



FRIENDSHIP SHELTER

Reaching Out to Rebuild Lives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Digital images available

FRIENDSHIP SHELTER TRANSFORMS FACILITY TO HELP RESIDENTS TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES

MOVE FORWARD INCLUDES INSPIRING NEW MURAL



Santos Orellana at work

(LAGUNA BEACH, CA.....JULY 24, 2007) Friendship Shelter, Inc. (FSI), a 20-year-old Laguna Beach-based non-profit that provides housing and comprehensive services to help highly motivated homeless adults regain self-sufficiency, has announced a major transformation of its main facility including a room-size mural by artist Santos Orellana. The mural, which adorns FSI's completely refurbished day room, as well as a host of other facility improvements, will be on view for the general public on Saturday, August 18, from 10:00 a.m. – 1 p.m. There will be refreshments served, and staff will be on hand to answer questions.

“Friendship Shelter is very proud to show the tremendous progress we have made, thanks to an outpouring of generous support from the community,” said Carol Rhoads, Executive Director of FSI.

With these facilities improvements we are creating an environment for program participants that is sure to have a positive impact on their success,” said Rhoads

Muralist Orellana is a native of Honduras and self-taught artist. Through Polina Hryn, a Laguna Beach artist and friend of Orellana, he became involved in the project underwritten by Laguna Beach residents Kristy and Danny Melita. Orellana donated his services as did interior designer Hryn. The entire project was completed in a little more than three weeks with key donations being provided by Orange County Paint, Laguna Flooring Bella Bazaar, and Timeless Teak.

“As recent transplants to the city, we wanted to support an organization that was moving in a positive direction and help it grow. At Friendship Shelter, we found a really caring and committed community that was clearly making a difference,” said underwriter Danny Melita.

Orellana is a San Diego based artist and Mural Ambassador to the Art Miles Mural Project, founded by Joanne and Fuad Tawfilis and affiliated with the United Nations with the goal of creating twelve miles of mural projects worldwide and then putting them together in a traveling exhibition. Next month he will create a mural with FSI residents, and that mural will be included in the Art Miles Mural Project, scheduled to open in Cairo, Egypt in 2010. Orellanas’ FSI mural is “a reproduction of a past work, *Girasoles*, an 18 x 36 inch acrylic on canvas of sunflowers,” according to the artist. He found inspiration in the various stages of growth one can see in a field of sunflowers, and his artistic vision was affirmed by an enthusiastic response from the residents.

Commenting on the mural and other important facility upgrades, Mark Miller, the agency’s Director of Development, said “the infusion of support comes at an important milestone for FSI, as we kick off our 2008 20th anniversary celebration, “The Art of Getting Home”, on September 14th at Seven Degrees in Laguna Beach.” Miller went on to outline the other important changes at FSI including:

- The transformation of the entire garage space into a donation center and laundry room, fully underwritten by the members of the Laguna Presbyterian Church,
- The renovation of one of the eleven resident bedrooms and updating of the kitchen with new shelving, a new fan, and fresh paint by employees of Oakley;
- A number of building improvements including the landscaping of the front of the building, the building of new clothing closets for resident bedrooms, and the installation of a new walk-in donations closet provided by Eagle Scouts Kyle Jenkins, Christian Kessler and Jonathan Anderson;
- A redesign of every office and installation of new furniture by Larry and Nancy Wilson of Office Solutions;
- A commitment to completely renovate the resident kitchen including flooring, cabinetry, and plumbing by Helen and Peter Maxwell and the Rotary Club of Laguna Beach; and
- The donation of 55 brand new mattresses and bed linens, enough for every resident at Friendship Shelter and Henderson House, FSI’s transitional housing facility in San Clemente, through the generous efforts of Lawrence and Janeen Hirson.

“Perhaps most important,” said Rhoads, “is all the resident participation in these improvement projects. Wielding tools and paintbrushes, and calling on their skills and creativity, residents have enthusiastically joined in improving their community at Friendship Shelter.”

Friendship Shelter, Inc. (FSI) provides housing and a comprehensive program of supportive services to homeless unaccompanied adults who are highly motivated to regain self-sufficiency and become productive members of our community. The 60 day self-sufficiency program located in Laguna Beach has been in continuous operation since 1988. In 1995 FSI opened Henderson House, a transitional living apartment complex in San Clemente. For more information on “The Art of Getting Home”, the 20th anniversary dinner, or to find out how you can reach out to help rebuild a life, please visit www.friendshipshelter.org.

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