

"I'm here to help others struggling to be accountable and to let them know there is always hope."

Miguel Araujo

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2023

2. MIGUEL'S STORY

3. THE YEAR SO FAR

4. MESSAGE FROM KEN

Contents

UPCOMING EVENTS

14 YEAR CELEBRATION

AUGUST 25, 2023

DRUMSTICK DASH

NOVEMBER 23, 2023



MIGUEL ARAUJO

HIS JOURNEY FROM THE STREETS OF LOS ANGELES TO HOPE

For more than a decade, Miguel Araujo lived on the streets of Los Angeles. His drug addiction had alienated him from all of his friends and family. The mental illness that fed off of the drug abuse acted like a relentless anchor, trapping him in this wicked spiral. Like so many addicts, he used drugs at first to numb the pain he had caused himself and his loved ones. Eventually, he was using to quiet the voices in his head and the constant fear of surviving life on the streets. "I was bad in the head. And I wasn't ever in my right mind," Miguel says.

The toll of this life on the street was devastating. Miguel's drug influenced schizophrenia led to recurring mental breakdowns and hospitalizations. Even after being admitted repeatedly to trauma wards, he still continued refusing help and support. The paranoia his mind generated prevented him from trusting anyone. Miguel felt as if he was in a constant battle with threats that were both real and imagined. When Miguel was close to what he describes as "the point of no return", he somehow managed to take a break from using just long enough to collect himself and seek out help. This moment of clarity led him to Hope the Mission.

Continued from first page...

Miguel finally accepted treatment for his addiction, leaning into the support of the sober living environment provided for residents of House of Hope. This residential treatment facility in Van Nuys was one of the first homeless shelters opened by Hope of the Valley in 2010.

He spent two years as a resident there, fighting his addiction and re-building his life. Miguel points to key supportive services provided by Hope as critical to his pathway back to mental and physical health. Initially, it was the acute care of mental health professionals, followed by daily AA meetings. Faith in God and regular spiritual guidance counseling was also hugely important for him in re-building his relationships and developing a new network of peer support.

"I'm living proof that these problems can be fixed..."



Current data show that 63% of chronically homeless individuals suffer from mental illness. 49% of those living outside have a substance abuse disorder. Ken Craft, CEO of Hope the Mission weighs in, "I feel as if it's easy to look at people when they are at their worst and make a determination that this person is un-wanting of our help, or beyond help. If we as a community are going to win this war against homelessness, it is critical that we rise above that and do all we can to help." As Miguel puts it, "I'm living proof that these problems can be fixed. I plan maybe to take over the CEO position one day."



So, where is Miguel today?

He is over six years sober, has gained himself permanent and sustainable housing and is gainfully employed as Hope's warehouse and vehicle fleet manager. Most importantly, he is engaging every day helping others that are experiencing the pain and fear he once lived with. "I'm here to help others struggling to be accountable and to let them know there is always hope," he says.

Miguel, like so many unhoused individuals, experienced childhood trauma in an environment that was totally void of opportunities for growth and advancement. When asked about the origins of his collapse into homelessness, he cited the compounding of problems in his life that began at a very young age.

He eventually joined so many others in that tragic race downwards towards the point of no return. Having experienced suicidal thoughts on numerous occasions, he is all too familiar with the dangers that the addictive mental illness cycle can lead to. His story of faith, recovery and re-gained self-worth is one of many that Hope has been fortunate enough to foster.



THE YEAR SO FAR

The spring of 2023 has seen Hope take meaningful steps to attack the homelessness crisis in key L.A. County communities. In April, The Mission opened The Alvarado, a 43 unit/172 bed shelter in downtown's MacArthur Park neighborhood. This families only residence transformed a formerly blighted flop house in this struggling neighborhood. To execute The Alvarado's transformation into a safe and supportive family residence, funding was secured via the government's Project Homekey program alongside critical donations from our community of donors.



In June, as part of the same development pipeline, Hope will open a 400 bed family shelter on Woodland Hills' Ventura Blvd corridor. The Woodlands family shelter truly breaks the mold as a sustainable full services living environment. In addition to housing 100 families, the Woodlands project will re-purpose a former on-site Denny's restaurant into a pre-school and community center. For the first time, these kids will be able to attend school in a safe and happy location just steps from their residence.



Both of these new Hope sites will provide individual room housing and wrap around services, including mental health and addiction treatment, job placement, case management and three healthy meals every day. These built in support systems are keys to the Hope model - which is focused on sustainability and advancement into long-term permanent supportive housing. These buildings are also carbon neutral, having installed solar panels throughout the sites to provide energy sustainability.

In May, our friends at Shepherd Church co-hosted Hope the Concert. This annual celebration was free to the community and it brought together thousands of passionate fans and supporters of the Mission. Featuring award winning recording artists Evan Craft and Israel Houghton, the event allowed Hope to personify the core tenets that drive our Mission - Compassion, Integrity, Faith, Diversity and Growth.



PAGE 3

The steps Hope took this spring are just the beginnings of a robust plan to successfully house and treat so many more individuals and families living outside. Our forward goal for 2023 and 2024 is to open over a half dozen new shelters and support sites throughout Southern California. In addition, we have broken ground on Hope Kitchen, a commercial sized commissary inside Hope's home office that will be capable of providing 5 million meals every year to those in need.



Outreach Team with Participants

Hope the Mission has always worked closely with our local government leaders to collaborate on solutions in turning the tide of the homelessness crisis. We are very proud of the work we have already accomplished with Mayor Karen Bass' office in executing her keystone Inside Safe initiative. In the midst of the late winter storms, Hope was mobilized to send an emergency outreach team to an encampment along the L.A. river.

This location was at severe risk of being swamped by the torrential rains and river overflow. Hope outreach swiftly and successfully engaged and re-located 46 encampment residents into an Inside Safe hotel in Canoga Park. This was Hope's pilot program for Bass' initiative. To date, over 90% of the unhoused community members that we moved inside are still there. Most of these clients are using this salvation as an opportunity to get back on their feet, several seeking a career path or getting enrolled into a college degree program. A second Inside Safe outreach is being planned in June! This is the Hope model in action and at its best.



Outreach Team in LA River

In the coming months, Hope has plans to add over 10 new outreach teams to our city streets. These on the ground empathy warriors are specially trained to engage unhoused individuals, build trust amongst them and work hand in hand to facilitate their transition inside. Hope could not be more thankful for their work and compassion and we look forward to telling more outreach success stories in the year ahead.



MESSAGE FROM KEN

At Hope the Mission, we work hard every day to house and support as many of our fellow community members as we can. A huge part of that endeavor is ensuring that everyone in our care receives sufficient and healthy nutrition. If you've been paying attention to anything over the past three years, you know all too well that we are in one of the greatest housing crises we've ever faced. What is intrinsically correlated to the housing crisis is the spread of food deserts throughout our region.

A food desert is an area where it is difficult to access affordable, healthy food. These deserts are typically found in low-income communities as well as areas where homelessness is prevalent. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there are currently over 65 food deserts in Los Angeles County. Most of these exist in areas around South and East Los Angeles and throughout the San Fernando Valley. People who live in food deserts are more likely to be overweight or obese, have high blood pressure and have increased vulnerability to other chronic health conditions. These people are also almost all food insecure - meaning they do not have access to enough food that sustains them and maintains health. Alongside addiction and mental health illness, food insecurity is just another unfortunate issue that increases homelessness and makes it harder to climb out of it.

Hope the Mission is building a solution that will feed thousands of food insecure individuals every day. Thanks to the generosity of a major donor, Hope is constructing a new commercial grade kitchen commissary inside of its headquarters in North Hills. When Hope purchased this building in 2021, a primary reason was to have the space to develop our own Regional Homeless Kitchen. We broke ground on the project in April of this year and expect Hope Kitchen to be operational by the 4th quarter of 2023.

PAGE 4

Hope Regional Homeless Kitchen will have the large scale capacity we have been seeking in order to make an impactful dent in the current food desert landscape. At full capacity, Hope can provide over 5 million healthy meals per year to the community. This will service all 19 of the current Hope shelters and more. We anticipate that Hope Kitchen will have provided our communities over 30 million meals by the end of the decade.



Guests at Reseda Tiny Homes

Through this facility, Hope is also planning to launch an in-house Culinary Arts Program. A project like this will be designed to train, equip and qualify many Hope clients to develop careers in the food services industry. Our program goal is to engage Hope clients and provide them an illuminated pathway to professional progress. We often see this type of purpose-driven approach as a catalyst to empowering personal sustainability and growth.

I am so very excited for Hope Regional Homeless Kitchen to come online. I will provide more updates and virtual tours via our social media channels as we get closer to launching.

Thank You.

Ken Craft,
Founder & CEO
Hope the Mission



@Kencraft
@Hopeofthevalley



@Kencrafthope
@Hopeofthevalley

Dont Discard...Donate...

Donate your gently used clothes and household items to our Thrift Stores! 100% of the proceeds go toward programs and services for our unhoused guests. Call us at **(818) 392-0020** to schedule a pick up from your home.

(Cut Here)

Scan QR
Code Here
To Schedule
a Pick up



The summer months are difficult at the Mission. June thru August we receive our fewest donations and with current food and fuel costs, it takes a toll! Please give a generous summer gift and help us keep changing lives for good! Enclosed is my Summer Gift of....

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ My best summer gift : _____ ☐ Check Enclosed ☐ Bill my Credit Card

Credit Card #

Exp Date:

Phone :

Email:

Send Checks to: Hope the Mission P.O. Box 7609 Mission Hills, CA 91346-7609

#NL-Q2-23