



Broken Hearts Ministry

Reaching out to the streets of Los Angeles

Shelter for Those at Risk

-by Antquan Washington, Executive Director

Cooperating with like-minded organizations to meet the needs of those living and working on our streets is one of Broken Hearts' core values.

We also strive to **"bridge the gap"** between the church and the streets, and **build up** the body of Christ by training and equipping individuals to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

We were privileged to begin 2012 by seeing the Church truly coming together through Hollywood's first winter shelter, run entirely by churches, since Broken Hearts began here in 2004.

The STAR shelter (Shelter for Those At Risk) offered some of the most at-risk in our city:

- a place to lay their head.
- a place to be loved.
- a place to be fed emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
- a place to discover their worth in God's eyes.
- a place to dream about what's to come in the days ahead here on earth as well as Heaven.

While the shelter gave a bed and warm meal to guests each night, case workers from various agencies also partnered to come and assist in finding long-term or transitional housing.

One thing that struck me was that, as our guests

arrived each night, the activities they were interested in are not much different from what we do on any given family gathering. We spent evenings playing games, having Bible studies, watching movies, painting, and hanging out at the dinner table talking and laughing until "lights out".

Another thing that struck me was how many people are interested in seeing this continue and grow beyond an eight-week temporary shelter. Those living there as well as volunteers are not content with a quick fix, but want to explore more permanent solutions together.

We dream of something like this run by the local churches and ministries to help people year-round. We want to reduce homelessness and increase a sense of family for those who have none.

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The last morning, a few tears ran down one woman's face as she talked about having friends or family who aren't even willing to let her stay on their couch for a few days at a time. But that if they each just helped a little, she wouldn't be in this predicament and it would make such a difference for her.

She said, "Tell your friends. Tell them to just help out that person they see in need." She wanted us all to know that when we just help the one in front of us, even a little, it makes all the difference. If families and friends – even strangers – were helping each other, the need for these shelters would diminish by quite a bit. It's not easy – people are frustrating, inconvenient, and tiring at times. Giving up our time and comfort isn't easy, but at some point or another, we all need a hand. When we come together to help, we can do even greater things like this shelter. And when you see – really *see* – these faces of homelessness, you realize we're not all that different.

Please join us in praying for our 30-35 guests this year and for lasting impact in their lives!

Stories from Santa Monica Blvd...

Different Brokenness, Same Cure

As I cooked up a brunch of eggs, bacon, and the works the other morning, I began to revisit in my mind a conversation I had with one gentleman on the streets of Hollywood. He is an African-American man in his 20's who has been faithfully joining us for years at The Refuge services on the street. Homeless when we met him, he became a recipient of our Street Retirement Fund and is now permanently housed in his own apartment.

Without going into all of the details, the crux of the conversation we had that cold night on the boulevard was *abandonment*. He, as most others we come in contact with, has the feeling that he must go this life alone, without anyone to help him. As a result, he feels most comfortable in his 'ways' – a lifestyle of engaging in homosexual relationships.

We talked about how we all have issues but God has taught us how we should live. As much as the world around us tells us something which totally

contradicts the Word of God (and which in all cases will *feel* like the most natural approach), we have been taught and commanded not to conform to the patterns of this world but in *all* things be renewed *in our minds!*

I went at length to explain that all our struggles are in the mind. If we can think differently about who we are, or what happened in the past, we can be healed through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. That means healing can only be gained when we first acknowledge that our mindset - or rather our sinful nature - is corrupt and in need of a totally new program designed by God himself.

Right after that he said that he is still not sure if God and the Bible are genuine, and questioned why God would make him the way he is.

The promise of the renewal of our minds is that, by our testing we may be able to discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

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Our friend said in this conversation that He knows what he does is wrong and that God is not pleased with his lifestyle, but even as he was saying it, the world mindset he's so used to kicked in.

There is still a constant battle in his mind. The Holy Spirit continues to speak truth to him as he reads the Word and believes in it, but the enemy interjects to keep him doubting. This prevents the truth of God from sinking into his heart and keeps him confused about who he is, thereby eliminating the power of God doing its full work in him.

His battle is not unique. Not to the streets of Hollywood and those who are homeless, prostituting or addicted to drugs, and not to us. It may or may not be about sexual orientation like our friends here, but we have areas in our lives where we are constantly tossing back and forth between the truth of God and the sensuality of human nature.

Antquan will often say that when Broken Hearts began, *"We started to realize that there weren't a lot of things we had in common with those to*

whom we ministered. But one common factor we all had was brokenness, because we've all experienced it. Our brokenness may look a little bit different, but the cure is the same – it's Jesus."

The biggest challenge we all face is to truly embrace His Word and walk away from our sinful tendencies. His word is true that we will be transformed into His image and likeness.

This is the message that we must preach to ourselves daily as we face our own doubts and confusion, and then we can take that same message of hope to the streets.

That specific conversation with our friend popped into my mind over brunch, but it represents the many we meet weekly fighting the same battles of abandonment, flesh versus spirit, and belief in transformation.

Let us speak the Word as it is. Through the promises of God we will attest to how we have overcome the world by believing in the saving blood of Jesus, as the power of our testimony lifts up the true, living word of God.



Upcoming Events

WHITE AS SNOW: March 29, April 26, May 31 @ 8:45pm

Join Broken Hearts and other local churches for a monthly laundry ministry. Invite friends, neighbors and strangers to get their laundry done for free on Thursday night at 9:00pm at the Launderland Coin Laundromat on Santa Monica/Las Palmas. Volunteers are welcome, and should arrive by 8:45pm for briefing. Contact antquan@brokenheartsmintistry.org for more info

**BROKEN HEARTS PRESENTS: Street Ministry 101 @6:30pm
(last Tuesday of every month)**

In partnership with The Chicago School of Psychology, Broken Hearts is hosting monthly trainings to equip and educate individuals to effectively reach our communities. Trainings will teach us to better love and care for the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs of the overlooked and underprivileged.

Trainings are **FREE** and open to anyone who simply wants to learn.

For full class info visit our website or contact holly@brokenheartsmintistry.org.



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About Broken Hearts Ministry

Who We Are: Broken Hearts is a mission-based organization serving in Los Angeles, focused on relational evangelism to share Christ with the broken. We seek to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the people to whom we minister while communicating the gospel through our words, work and worship.

Mission Statement: Our mission is to impact the broken-hearted living and working on the streets of our cities by building relationships, providing resources, demonstrating the love of Jesus, and giving them hope.

If you'd like to financially support Broken Hearts, please send donations to:

Broken Hearts Inc,
PO Box 93592, Los Angeles CA 90093

or visit our website at:

www.brokenheartsmintistry.org/donate

Broken Hearts Inc is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible.

To find out how you can get involved, visit:

www.brokenheartsmintistry.org/get-involved