Dear friends and supporters,

2010 marks the third year of the financial crisis that has caused the worst economic decline since the Great Depression. As more and more people lose their homes the demand for assistance, stability and security grows exponentially.

While the causes are still being debated, it has become clear that the main route out of this crisis is through jobs. At Skid Row Housing Trust, we take pride in the fact that our work not only rebuilds lives for the most vulnerable men and women in our community, but that our work is also an economic engine for recovery. Each permanent supportive housing development we build brings outside dollars and new jobs into the Los Angeles economy.

Thanks to funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the generous support of Community Redevelopment Agency, the Los Angeles Housing Department, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, the California Reinvestment Corporation, the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Century Housing, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, and Wells Fargo the Trust will break ground on the New Genesis Apartments this month.

The New Genesis will provide 106 new apartments for both homeless men and women and low income working men and women. The New Genesis will provide the opportunity for homeless men and women to have a home of their own from which to rebuild their lives. Low income working residents will have the opportunity to afford beautiful new apartments in the heart of the up and coming downtown historic core community. The New Genesis will also serve as a catalytic new development, transforming an underutilized residential hotel and surface parking lot into a vibrant center of community life.

But the New Genesis also represents tens of millions of dollars of new investment and hundreds of new jobs in Los Angeles. The Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing estimates that the New Genesis will generate 185 new construction jobs and 222 additional jobs through indirect activity.

The New Genesis also the first affordable housing development constructed under the Community Redevelopment Agency’s Construction Careers policy and includes a Project Labor Agreement, which means that the jobs generated by the development will be well-paid, high quality jobs that support families and help get the economy back on track.

We at Skid Row Housing Trust have seen firsthand that permanent supportive housing is a good investment. Rebuilding lives is not simply right thing to do, but the smart thing to do. The economic downturn has helped us look beyond our mission to see that permanent supportive housing also benefits our local economy. With your help, we will continue to rebuild buildings in order to rebuild lives and our economy. Not only during these financially trying times, but because of them.

Sincerely

Mike Alvidrez
Development Corner

Breaking Ground!
Skid Row Housing Trust is proud to announce that we will begin construction on the New Genesis Apartments this month. The New Genesis is a redevelopment of the site occupied by the Trust’s very first residential hotel, the Genesis Hotel. The Genesis Hotel will be replaced by a brand new LEED Platinum mixed-use development providing 106 apartments and ground floor retail. The New Genesis Apartments are designed by Killefer Flammang Architects (www.kfarchitects.com) and will be built by Golden Bear Construction, Inc. The New Genesis is also the first affordable housing development constructed under the Community Redevelopment Agency’s Construction Careers Policy.

Completed!
The Charles Cobb Apartments received its Certificate of Occupancy on March 2nd and the Trust expects that the first residents will move in before the end of the month. The Cobb is a 76-unit residential apartment building providing 74 apartments for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and disability. Designed by Kivotos Montenegro Partners with interior design by Suzanne Furst Interiors (www.suzannefurstiteriors.com), the Cobb is a beautiful example of the Trust’s commitment to design and quality. The Trust will celebrate the opening of the Cobb at a grand opening celebration in May.

The New Carver Apartments were completed in December, 2009. The New Carver provides 95 apartments for men and women experiencing homelessness and disability. The Trust’s collaboration with architect Michael Maltzan (www.mmaltzan.com) on the New Carver was recently featured in the New York Times. The Trust was also able to collaborate with interior designer Molly Luetkemeyer (www.mdesignla.com) on a number of community areas at the Carver. The Trust will host an open house at the Carver planned for fall of this year.

In Development
The Star Apartments, the Trust’s latest collaboration with Michael Maltzan Architecture, will include ground floor retail and residential apartments above. The original concept for the development is not possible to fund currently because of the lack of resources for supportive housing development. The Trust has renegotiated the architectural contract with Michael Maltzan Architecture and is currently redesigning the development with a reduced scope of work. The Trust expects to complete design development during the summer of 2010.

Invest In Our Future
Skid Row Housing Trust knows that the only true solution to the ravages of homelessness in Los Angeles is also the most economical and efficient.

When life on the streets is replaced with a home of one’s own and the support essential to eradicating the causes of homelessness – poverty, illness, addiction – everyone benefits.

The men and women on the streets of Skid Row benefit because a home provides the stable foundation from which health can be improved.

Taxpayers benefit because it’s indisputably more economical to provide permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals than it is to rely on shelters, emergency rooms, and prisons to provide crisis interventions that often do nothing to solve the state of homelessness.

Los Angeles benefits because our neighborhoods can’t become true communities while the most vulnerable of us are left to decompensate on the streets. Downtown L.A. won’t become a true economic engine until homelessness is dramatically reduced.

Your support of our work solves homelessness for the most vulnerable men and women on the streets and creates communities that we can all be proud of.

$100 enables a formerly homeless person to receive healthcare for a month
$300 provides case management for two months
$500 brings two months of substance abuse recovery groups to Trust residents
$800 delivers six months of mental health care to a formerly homeless person
$1,000 allows a chronically homeless person to have daily access to a nurse
$5,000 gives a homeless person a home of their own for a year

Few investments provide richer returns than providing homes and support needed to restore lives.

Skid Row Housing Trust has recently received generous support from Robert E. Carlson, Jennifer and Frank Dolce, Theodore Miller, Lorcan O’Herlihy, L. Sherman Tellen, Theodore Van Der Ahe, The Arba Group, Binney, Chase, & Van Horne, Inc., Capital Group Companies, Dreyfuss Construction, G.B Construction Inc., Glendale Fire Systems, McMaster Carr Supply, and Wells Fargo Bank. Their support enables lives to be changed by providing the resources for safe, healthy and supportive homes. Your support enhances that promise.
Richard Chavez

Richard jokes about waiting for a movie deal because he’s got a great story to tell.

As he begins to tell his story, the soft spoken, affable Richard laughs as he shows off his immaculate and beautifully decorated apartment at the Dewey. He shakes his head and says, “For me to have been living on the streets where I am now is amazing.”

Richard grew up in San Bernardino. He was always close with his family and it’s clear that his love for them is still strong today. Richard finished high school and began college, but as a young gay man in San Bernardino in the late 1970s he was drawn to Los Angeles. Richard began spending time in LA bars and clubs. He loved to dance and was able to find some work as a dancer, culminating in dancing on American Bandstand. However, dancing was often accompanied with drinking. “Drinking has always been my crutch,” Richard says.

When he was 22 years old, Richard fell in love with the man who would become his partner for 17 years. Richard earned his cosmetology license and began working in salons, and his partner was in the military. Many years into their relationship, Richard’s partner was deployed in the first Gulf war and returned home a different person. Richard believes that his partner may have been suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In 1994, the military transferred his partner to Massachusetts and the couple moved to Boston.

Life in Boston was difficult, and Richard felt isolated being so far away from his family. His cosmetology license was not valid outside of California, so he found work at a CVS pharmacy. As time went on, his partner’s drinking increased, he became physically abusive. In 1996, Richard’s partner was arrested and admitted into a military mental hospital after he had attempted to kill Richard. Because the arrest was for domestic violence against another man, the military discharged Richard’s partner under the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy.

In 1997, the couple reconciled and moved back to San Bernardino, but the abuse continued. Richard eventually moved in with his sister and got a restraining order against his partner, but Richard felt that his life was “…going down the toilet really fast”. He was working at Walmart where his partner would show up and create scenes. Embarrassed and ashamed, Richard began drinking more and neglecting work, which resulted in him losing his job. He says, “It was very degrading.”

After his partner vandalized his sister’s home, Richard left and moved in with his parents, but without a job, and now drinking heavily, he felt terrible about himself and his life.

In 2004, he bought a one-way bus ticket to LA and found himself on the streets of downtown alone, penniless and homeless.

Richard spent two years on the streets, sleeping in front of the missions and the Queen of Angels church. He’d tried different programs, but says, “There were so many rules. There was a lot of racial tension and conflict. I had four or five people that became my community on the streets, so I stayed with them.”

He was on potent medications for depression and health ailments. The combination of meds and alcohol often caused him to black out, and during a two-month period he was hospitalized four times for alcohol poisoning.

Richard began stealing liquor and was arrested numerous times. In 2006, he was sentenced to 16 months in prison for petty with a prior. He served 8 months in prison, was released, and within 2 months was back in prison again for another petty with prior.

Between going back and forth from the streets to prison, Richard was identified as one of the most vulnerable people on the streets of Skid Row by the Project 50 program. He was suffering from depression, chronic physical disease, an alcohol addiction and chronic homelessness – the combination of which is a strong indicator of being likely to die on the streets. Project 50 prioritized Richard for permanent housing. The Project 50 Outreach Specialist, Chris Tower, began speaking with him about what it would take to get his own apartment, but Richard would not be out of prison for long before he was right back in.

During Richard’s third stint in prison, this time for not reporting to parole, he received a letter from his mother saying that his sister might have breast cancer. Richard was devastated. “I did not want to be in prison and have something happen to family members of mine. I decided enough was enough.” Richard got out of prison on August 11, 2009 and went to reinstate his general relief benefit. He was told that a tall man with his picture had come in was looking for him. Richard knew that there was only one person that could be – Chris Tower.

Richard walked to the Project 50 offices to find Chris and told him that he was finally ready for permanent housing. Within a month, Project 50 had provided Richard with his own apartment at the Dewey Hotel and also helped him stay sober and reinstate his Social Security Disability Insurance benefits.

“Moving into housing is a big adjustment. You have to start getting to know the person you’ve been running from all your life, and that’s yourself,” Richard says. He has skillfully navigated this transition and is living alone for the first time in his life. “I love my apartment!” he says enthusiastically. Walking around the well decorated, warm apartment it is easy to understand why – it’s a home that anyone would be proud of.

Like so many others who have faced personal challenges and homelessness, Richard is rebuilding his life – a life made possible again by permanent supportive housing.
We have known it for awhile, but thanks to a recent study by the Economic Roundtable there is no refuting that the Trust’s permanent supportive housing saves Los Angeles taxpayers money.

The Economic Roundtable recently released Where We Sleep: Costs when Homeless and Housed in Los Angeles. Funded by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the California Endowment and the Economic Roundtable, the study shows that “the stabilizing effect of housing plus supportive care is demonstrated by a 79 percent reduction in public costs for these residents.” Or, in dollars and cents, the men and women we serve use an average of $2,897 in public services per month while they are homeless, versus $605 in public services a month once provided a home in the Trust’s permanent supportive housing.

The study shows that there is a net public cost savings of $14,280 per year for every homeless individual the Trust provides a home for. Each individual in Los Angeles County living on the streets costs county taxpayers an average $34,764 in public services per year while homeless. In contrast, the total cost to build and provide a home with integrated supportive services – including healthcare and counseling – through permanent supportive housing operated by the Trust costs $13,224. Solving homelessness costs less than leaving people on the streets.

Permanent supportive housing generates the greatest cost savings for city and county governments. 100% of the $34,764 costs while homeless were borne by the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County. In contrast, a significant portion of the costs of providing supportive housing are provided by private investors and the federal government. For example, in a permanent supportive housing development funded by 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits, 50 to 60% of the equity is provided by private investors. On the operating side, 100% of the cost of providing rental subsidies is carried by the federal government. Even the cost of providing services can be offset for local governments if residents are permanently disabled and begin receiving Supplemental Security Income, which includes Medi-Cal coverage.

The Economic Roundtable’s study has great significance for the City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County. At a time when local governments are facing unprecedented budget deficits, now more than ever, we need to use our public resources efficiently. Reducing the costs of homelessness could free up tens of millions of dollars for other critical public services facing cuts. There are not too many budget solutions that have the added benefit of restoring lives and improving communities. Hopefully this solution will not go overlooked.

To read the Economic Roundtable’s full study Where We Sleep: Costs when Homeless and Housed in Los Angeles visit www.economicrt.org.

Skid Row Housing Trust’s philosophy is simple:

The Trust solves homelessness by developing, managing and maintaining permanent supportive housing. The Trust provides HOMES for the most vulnerable homeless men and women on the streets. The Trust ensures that our residents have access to the critical SUPPORT services to achieve stability, health, and dignity. And the Trust ensures SUCCESS by reducing homelessness through opportunity for our residents and better neighborhoods for our communities.

Skid Row Housing Trust is a 501c(3) organization to which contributions are tax-deductible.

Skid Row Housing Trust, 1317 E. 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021  213-683-0522

The Savings (per year)

- Public costs when homeless: $34,764
- Public costs when housed: $7,264
- Permanent Supportive Housing costs: $13,224 (including capital and operating costs)
- Total Savings: $14,280 per resident

To read the Economic Roundtable’s full study Where We Sleep: Costs when Homeless and Housed in Los Angeles visit www.economicrt.org

Board of Directors

Marc Hayutin  Carol Goldstein
Curtis Hessler  Paul Gregerson
Patrick Spillane  Dan Leibsohn
Alice Callaghan  Candy Rupp
Robert E. Carlson  Robert E. Wycoff