and taught a combined art history and studio arts course at California Institution for Women's death row in 1973-74. I designed, founded and ran for ten years (1998-2008) the Lamp Art Project for Lamp Community, serving homeless, formerly homeless and other Skid Row residents, in conjunction with Mollie Lowery. I never embraced the ludicrous notion that the Skid Row inhabitants "needed culture brought to them" but that the culture of the people of Skid Row was radically spiritual, intelligent, brave and exquisite. I sought the honor of offering simple resources considered normal in the rest of societal niches, that is a Master's level studio space and materials for the fine arts. The project was an amazing success, the artists winning Frederick Weisman, Green Foundation, Annenberg and other awards. We were featured in the award winning documentary film *Humble Beauty*, and I was given the Eli Lilly Welcome Back Award "Person of the Decade" in 2008. I currently run Art Works, A Project of Housing Works, serving artists and other humans who have experienced marginalization by homelessness and/or conditions of difference and vulnerability in Los Angeles.

I heard of the Lamp Art Project while I was at Lamp shelter, and from that moment I wanted to meet the person who started it. So, I met Rory White, and we have been friends ever since.



SELECTOR Chella Isabel Marie Coleman is a transgender Skid Row activist that seeks to educate folks on issues that effect low-income trans women of color using visual and embodied art such as theater. She has lived in Skid Row for four years and has been active in the community for the last three. She seeks to bring about change building the gap. She is a proud member of LA Poverty Department.



PRESENTER Dora Valenciano was born and raised in El Paso, Texas and attended UTECH (now University of Texas) and moved to Los Angeles in 1971. In the late 80's, she started working with homeless parolees at the Stairs Program at 6th and Alvarado. It relocated to the Yorkshire on 7th and Broadway in the 90's. LA Police Dept. gave them a hard time, and it was again relocated to the Ford hotel. Eventually, the program moved to the Weingart Center in 1993. Dora started as a counselor and worked her way up to supervisor. She found she preferred working directly with clients so she happily demoted herself. In 2001 Dora transferred to Project Paycheck, also located at Weingart. Project Paycheck helps the homeless and underprivileged to learn necessary skills, including preparing for the workforce through job preparation and to be self sufficient in society. She worked at the Weingart from 1993 until her retirement in 2013. Dora continues to help people by volunteering at the Gryd Program, which helps gang and former gang members become productive citizens.

I invited Dora Valenciano because this wonderful and beautiful soul of a human has an unconditional and undying passion for humanity, loves life, has helped countless people of any age, race, creed, beliefs, mental capacity or any human being and continues to do so.

SELECTOR Anthony Taylor was adopted at 2 months old by two loving and nurturing parents in Norfolk, Va. He was a bright and happy child with a promising future. Through a turn of events, Anthony's life progressively became one of turmoil, despair and criminal activity as a result of illicit drug and alcohol abuse. Not only heartache for himself but also for the people that loved him. After two decades he finally surrendered, sought and received help. He has met many people who have helped him on his journey of recovery, including Dora Valenciano. Anthony is committed to the recovery process and is pursuing his lifelong dream of acting and is in his third semester at the Los Angeles City College Theatre Academy. His father was able to witness his son's redemption before his passing this year. Anthony is a happy, proud and grateful member of Los Angeles Poverty Dept. theater troupe.



PRESENTER Fernando Fernando opened F. Square Printing on Spring and 5th to serve all of the people. F. Square Printing operated under a combined business/community space model, years before these hybrids were popularized. In addition to its printing and copying business, F. Square functioned as an internet café serving up karaoke, performance and visual art as well as meeting site for community political groups. Recently, his rent was doubled, forcing him to close his doors.

I chose Fernando because he always tries to help those on the fringe who happen to be short on change.

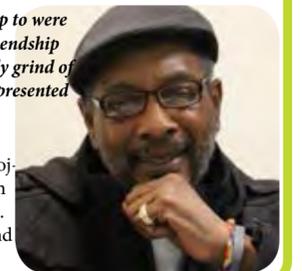


SELECTOR Riccarlo Porter has been a member of Los Angeles Poverty Department since 1989. He is a Toastmaster and consultant to community business owners throughout the city. He has interviewed Verdell White of Earth Wind & Fire, Holly Robinson-Peete, Ramona Africa and many others.



PRESENTER Fred Walker grew up in South LA and lived and worked in Los Angeles for most of his life. He has been continually serving and supervising Skid Row residents for the last 14 years. As his duties at The Weingart Center expanded, so too has his understanding of the realities each man and woman he works with faces. Fred currently is Senior Director of Re-Entry Services, which includes AB 109 residents, The Veteran Housing Program, Veterans Family Reunification/Rapid Family Re-housing/Veterans Prevention of Homelessness Projects. Fred's vision for Skid Row is that residents acquire the means to successfully experience the full quality of life.

I first met Fred Walker more than a decade ago, when most of the guys who I looked up to were graduates of the program at The Weingart that Fred headed. As I matured and our friendship grew, I observed how Fred made it a point to expose his guys to things beyond the daily grind of everyday life in Skid Row. I chose to present Fred because of the opportunities he has presented to his residents.



SELECTOR Kevin Michael Key is a law school graduate and has practiced as a defense attorney. He is active in the recovery community in downtown Los Angeles and in community advocacy groups. He works for United Coalition East Prevention Project to mobilize the neighborhood on quality of life issues. He does community diabetes education with the JWHC clinic. Kevin Michael has worked with Los Angeles Poverty Department since 2003 and has traveled with LAPD for community residencies. As a member of LAPD Kevin Michael is responsible for linking communities, organizing workshops public and convenings and speaking with the press.

Parade Route

Saturday, May 24 11 am - 3 pm



Sites of 10-minute performances along the parade route.

- A** Corner Gladys Avenue & 6th street
General Jeff / GLADYS PARK
- B** 804 East 6th Street
C Zelenne Cardenas & Charles Porter / UCEPP
- D** 601 South San Pedro Street
Clancy Imislund / MIDNIGHT MISSION
- E** Fire Station 9
430 East 7th Street
Captain Duffy / L.A. FIRE DEPARTMENT
- F** 520 San Julian Street
Michael Blaze / SIMONE HOTEL
- G** 231 Winston Street
Joan Sotiros / ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CARDINAL MANNING CENTER
- H** 456 S Main Street
Dr. Mongo / NEW GENESIS HOTEL

Dr. Mongo : "I'd love to see Skid Row 10 years from now become a model community, accepted as a village. So that's what I'm doing right now. I'm trying to focus on this play called Skid Row Follies, to show the sweet side of Skid Row and one thing I really love is, 'the largest recovery community anywhere,' because if it can happen here, it can happen anywhere."

Clancy Imislund: "It's really amusing to me that when you really get at the bottom, that's where you get the goal that everyone's trying to reach—one day at a time—how do I get through this day? Tomorrow—I can't think about tomorrow—but, if I get a couple of bucks to get through this day, I'll be all right. Really, one day at a time, that's the street motto."

Joan Sotiros : "In my shelter there's one: rule Respect Yourself and Respect Others."



A

General Jeff

General Jeff is a Skid Row activist. He's a first generation West Coast rapper. In 2006, after unsuccessful attempts to end gang violence where he grew up in South Central, Jeff packed up and moved himself and his activism efforts to Skid Row. He knew that to help the community, he would have to learn the community. He found that people were busy talking about Skid Row's problems, but not about the solutions. Later that year, he created Issues and Solutions, the vehicle for his activism. One of his first projects was the Gladys Park Improvement Project.

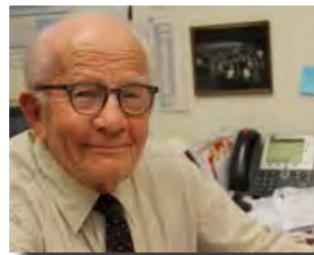


Charles Porter

Charles Porter was born in a rural black community in Southern New Jersey, Bushtown Village, which has been home to free blacks since the 1700's. He studied Political Science and African American History at Howard University, Washington DC. Coming out of college, Charles was interested in how people organize and create society—create community. In 1999, Charles began working at United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP). Over the past 15 years, he has worked diligently to advocate for the poor, create community in the Skid Row area and instill a sense of pride in the residents by creating classes, workshops and presentations for youth and adults in the community to learn about their heritage and culture.

Zelenne Cardenas

Zelenne Cardenas grew up in East Los Angeles. She attended UCLA, earning a degree in sociology and ethnic studies. In 1996, while working for Social Model Recovery Program, Inc., she began UCEPP, which focuses on preventative solutions to alcohol and drug issues in Skid Row. The premise: drugs are not the problem, but rather an environment that invites people to use drugs and alcohol is the problem. UCEPP works to change the environment by building community. Today, Social Model Recovery Systems, Inc. functions as UCEPP's parent organization, and as its director of prevention Services, Zelenne spearheads many projects, giving a voice to the community, meeting people where they are and advocating for the possibility of change.



D

Clancy Imislund

The last day that Clancy Imislund drank, he was kicked out of the Midnight Mission for being drunk and hostile; that was in 1958. Sixteen years later, Clancy was working in Beverly Hills as the marketing director for Security World Publishing when his friend told him that the director of the Midnight Mission had died and they were looking for someone to take his place. Well, when they threw Clancy out of the mission, he said, "I'll come back and get you!" So, in 1974 he took the job as the director of the Midnight Mission. After 40 years of service, Clancy continues to come to work everyday. He retired as the director when he was 75; now he's 86 and he still works in fundraising and public relations. Clancy Imislund is a legend in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. He has helped numerous people with their addiction. He has 55 years sober.



E

Captain Duffy

Firehouse 9 rarely fights fires, but they are one of the busiest stations in the nation. Located at 7th and San Julian, in Skid Row, Number 9's paramedic ambulance averages about 15 calls within a 24-hour period. For the last eleven years, Captain Walter Duffy has been the captain at Number 9. Duffy grew up in South Central Los Angeles, graduated from UCLA and became a lifeguard before joining the LAFD. Captain Duffy is looking forward to a new chapter in his life. Next year he will retire after 35 years of service.



F

Michael Blaze

"In the late 90's, I made up my mind, made a deal with god, that he would help at least one human being a day, absolutely for free. That was my deal to get off of drugs, and I don't use drugs." Michael Blaze focused on keeping his promise by creating programs to help the residents of Skid Row. He formed Unified Fathers for Life, a fathering program that reunites families, one father at a time. Blaze created the Skid Row Photography Club, a photo group for the people of the community. He has given away numerous digital cameras to the residents he works with and organized viewings of their works in downtown galleries. He has 150 films about Skid Row and is always with camera in-hand. Blaze's current project is Veterans in Photography. "My vision is to be able to give a camera to every veteran I meet and invite them to come in," he said. Veterans in Photography takes place at 800 E. 6th St., Fridays from 10am to Noon.



G

Joan Sotiros

Social Worker Joan Sotiros was the director at St. Vincent De Paul Cardinal Manning Center, a homeless shelter in Skid Row. Prior to becoming director in 1993, Joan ran a residential treatment program for disturbed and delinquent kids in Southern Colorado. At St. Vincent's, Joan was determined to create a warm, understanding environment. She redecorated the facility and implemented her one rule philosophy, respect yourself and respect others. After 19 years of service to the Skid Row community, Joan Sotiros retired in October of 2012.



H

Dr. Mongo

Dr. Mongo was born in Memphis, Tennessee. He is a poet, author and former teacher. He has a doctorate in comparative philosophy from Case Western Reserve University and taught literacy 1 and 2 at Cleveland Community College before coming to Skid Row in the 1960's. Since then, Mongo has organized numerous poetry reading series at diverse sites, including: Little Tokyo Pizza, The 5th Estate and The Whole, to name a few. He is the author of two books, *The First Prescription* and *The Last Prescription*. Dr. Mongo was honored to be poet laureate of the Los Angeles Community Action Network.



Mike Kelley's Mobile Homestead Joins the Parade!

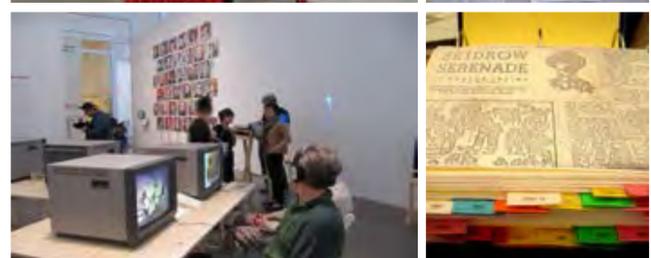
The late artist Mike Kelley was a friend of LAPD, and we are honored to have his art piece Mobile Homestead—a full-scale, mobile replica of the artist's original family home in Westland, Michigan—participating in Walk the Talk.

On view inside the Mobile Homestead, LAPD has installed historical materials on the making of the Skid Row community. This includes the stories of the 36 Skid Row visionaries who were honored in our first Walk the Talk events in 2012, along with their portraits by street artist Mr. Brainwash. Also on display is a timeline of Skid Row history, originally created by LAPD for the 2008 exhibition The Skid Row History Museum at The Box Gallery and since updated for LAPD's current gallery show at New York's Queens Museum. After 2014's Walk the Talk, the stories and portraits of this year's honorees will be added to the exhibition, which will remain on view free and open to the public inside the Mobile Homestead from May 29 - June 16, while it is parked outside in front of The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA at 152 N. Central Avenue in Little Tokyo.



Production Still, The Mobile Homestead in front of the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan, 2010. Photo: Corine Vermeulen. Courtesy Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts.

After the parade, LAPD's exhibition remains on view FREE and open to the public inside the Mobile Homestead from May 29 - June 16, while it is parked in front of The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA at 152 N. Central Avenue in Little Tokyo.
Monday: 11am-5pm, Tuesday, Wednesday: CLOSED, Thursday: 11am-8pm, Friday: 11am-5pm, Saturday, Sunday: 11am-6pm



Elements from the Queens Museum retrospective exhibition on the work of LAPD, "Do You Want the Cosmetic Version or the Real Deal?: Los Angeles Poverty Department 1985 - 2014" will be on view inside the Mobile Homestead. The Mobile Homestead is permanently housed at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, where it was Mike Kelley's wish that the Homestead not simply be an outpost of the museum, but that it represent the cultural interests of the community that exists in proximity to it. The work is making its first appearance in Los Angeles in conjunction with the retrospective exhibition, Mike Kelley, at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, which opened last month and is on view through July 28. It is the largest exhibition of Mike Kelley's work to date, bringing together over 250 works, from 1974 through early 2012. Widely regarded as one of the most influential artists of our time, Mike Kelley (1954-2012) produced a body of deeply innovative work mining American popular culture and both modernist and alternative traditions—which he set in relation to relentless self and social examinations, both dark and delirious. The Mobile Homestead is brought to LA by the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts in collaboration with MOCA LA, and MOCA Detroit.

LAPD

I'm **Stephanie Bell**, I have been in a lot of things in LAPD, acting, and I belong and you can ring my "bell".

Henriëtte Brouwers: Walking and talking with old and new Skid Row enthusiasts, it's moving me.

Stephanie Clark: Walking with LAPD gives me insight into the Skid Row community, which is totally different from how the 'new media' portray it.

Chella Isabel Marie Coleman: As an activist in the community LAPD's Walk the Talk shows the positive side of the Skid Row community.

Mello Desire has been a Skid Row resident for four years and is an independent filmmaker for homeless innercity and the incarcerated. She plans on building a new Hollywood in the heart of Skid Row in 2017.

Adrian Excel: Skid Row is not because we're here, but I'm here because Skid Row is here.

Walter Fears: Walk the talk!!

Linda Harris: I am who I am and who I am is me.

Frida Hernandez is a student at LACC who is working with LAPD for the first time and is enthusiastic to continue working with LAPD.

Silvia Hernandez: The sun shines at Skid Row too.

Chas Jackson: Live today, for tomorrow is promised to no one.

KevinMichael Key: Life as a Skid Row Advocate has allowed me to walk and talk in the sunlight of The Spirit.

John Malpede: May your coronet become a trombone, your trombone a bassoon, your bassoon a tuba, blow, blow your horn.

Riccardo Porter: theatre, art, Skid Row, social awareness and family: ingredients for LAPD.

RCB: You are headed in the right direction - trust your instincts.

Anthony Taylor: My desire is to love, embrace life, accept reality, forgive and thank God for the good and bad because sometimes I just don't know the difference.

Carmen Vega: Walking down the street one day, doin' nothin', I saw this theater group doing something... so I joined in.

Vanessa Conlon: I am from Boston, and I want to keep walking, keep talking, and keep learning - learning all the time.

Celestine Williams: I have a great admiration for the people honored.

Jen Wilson is a writer, actress, SoCal native and future scuba-yoga instructor. This is her first performance with LAPD.

Why Walk the Talk:

In 1976, an amazing, enlightened moment of LA city governance occurred when a zoning plan was put in place that preserved the biggest stash of low income housing in Los Angeles County -- in other words, instead of bringing in the wrecking balls, it preserved the Skid Row neighborhood. In the nearly 50 years since then, most of that housing has been taken out of slum lord hands and is now owned by non-profits who have renovated existing buildings and created new ones. Other non-profits and social services have located there. And importantly, the long-term permanent residents of the neighborhood have made mighty contributions toward preserving the neighborhood and making it livable. It was Skid Row residents who got City Council to enact a moratorium on hotel conversion, during the height of the early 2000's real estate bubble feeding frenzy. It was Skid Row residents who started providing trashcans and cleaning up the streets, when the city wouldn't. It was a Skid Row resident that got the Parks Department to reinvest in Gladys Park. Right now, its Skid Row residents testifying before the Zoning Commission that have prevented a non-profit developer from obtaining a restaurant liquor license for a hotel dedicated to providing supportive housing for people in recovery.

Right now, there are dueling narratives about who comprises the "downtown community," new residents claim that they are creating community downtown, but, often without understanding the accomplishments of the long term Skid Row residents. Walk the Talk is intended to highlight these achievements while fostering an understanding of how Skid Row people and institutions contribute to the wellbeing of the entire city. As the site of many groundbreaking solutions to intractable social problems, Skid Row is a valuable social incubator for communities everywhere.

LAPD began chronicling the social history of Skid Row with its 2002 month-long installation, "Is there History on Skid Row?" at 112 Winston Street (corner of Main) and again in 2007, with our performance project UTOPIA/dystopia, which engaged people from all parts of downtown, asking them to envision their ideal future for LA. This was followed by our 2008 gallery exhibition "The Skid Row History Museum" at The Box Gallery. Our chronicling of the neighborhood's achievements continued with our first Walk the Talk parade and conversations in 2012. Currently, much of the material from these projects is on view at The Queens Museum in New York, which is presenting a retrospective on the history of LAPD's work. Commenting on the Queens Museum show, Ryan Wong writing in ArtSlant NY, did a good job of grabbing onto and articulating what we've been up to with these projects.

Ryan Wong ARTslant (2014):

[T]he collective acts as curator and archivist of their neighborhood. Homeless communities are barely acknowledged by most institutions, much less thought to have histories and textured pasts. The LAPD turns that generalization on its head, pointing to the area's 'amazing community assets.' The installation, like any exhibition or museum display, was created to 'highlight the cultural, civic and political initiatives and the community people' who created the neighborhood. The installation includes a timeline of notable moments in Skid Row's history, photographs of community leaders, and proposals for monuments and plaques to be installed in the area.



WALK THE TALK 2012 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY MR. BRAINWASH - FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Top row: Richard Fulton, Catherine Morris, Jeff Dietrich, Officer James Rich, Robert Chambers, Rosa Arzola, Jill Halverson, Walter "Redd" Moore, Mark Holsinger
 Second Row: Pastor William Monroe Campbell, Harry Rogers, Darlene Berry, Ms. Lee, Mr. Lee, Andy Raubeson, Orlando Ward, Nancy Mintie, Clyde Casey
 Third Row: Adam Bennion, Tanya Tull, Mike Neely, Flo Hawkins, Robert Sundance, Judge Harry Hupp, Alice Callahan, Manuel Compto (aka OGM), Lillian Abel Calamari
 Bottom Row: Mollie Lowery, Wendell Blessingame, Dr. Dennis Bleakley, S.S. Jones, Pete White, Tony Stallworth, Lucy Stallworth, Ted Hayes, Scott Chamberlain.



Skid Row History Museum, 2008



Skid Row History Museum, 2008, Mollie Lowery



Walk the Talk, 2012



Walk the Talk, 2012, Hippy Kitchen



Walk the Talk, 2012



about

THE MUDBUG BRASS BAND

Once again, The Mudbug Brass Band is excited to be part of Walk the Talk. Two years ago, we were quickly educated to the reality of “Skid Row.” We were moved by the stories told and awed by the dedication that is freely given on a daily basis by the LAPD. The spirit and positive energy conveyed with Walk The Talk is a remarkable thing to witness. I hope that even more people join in on this celebration along with The Mudbug Brass Band as we know it’s going to be another great time!

With roots from Louisiana, The Mudbug Brass Band is an 8 piece New Orleans Jazz Band that is based in Los Angeles, California since 2011. The Mudbug Brass Band is dedicated to the Second Line tradition of The Big Easy, drawing from New Orleans traditional Jazz, R&B, Funk and Mardi Gras. Each of their performances is a celebration of the “Birth of Jazz” which was gifted to American music by New Orleans greats over a century ago.



about

BRIAN DICK

Parade portraits designed and created by Brian Dick. Brian is a founding member of the Nationwide Museum Mascot Project Collective and has exhibited in shows in the United States and Europe. This Summer, the NWMMP collective will launch their LA-LA Tour: Los Angeles to Latin America. Along with his partner Christen Sperry-Garcia and his little boy Sam, Dick lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

Enormous

THANKS TO...

... all our pals and partners who have worked to make Walk the Talk happen. And that includes the LA Poverty Department production staff. The “parade monitors” and volunteers: Hayk Makhmuryan, Darlene Berry, Sista Mary, Aimee Edmonds, Faith Purvey, Crystal Dozier, Cathy Gudis, Socorro Gutierrez, Bobby May, John Kaye, Yuko Nakamura and Helki Frantzen. Visual artist Brian Dick, the Mudbug Brass Band and pick-up musicians. Our community partners and hosts for the Walk the Talk ~ Come Together and rehearsals: United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP), the LA Mission and the LA Catholic Worker. Mary Clare Stevens and Jade Thacker and the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts and the Museum Of Contemporary Art (MOCA).

about

LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT

LAPD’s MISSION: Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD) creates performances and multidisciplinary artworks that connect the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities. LAPD’s works express the realities, hopes, dreams and rights of people who live and work in L.A.’s Skid Row.

LAPD’s VISION: LAPD makes artistic work to change the narrative about Skid Row and people living in poverty. In doing so, LAPD aims to create a community of compassion, change individual lives and inspire the next generation of artists.

LAPD’s HISTORY: The Los Angeles Poverty Department has been working in LA’s Skid Row since 1985, hosting free performance workshops and creating art. LAPD was the first theater company run for and by homeless people in the nation, as well as the first arts program of any kind for homeless people in Los Angeles. Our original goals remain the same: to create community on Skid Row and to amplify the voices of the people who live on Skid Row, in order to share the lived experience of our company members with the larger city of Los Angeles and the nation.

Get Ready for The Los Angeles Poverty Department’s

5th ANNUAL Festival for All Skid Row Artists

Coming up Saturday & Sunday October 18 & 19, 2014.

The Festival is 2 afternoons of non-stop performances created and performed by Skid Row talents. We’re talking about performance of all kinds: music, dance, more music, spoken word, theater and yes even more music. Skid Row visual artists will display their work and we’ll have visual arts workshops going on, so anyone can make some work on the spot. If you want to perform or exhibit your work, contact us anytime between now and October and get a spot at the festival.



Call or write us!

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