

## Business leaders report progress in LA plan to end homelessness

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Eric Zassenhaus/KPCC

With over 40,000 homeless living on its streets, Los Angeles is the homeless capital of the country.

L.A. business leaders say there's good news about a widespread effort to help thousands of homeless people. The group has made significant progress and hopes to do much more.

Artist Stuart Perlman has a special take on the homelessness problem.

"You can see the pain and the intensity in their being and in their life and in their soul," he said.

For several years, Perlman has painted the faces of dozens of homeless people from different backgrounds. Most of them posed for Perlman near Venice Beach where they sleep.

"And if we can really understand their pain, we can understand that we're all just one thin experience away from homelessness."

Perlman, who's also a psychotherapist, has displayed about 40 of his vibrant, colorful oil paintings at the JW Marriott in downtown L.A. The LA Business Leaders Task Force on Homelessness held its convention there. In its first annual report the group says about three thousand chronically homeless people in LA found a permanent place to live in the last year.

Task Force member Kerry Morrison credits the progress to government, police and faith-based leaders working together through an effort called "Home For Good."

"The business community I think, through 'Home For Good' has been able to kind of reframe the issue to articulate achievable objectives to lay out in a sense a business plan to get there, to identify all the accountable parties and hold people accountable," Morrison said.

Home for Good has a five-year goal. It wants to end chronic homelessness in LA. The task force says it needs the help of more community groups, to get there.

In the meantime, Stuart Perlman says he'll continue to paint portraits of homeless men and women, as they share their life stories.

"I'm actually internationally known as a trauma expert but these are the most fascinating people I've ever met," Perlman said.

It's homelessness, with a human face.