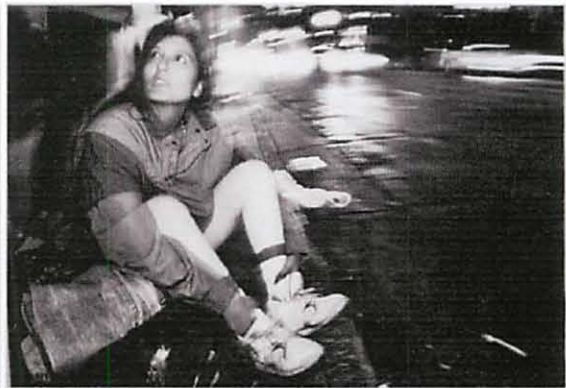


Single People Helping Single People

A Challenge Grant from AASP to Reopen the Single Women's Shelter



Press Conference -- April 5, 2001 -- Union Rescue Mission

The Closure of the Single Women's Shelter is an Unnecessary Tragedy

by Thomas F. Coleman

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I would like to commend the staff at the Union Rescue Mission for the excellent work they have been doing for many years to provide emergency relief and temporary shelter for men, women, and children, who for a variety of circumstances have found themselves homeless.

Providing these services costs a lot of money. The development staff has done wonders to raise the funds necessary to help thousands of needy people each year at this shelter.

But as they have explained, the demand for services has increased dramatically, especially by women with children. Unfortunately, donations to the Mission have remained about the same. It is the simple law of supply and demand and the demand for shelter has now outpaced the available funds.

Tough choices had to be made. A decision was finally reached to close the dorm for single women without children. And here we are.

The staff at the American Association for Single People learned of this tragedy through a recent article that appeared on the front page of the Los Angeles Times.

Our first thoughts were: "These are single people. We are single people. We need to do something to help."

We contacted Gil Mertz at the Mission and learned that the single women's dorm could not

reopen until \$320,000 was raised -- the annual cost of operating the dorm.

AASP is a rather new nonprofit organization. We don't have that kind of money. But we were able to arrange for an \$80,000 challenge grant to help reopen the single women's shelter. The grant will give one dollar for every three dollars in new donations to the shelter, up to \$80,000.

The Mission gladly accepted the challenge grant and we decided to hold a joint press conference today -- the day the doors to the single women's dorm are closed due to lack of funds.

The theme we have chosen for the challenge grant is "Single People Helping Single People."

We at AASP are here today to invite -- actually, to make a plea to -- all single people in the Los Angeles area to contribute to this cause.

I say that the closure of the single women's dorm is an unnecessary tragedy because, with more than 2 million unmarried adults in Los Angeles city alone -- not to mention millions more single people in the surrounding communities -- there is absolutely no reason for the shelter to close due to lack of funds.

There is an unfair stereotype in society that single people are carefree, selfish, party animals. That is an unfair characterization of an entire class of people -- most of whom are hard working, tax paying, citizens and voters.

Unmarried adults are single, divorced, and widowed. We are young and old. We are gay and straight. We are renters and homeowners. We are a diverse class of people.

Many single people are wealthy. Just flash back a few weeks ago to the Academy Awards. I dare say that most people who work in the entertainment industry are unmarried. Many of them are quite well off financially.

But most single and unmarried adults are middle class workers. They do not have a lot of extra spending money. But when they see a real human need -- an unnecessary tragedy such as this -- I believe that the single people of Los Angeles will respond.

The staff at AASP is providing an example to the rest of our unmarried friends and neighbors. All of us have made personal individual donations to the single women's shelter fund.

For example, Michael Vasquez, our production manager, has donated \$56 -- enough to house a single woman for one week.

And AASP members are responding to our plea for help. Consider Anita Patino, a widow who lives on a fixed income in East Los Angeles. When she heard about the fundraising drive, Anita came to our office last Sunday and gave us a check for \$8 -- enough to house one woman for one night.

If unmarried people like Michael and Anita can dig into their pockets to make a donation -- then so can thousands of other single and unmarried adults in the Los Angeles area.

We invite entertainers and celebrities to come forward to support this cause. After all, millions of their single fans who watch their films or buy their records make it possible for these celebrities to live the good life. This is an excellent opportunity for these singers, actors, writers, and directors, to help single people in need.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm the theme of this challenge grant -- Single People Helping Single People -- and challenge all of the single and unmarried adults who read about this in the newspaper or hear about this on the radio or television, to respond by making a donation to the Union Rescue Mission's single women's shelter fund.

The sooner we raise the funds, the sooner the shelter will reopen its doors. It's as simple as that.

For information about this tragedy and how to donate, visit our website at:
<http://www.unmarriedamerica.com/shelter-fund/shelter-fund-entry.html>