

Charter/Mandate for The Giving Spirit's
Education and Community Development Committee,
November 2016

The Giving Spirit (TGS) has had the honor of serving the homeless and citizens of Greater Los Angeles since 1999. Chairman Tom Bagamane founded TGS as an all-volunteer led organization to execute a two-pronged mission. The first was the dissemination of life-giving aid directly to the unsheltered in Los Angeles. To date, TGS has engaged over 13,000 volunteers to serve over 42,000 homeless lives in 17 years with our survival-sustaining aid from Skid Row through the Westside, into the Valley and throughout Greater Los Angeles.

The second mandate was to educate volunteers about the myths and realities of homelessness and poverty while also informing our homeless friends that there are many in this City that care for their safety and wellbeing. Therefore, creating an educational platform grounded in understanding, acknowledgement and grace will serve to eliminate, as much as humanly possible, pre-set judgmental attitudes out of the process of confronting the community crisis that we know as homelessness in America. We have consistently been called an effective teaching tool for children and families in the areas of poverty, community empowerment and entitlement in LA by parents, teachers and kids.

At its annual meeting in January of 2016, the Board of Directors of TGS unanimously approved the commission of a ground-breaking new committee – the Education and Community Development Committee. Its charter:

- to use TGS's highly-attended events as a destination for interactive engagement and dialogue to educate and inform our volunteers and community about the myths and realities of homelessness.
- to leverage its brand, reputation, knowledge, experience and historical impact to create proprietary content and inter/intra-disciplinary tools to empower educators and parents.
- to extend TGS's social impact opportunities from solely event-focused to classrooms and living rooms.
- to provide universal platforms and agendas to reflect the current state of affairs of the homeless, the disadvantaged and the marginalized in individual Los Angeles communities.
- to build on the TGS volunteer experience of immersive education as a model to provide learning opportunities for each volunteer and homeless person TGS touches.

We will launch this new charter with three seminal breakout sessions at our December 2016 Winter Outreach. Each one of these breakout sessions will be held on Saturday, December 10, 2016 and recorded for rebroadcast:

Back from the Brink” (9:30 - 10:15)

- *A panel of formerly homeless citizens share their inspiring stories*
 - o Three individuals who found themselves on the streets without hope and forgotten by society who found their way back and are compelled to share their story. Their vivid journey’s will be revealed and shared in an intimate environment and moderated by TGS Board Member, James Segil.

“The State of the Unsheltered in LA” (11:15 - 12:00)

- *A Town Hall with Councilman Mike Bonin, 11th District*
 - o Councilman Mike Bonin, LA’s most vocal and passionate public servant regarding the issues of homelessness in our city, will conduct a town hall on the status of the unsheltered in LA. Councilman Bonin, who was once on the verge of being homeless, will share his unique perspective as well as providing the most recent updates on how LA is truly dealing with the plight of the homeless in Los Angeles.

“Kids Teaching Kids” (12:15 - 1:00)

- *Homelessness seen through the eyes of our youth*

Many families have credited TGS with empowering their children by exposing them to the reality of life on the streets and the compelling stories that help shape their evolving and growing minds. Many of these kids are “teaching up” their parents, families and peers about social justice, and for some, staring down their entitled lifestyles often found in the affluent areas of Los Angeles. The experience for all kids provides the opportunity to gain perspective and enlightenment about themselves and their world and the potential to emerge as balanced, enlightened solution-driven decision makers. Several kids will share and inspire with what they have learned as TGS volunteers.