

# KEHILLAT ISRAEL PRESENTS

You are not obligated to complete the work,  
but neither are you free to desist from it.

Pirkei Avot, 2:21



**INTERFAITH COMPASSIONATE  
RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS**

**1**

Have your congregation **join the Westside Coalition** and start participating in monthly meetings of the Faith Committee, where you can collaborate with like-minded organizations in opportunities for advocacy and service for homeless families and individuals on the Westside. *For more information, contact Darci Niva, [darci@westsideshelter.org](mailto:darci@westsideshelter.org), 310-314-0071; or Delis Alejandro, Faith Committee Chair, [delis@stmonica.net](mailto:delis@stmonica.net), 310-556-1530*

**2**

**Join the Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness** and get involved in finding compassionate and effective solutions to homelessness in the Palisades. The task force meets approximately once per month and collaborates with OPCC, city and county officials, and law enforcement in an effort to ensure that homeless Palisadians get the care they need while maintaining the safety, character and lifestyle of the Palisades for all who choose to live and do business here. *To join, email Robin Degtjarewsky at [PacPaliHFT@gmail.com](mailto:PacPaliHFT@gmail.com) or visit [www.pptfh.org](http://www.pptfh.org).*

**3**

Together with your congregation, **create a team to mentor a family through the transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency**. Imagine if each of the more than 8,000 faith communities in Los Angeles mentored just one of the 8,000 homeless families. ImagineLA is currently looking for teams to mentor teen parents who have recently aged out of foster care and fallen into homelessness with their young children. *For more information, contact Tara Ignont at ImagineLA, 323-944-0210 x412, [tara@imaginela.org](mailto:tara@imaginela.org); or visit [www.imaginela.org](http://www.imaginela.org).*

**4**

**Organize a food drive** to benefit the Westside Food Bank. As the food bank warehouse for the Westside, WSFB annually distributes 4.5 million pounds of food to over 70 local social service agencies. That food often enables low-income people to stay in their homes, because it saves them from having to make the agonizing choice between paying for rent or food when they can't afford both. It also allows its member agencies to devote more of their resources to other ways of helping clients achieve self-respect and economic independence. *Contact Allison Griffith at 310-828-6016x12 or [Allison@westsidefoodbankca.org](mailto:Allison@westsidefoodbankca.org) for more information and to receive collection barrels.*

**5**

**Offer individual assistance for the homeless and low-income clients of Chrysalis** with resume preparation, basic computer skills, completion of online applications and preparation for job interviews so that they can find and retain employment that will offer them a pathway to self-sufficiency. *Visit [www.changelives.org](http://www.changelives.org) for more information and to fill out a volunteer application.*

**6**

Gather a group of volunteers to: (1) organize a drive to **gather the furnishings and supplies** needed to help welcome a formerly homeless family or individual into their new home; and (2) rent a truck, recruit some muscle and **move them in**. For the PATH "Welcome Home" program call 323-644-2202, [path@epath.org](mailto:path@epath.org) or [www.epath.org](http://www.epath.org) For the Upward Bound House "Adopt-a-Unit" program call 310-458-7779 or [volunteer@upwardboundhouse.org](mailto:volunteer@upwardboundhouse.org)

**7**

**Consider giving the homeless you encounter bus passes and information about nearby drop-in centers** that can provide needed services. *Metro Tokens and TAP cards (usable on Metro, Big Blue Bus and others) are both available for purchase at Ralph's in the Palisades. (For other retail locations, visit [metro.net](http://metro.net) or [taptogo.net](http://taptogo.net).)* OPCC and St. Joseph Center both have drop-in centers, Venice Family Clinic sees drop-in homeless patients M-F at its Rose Avenue Clinic, and those in need can always get a referral to needed services by calling 211. You can keep prepared notes in your purse or car or carry pre-printed cards available from OPCC and 211.

**8**

Take the whole family to Barker Hangar each December to **help sort, package and distribute holiday baskets of food and gifts** for more than 12,500 people through the One Voice Holiday Food Program. *For more information visit [onevoice-la.org/volunteer/](http://onevoice-la.org/volunteer/)*

The Homelessness and Poverty Committee of the LA City Council has asked the City Attorney to draft an ordinance allowing faith organizations to open their parking lots each night as safe spaces for some of the 5,000 Angelenos living in their vehicles. This important change will prevent those reduced to living in their cars from being harassed or ticketed, subject to having their vehicles impounded and a warrant issued for unpaid parking tickets, and at risk of a consequent criminal record that could negatively impact their ability to obtain jobs and housing. **Write to Mayor Garcetti and the LA City Council** expressing your support for this change and **approach your church or synagogue about opening its parking lot** to those in need. *For information about similar programs in other California cities go to [www.sbnbcc.org/safe-parking/](http://www.sbnbcc.org/safe-parking/) or <http://www.dreamsforchange.org/services/safe-parking/>.*

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**Share your expertise in health and wellness** (e.g., doctors/nurses of all specialties, acupuncturists, chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, audiologists, nutritionists, fitness/movement instructors, physical therapists, speech therapists, etc.) by volunteering your services through Venice Family Clinic. In addition to seeing 20,223 patients per year, 75% of whom live below the Federal poverty level and 15% of whom are homeless, VFC provides services to the clients at Safe Place for Youth and OPCC and has mobile outreach teams who make weekly visits to areas where the homeless congregate to provide medical services and encourage those in need of further treatment to visit the clinic. *For more information about how to help, call Laney Kapgan at 310-664-7932 or visit [www.venicefamilyclinic.org](http://www.venicefamilyclinic.org).*

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Recruit members of your congregation to join you in **participating in this year's Faith Connect event** at the West LA Winter Shelter, where faith communities and service providers will be available to provide assistance, services and winter weather gear to shelter residents. This event is put on by the Faith Committee of the Westside Coalition and takes place each December at the West LA Armory. *For more information, contact Delis Alejandro, Faith Committee Chair, [delis@stmonica.net](mailto:delis@stmonica.net), 310-556-1530; or go to [www.westsideshelter.org](http://www.westsideshelter.org)*

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**Prepare and donate sack lunches** to be distributed to the homeless through local agencies. Some of these agencies also need volunteers to hand out the lunches to clients. (All ages)

*For PATH'S "Lunches for Bunches" program 323-644-2202, [path@epath.org](mailto:path@epath.org)*

*For Downtown Women's Center's "Snack Packs" program contact Lauren LeBer at 213-213-2847 or [volunteer@dwc.org](mailto:volunteer@dwc.org)*

*For the Westside Food Bank, contact Allison Griffith at 310-828-6016x12 or [allison@westsidefoodbankca.org](mailto:allison@westsidefoodbankca.org)*

*For any of the OPCC programs contact Ruby Holz, [rholz@opcc.net](mailto:rholz@opcc.net)*

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You can also sign up to **hand out packed lunches** to the homeless on Sundays at the LGBT Center in Hollywood through Food on Foot. (All ages) Visit [www.foodonfoot.org](http://www.foodonfoot.org) for more information.

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Volunteer to **participate in the Annual Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Homeless Count**, conducted in January of each year, as a driver, navigator, or counter. Sign up at [www.theycountwillyou.org](http://www.theycountwillyou.org) or call 213-225-6562 for more information.

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**Donate (or organize a drive for) winter coats, rain ponchos, sleeping bags and blankets** for St. Joseph Center or OPCC for distribution at their drop-in centers to those who will be spending the winter on the streets. *For St. Joseph Center, contact Christine O'Rourke at 310-396-6468 x326 or corourke@stjosephctr.org. Items for OPCC can be dropped at the Access Center (503 Olympic Blvd, SM) or at OPCC's administrative offices (1453 16<sup>th</sup> St., SM)*

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**Attend the Homeless Memorial Service** held each fall at Christine Reed Park in Santa Monica. The Homeless Memorial is an interfaith service honoring the lives of those members of our community who have died on the streets in the past year. *For more information, contact Darci Niva, darci@westsideshelter.org, 310-314-0071; or visit [www.westsideshelter.org](http://www.westsideshelter.org).*

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Gather a group of friends to **cook and serve a meal** for residents of transitional housing or shelters or for homeless visitors to drop-in facilities. (Some of these facilities welcome families in the kitchen.)

*For the DWC "Cooking Club" contact Lauren LeBer at [volunteer@dwc.org](mailto:volunteer@dwc.org) or 213-213-2847*

*For OPCC (Turning Point, Samoshel, Daybreak and Safe Haven) contact Ruby Holz at [rholz@opcc.net](mailto:rholz@opcc.net)*

*For Safe Place for Youth contact Sally Paquette at [sally.paquette@gmail.com](mailto:sally.paquette@gmail.com)*

*For Step Up on Second call Len Lovallo at 310-394-6889 x1616*

*For the "PATHCooks" program contact Megan Colvard at 323-644-2200 x361 or [meganc@epath.org](mailto:meganc@epath.org)*

*For Upward Bound House contact Krystel Ruiz at [kruiz@upwardboundhouse.org](mailto:kruiz@upwardboundhouse.org)*

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Volunteer to **sort donations, organize a donation closet, or help clients choose new clothing.**

*For OPCC Annenberg Access Center contact Ruby Holz at [rholz@opcc.net](mailto:rholz@opcc.net)*

*For DWC contact Lauren LeBer at 213-213-2847 or [volunteer@downtownwomenscenter.org](mailto:volunteer@downtownwomenscenter.org)*

*For Upward Bound House contact Krystel Ruiz at [kruiz@upwardboundhouse.org](mailto:kruiz@upwardboundhouse.org)*

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Volunteer at the Westside Food Bank on any Friday morning from 10:30am until 12:30pm **boxing donations of fresh produce** for distribution to local agencies. Or organize a group to sort and box non-perishable items collected during food drives. *Contact Allison Griffith for more information at 310-828-6016x12 or [Allison@westsidefoodbankca.org](mailto:Allison@westsidefoodbankca.org).*

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Volunteer to **clean and organize a food pantry** and assist clients as they choose groceries.

*For St. Joseph Center contact Christine O'Rourke at 310-396-6468 x326 or [corourke@stjosephctr.org](mailto:corourke@stjosephctr.org)*

*For Upward Bound House contact Krystel Ruiz at [kruiz@upwardboundhouse.org](mailto:kruiz@upwardboundhouse.org)*

*For SOVA contact Felice Resnick at (818) 988-7682x118 or [FResnick@jfsla.org](mailto:FResnick@jfsla.org).*

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**Donate (or organize a drive for) gently used professional clothing** for those transitioning back into the work force.

*Chrysalis (especially plus-sized women's clothing), 310-401-9400, 1853 Lincoln Blvd, SM  
New Directions for Veterans at the West LA VA, 310-914-4045*

**Volunteer weekly at the Bread and Roses Café** in Venice, which serves lunch to as many as 150 homeless men and women each day and is part of the Culinary Training Program that prepares St. Joseph clients for positions in the food-service industry. *Contact Christine O'Rourke at [corourke@stjosephctr.org](mailto:corourke@stjosephctr.org) or 310-396-6468 x326.*

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The Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness has signed an agreement with OPCC to provide two full-time outreach workers in the Palisades, who will build relationships with our homeless residents and connect them with needed services, all with the goal of helping as many as possible transition into permanent housing. By **making a donation to OPCC earmarked for PPTFH**, you can help to fund that contract so that OPCC can begin work. *Contact Barbara Overland at [bcoverland@yahoo.com](mailto:bcoverland@yahoo.com) for more information. Or visit the PPTFH GoFundMe page at [www.gofundme.com/Palisadeshomeless](http://www.gofundme.com/Palisadeshomeless)*

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OPCC's Daybreak is an interim housing and day program for homeless women struggling with mental illness. Daybreak's clients make arts and crafts, which they sell at the Daybreak Designs boutique for limited hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You can **support the women of Daybreak by purchasing these items and by including Daybreak Designs in your next holiday boutique.** *For more information, visit [www.opcc.net](http://www.opcc.net).*

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"MADE by DWC" is a program that allows Downtown Women's Center clients to collaborate with community artists to design and make products for sale. You can **support the women of DWC by including them in your next holiday boutique and purchasing their work** at etsy.com, Bloomingdale's Century City or at the DWC Café and Gift Boutique. *For more information call 213-680-0600.*

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**Donate (or organize a drive for) fabrics, notions, yarn, knitting needles, crochet hooks, art supplies, paints/brushes, beads, jewelry-making supplies and tools, candle-making supplies, etc.** to the "Made by DWC" or "Daybreak Designs" programs.

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*Donations to Daybreak can be dropped at the OPCC Admin Offices at 1453 16<sup>th</sup> St., SM  
For donations to DWC contact Joyce Williams at [volunteer@dwc.org](mailto:volunteer@dwc.org) or 213-213-2820*

**Share your talents** by leading a class or workshop in the performing or visual arts, music, writing, movement/exercise, meditation, stress management, coding and web development, basic computer skills, financial management, parenting, nutrition, personal safety/self-defense, or any other area of life or job skill development in which you have expertise. *Contact Chrysalis, OPCC, Upward Bound House, Safe Place for Youth, DWC, New Directions for Veterans, Step Up on Second or St. Joseph Center for more information about their specific needs.*

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**Donate your teen's gently-used hoodies, jeans, leggings, socks, and especially shoes** to the homeless young people (aged 12-25) served by Safe Place for Youth, many of whom have been part of the foster care or juvenile justice system or have fled abusive home lives. SPY also needs volunteers to staff its drop-in center in Venice on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. *For more information, contact Nathalie Flores at [nathalief@safeforyouth.org](mailto:nathalief@safeforyouth.org)*

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**Share your professional skills** (legal, medical, dental, accounting, financial, tutoring, etc.) with families working to transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency. ImagineLA is in need of pro bono professional services for families already partnered with existing mentoring teams. *Contact Rachel Feldstein at [Rachel@imaginela.org](mailto:Rachel@imaginela.org).*

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**Donate gently used clothing** (especially for men) to the OPCC Annenberg Access Center. The Access Center also has an acute need for **NEW socks and underwear** for men and women. *Items can be dropped at the Access Center (503 Olympic Blvd, SM) or at OPCC's administrative offices (1453 16<sup>th</sup> St., SM).*

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**Donate gently used clothing for women** (especially plus-sized) to the Downtown Women's Center.

*Contact Joyce Williams at [volunteer@dwc.org](mailto:volunteer@dwc.org) or 213-213-2820*

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**Volunteer to pack and deliver groceries** to needy families with One-on-One Outreach. One-on-One (a 100% volunteer organization) purchases, packs and delivers 170 boxes of groceries to food-insecure families in South Central Los Angeles. These are working families living in one and two bedroom apartments, who simply do not make enough money to pay rent and feed their families. (All ages) *For more information, contact Michael Schwartz at [Michael@oneononeoutreach.org](mailto:Michael@oneononeoutreach.org).*

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**Donate toiletries and other personal care products** for use by the homeless at drop-in centers and shelters. Please note: some agencies prefer full-sized and some prefer travel-sized (be sure to collect all the hotel toiletries on your next vacation!) OPCC's SHWASHLOCK and St. Joseph Center also need **towels**. *For donations, contact OPCC, Venice Family Clinic, St. Joseph Center, New Directions for Veterans, Safe Place for Youth, or PATH.*

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**Support Chrysalis and your community by making a donation to the Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce.** Each year the Chamber contracts with Chrysalis to put formerly homeless individuals to work keeping the Palisades business district clean. These men and women work 12 hours per week in the Palisades sweeping sidewalks, emptying trashcans, cleaning graffiti and taking down old flyers and garage sale signs. With additional donations, the Chamber could pay for more hours—providing employment to those who need it and further beautifying our Village. *For more information, contact the Chamber at 310-459-7963.*

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Volunteer to **tutor one of the 63,000 students in LA County who have been identified by their school district as living in homeless situations.** Adults and children ages 12 and up can serve as tutors through School on Wheels. School on Wheels also welcomes donations of backpacks and school supplies, help in sorting donations, and computer help at their learning centers. You can also host a birthday or holiday party for students living in a local shelter. *For more information contact [volunteers@schoolonwheels.org](mailto:volunteers@schoolonwheels.org).*

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**Donate your maternity clothing and baby supplies** to homeless pregnant women. Harvest Home provides shelter, programming and assistance to homeless pregnant women and their children in order to equip women to become great mothers. *For more information, contact 310-452-1223 or visit [www.theharvesthome.net](http://www.theharvesthome.net)*

**Continue the conversation** about compassionate responses to homelessness by talking with friends and family about what you've learned or by inviting some of the many dedicated men and women who work in this field to speak in your home or at your church or synagogue.

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**Hire the men and women trained by Chrysalis, St. Joseph Center, PATH and New Directions for Veterans in your business.** St. Joseph Center is also looking for restaurants that will provide externships for the students in its Culinary Training Program.

*For Chrysalis contact 213-806-6350 or [hire@changelives.org](mailto:hire@changelives.org)*

*For St. Joseph Center email [culinarytraining@stjosephcenter.org](mailto:culinarytraining@stjosephcenter.org)*

*For New Directions for Veterans call 310-914-4045*

*For the PATH Veteran Employment Services call 213-447-6429*

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State Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins has announced a housing-bill package designed to address homelessness in California, which includes **AB 35, AB 1335, AB 90, and AB 1056**. These bills would expand the state's low-income housing tax credit, create a stable source of funding for the State Housing Trust Fund, create a framework for use of funds received from the National Housing Trust Fund, and use a portion of Prop 47 budget savings for rapid rehousing of formerly incarcerated people who suffer from mental health or substance abuse issues in an effort to reduce the recidivism that often accompanies homelessness.

**Learn more about these proposals** and find sample support letters at [www.housingca.org](http://www.housingca.org)

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If you're a landlord or property manager, **partner with OPCC PATH, or The United Way to lease a portion of your units to previously homeless clients.** Both OPCC

and PATH work with lessors to provide services and assistance to both the tenant and landlord in order to ensure a mutually beneficial arrangement. In addition, there are more than 500 veterans who have secured vouchers for rental subsidies and supportive services but have no place to go because there simply are not enough landlords willing to accept them.

*For OPCC call 310-264-6646, For the PATH Housing Partnership Program call 213-448-2714, For the United Way's Homes for Heroes program call 213-808-6220*

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Pick up a hammer and **help Habitat for Humanity build homes** in Compton, Inglewood and Montebello (age 16+). In addition to helping with actual construction, Habitat needs site hosts to help check people in, organize the day and make volunteers feel welcome. You can also donate items removed during your next remodel or upgrade to the Habitat ReStore. And volunteers are needed to staff the ReStore to help shoppers select and purchase donated furniture, appliances, doors, windows, fixtures, etc. (age 14+). Visit [habitatla.org](http://habitatla.org) for more information.

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**Stay informed** about legal and political issues affecting the poor and the homeless by visiting any of the following websites. Most of these sites give you the option to sign up for regular e-mail updates.

*Western Center on Law and Poverty, [www.wclp.org](http://www.wclp.org)*

*LA Community Action Network, [www.cangress.org](http://www.cangress.org)*

*American Civil Liberties Union, [www.aclusocal.org](http://www.aclusocal.org)*

*National Alliance to End Homelessness, [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)*

*National Coalition for the Homeless, [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)*

*National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, [www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org)*

*Housing California, [www.housingca.org](http://www.housingca.org)*

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**Join the social justice committee** at your church or synagogue (or start a social justice committee) to educate your faith community on important issues and engage them in advocacy on behalf of the poor and homeless.

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# 44

**Attend meetings of the LA City Council's Homelessness and Poverty Committee**, where council members will be deciding how they intend to effectuate the city's \$100M commitment to ending homelessness. Meetings are held every other Wednesday at City Hall. *You can subscribe to receive the agenda in advance on the City Council website. (<http://www.lacity.org/city-government/subscribe-meeting-agendas-and-more/council-council-committees-ad-hoc-committees>) Audio recordings of past meetings are also available on the City Council website.*

# 45

The LA Community Action Network, Venice Justice System and the National Lawyers Guild Los Angeles, working in partnership, operate Citation Clinics where volunteers help homeless people who get citations for "quality of life" violations, e.g., sitting on the sidewalk, sleeping on the beach, smoking in public, and jaywalking. The clinics, staffed by volunteers, law students and pro bono lawyers, hold monthly intakes, then provide lawyers to go to court to **fight these cases that effectively criminalize homelessness** and make it more difficult for those cited to secure housing and employment. *For more information contact John Raphling at [johnraphling@yahoo.com](mailto:johnraphling@yahoo.com) of the National Lawyers Guild Los Angeles.*

# 46

**"Adopt" one or more families for the holidays** and purchase items on their wish lists as holiday gifts. *A few of the agencies that offer such programs are Jewish Family Service ([skadovitz@jfsla.org](mailto:skadovitz@jfsla.org)), St. Joseph Center ([corourke@stjosepgctr.org](mailto:corourke@stjosepgctr.org)), and the Salvation Army Westwood Transitional Village (310-477-9539).*

**Learn more about poverty and homelessness in America.**

# 47

**Read:**

*The American Way of Poverty: How the Other Half Still Lives* by Sasha Abramsky

*The Soloist* by Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander

*Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich

*The Working Poor: Invisible in America* by David K. Shipler

*\$2 a Day: Living On Almost Nothing in America* by Kathryn J. Edin and H. Luke Schaefer

"Million-Dollar Murray" by Malcolm Gladwell at [gladwell.com](http://gladwell.com)

"Homelessness: Causes, Culture and Community Development as a Solution" by Kaitlin Philipps at [digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell\\_theses/88](http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/pell_theses/88)

**Watch:**

*The House I Live In* (2013)

*Lost Angels: Skid Row is My Home* (2012)

*Inequality for All* (2013)

"100,000 Homes: Housing the homeless can save money?" 60 Minutes at [cbsnews.com](http://cbsnews.com)

# 49

For a fictional account of a mother grieving a tragic loss, who attempts to save a homeless single mother and her toddler, **read *Shelter Us***, written by KI congregant Laura Nicole Diamond. Proceeds from the book are donated to PATH Beyond Shelter.

# 50

The 54 block area of downtown Los Angeles known as Skid Row is home to the largest concentration of homeless people anywhere in the country. Every night nearly 2,000 men and women sleep in deplorable conditions on filthy sidewalks. In addition to the Downtown Women's Center mentioned above, there are a number of agencies providing services to residents of Skid Row, including the Union Rescue Mission, the Midnight Mission, the Weingart Center, the Los Angeles Mission, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and LAMP Community. **We encourage you to check them out and see how you can help.**