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SOUTH LA GROUP CONVENES 3RD INTERFAITH SUMMIT ON HOMELESS YOUTH

Stakeholders ask communities of faith to mobilize around community plan to prevent and end youth homelessness

(Los Angeles, CA) – The South Los Angeles Homeless Transition Age Youth and Foster Care Collaborative (Collaborative) will host its 3rd Interfaith Summit on Homeless Youth **Wednesday, May 13th, from 8:00 a.m. to 12 pm, at Holman United Methodist Church, 3320 Adams Blvd., Los Angeles.** The purpose of the event is to mobilize the faith community around South Los Angeles’ “Homeless No More” Community Plan. Summit activities include an address by Peter Lynn, Executive Director of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, workshops on tools and strategies to equip faith communities with the ability to be responsive, and a call for mobilization.

The Collaborative is building on momentum around a local plan with six strategic goals to prevent and end youth homelessness that was released in September of 2014. One of the specific goals calls for key partnerships with the faith community in the planning, delivery, and leveraging of resources as an integral part of a safety net system for youth.

Reverend Kelvin Sauls, Collaborative Chair, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Commissioner, and Pastor of Holman United Methodist Church said, “The faith community has the ability to step up and step out in preventing children from entering homelessness and experiencing the traumas associated with it. We believe that every congregation, regardless of size, can connect and collaborate on the ‘Homeless No More’ strategic goals as well as contribute something significant!”

Sauls has confidence that the faith community is ready for galvanization and impact. “With the strategic plan as lamp and light, we invite our interfaith partners to join us in strategies and solutions to eradicate youth homelessness.” He further pointed out, “Our faith is at its best when we employ and deploy it towards the sacred work of serving and freeing the ‘least of these.’ With the assistance of members from the Collaborative, we can re-tool and re-position the hearts and hands, minds and means of the people in our congregations towards a disposition that embodies ‘Homeless No More!’ The places from whence our ministries emanate can be re-imagined, and re-purposed as sanctuaries of safety and dignity, affirmation and restoration, wellness and wholeness.”

A shortage of housing and other support services for South Los Angeles’ homeless youth has caused alarm. Often invisible, the area’s homeless youth experience longer periods of homelessness and disconnection from services due to a lack of resources to help them in their time of crisis.

Congregations and people of faith are part of an ecosystem of first responders to homelessness. The Summit aims to broaden their impact and involvement in youth homelessness.

“Ending youth homelessness by 2020 is a federal goal endorsed by 19 cabinet secretaries and agency heads,” said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. “If we are to achieve this goal by the deadline, it is imperative that the faith-based community heeds the clarion call to implement the six strategic goals put forward by the South Los Angeles ‘Homeless No More’ Community Plan.

“We look toward a future where there is a coordinated community response that ensures that no young person has to wonder where he or she will sleep at night, no young person has to struggle to find or keep stable housing and no young person is homeless for more than 20 days,” he added.



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About the South Los Angeles Homeless TAY and Foster Care Collaborative

The South Los Angeles Homeless TAY and Foster Care Collaborative is coalition of business, government, nonprofits, and residents working to prevent and end homelessness for South Los Angeles' Transition Age Youth. For more information, visit the organization's website at www.southlatay.org.