

*Helping the Homeless Isn't a
Program, It's a Path.*

**What's the first thing you think
when you pass homeless people on the street?**

If you're like most of us, you run through a gamut of thoughts and emotions when you see the **homeless on the streets of the Coachella Valley.**

You want to help but you don't know how.

*You feel a little scared and
you wonder if what you're feeling is realistic.*

*You might think about just how close you or
someone you care about could be to homelessness.*

*You want to know what's being done to change this.
You want to know what you can do to help.*

Dear Friend,

My name is Arlene Rosenthal. I'm the President of the Well in the Desert in Palm Springs.

I want you to know I understand how you feel. Your concerns and ideas about homelessness are understandable. There was a time many years ago when I had some of the same thoughts you do. But my perceptions have changed after working with the homeless over a period of several years.

The Well in the Desert helps the homeless in Palm Springs. We can help you address your feelings and concerns about the homeless and we can tell you what needs be done to help these people and to manage this problem in our community.

With your help and involvement, we can work together as a community to make a difference.

*The people who operate the Well in the Desert
are dedicated to Palm Springs.*

please turn the page

We live here, work here, and we work hard to make this a healthy, thriving community.

I'm a California native. I grew up in West Los Angeles. For the past eighteen years I've been a business owner in Palm Springs.

I'm involved with many organizations in the valley. I spent six years on the Board of the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce. I'm also the Athena California Chair and Chairperson of the Indian Wells Athena.

For three years, I was one of the Gala Benefactor Chairs for the Museum. I have been on the Board of the Palm Springs Opera Guild for seventeen years and am Chairperson and producer of Opera in the Park. I spent three years on the Aids Assistance Board and I left that Board to join the Board of the Well in the Desert.

But, I'm just one of the many people working with the Well in the Desert.

Tahilb McMicheaux is our Executive Director. He is a tireless worker and a dedicated advocate for the poor. For the last sixteen years he has worked in communities throughout the Coachella Valley as Minister, Community Activist and educator. We're lucky to have him with us and so appreciative of the work he does.

I wish I could tell you about all the dedicated people that pull together on behalf of the homeless and the hungry in our community.

By helping the homeless we also help our local businesses and our community. We have programs that reach out to the homeless and offer them help and a place to go where we understand their needs and how to help them. **With your help we can do even more.**

The Well serves a variety of people. We serve the homeless, the working poor, the at-risk for homelessness, and many shut-in seniors. We also serve the community on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter with wonderful holiday meals, gifts for the children, and a place for people to be when they cannot afford a celebration at home.

The Well in the Desert serves those who have nowhere else to turn; no roof over their head, working people who need a little more, seniors who have been forgotten, people living with AIDS/HIV, homeless mothers and their children, homeless Veterans, and those who have been forsaken by others.

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We've been serving the community in Palm Springs since 1996. Our services to the poor include: help in obtaining driver's licenses, id's, medical aid and help with medications, dental aid, anger management courses, rape crisis prevention, Alcoholics Anonymous, AIDS testing, veteran's administration, tax assistance and hot meals.

We expand our services as funding allows and we have a realistic plan for expanding the outreach to the poor and homeless in Palm Springs. We recently began a new program, called Well Assist. Well Assist helps the people of Palm Springs, downtown merchants and the homeless. The program encourages merchants who see homeless people in downtown to call The Well for help. We can then come out to talk to the homeless person and hope to bring them to our resource center for help. We have also begun to monitor Sunrise Park, especially the parking lot where library workers and others park for work in the morning. We plan to help deter behavior and activity that would have a negative impact on those using park facilities.

Were here for the community. We have the experience and the resources to work with the homeless to get many of them back on track and off the streets.

We are local community leaders and business people who live in, care about, and understand the Coachella Valley. We're also experienced administrators. We have been here for over a decade. We know the lives of the homeless in Palm Springs and we know what needs to be done to help.

The Well in the Desert has long been the only food and resource center in the Western end of the Coachella Valley that offers such a myriad of services to people in need.

We have one directive that we give to our staff and volunteers.

***We Take the Hopeless and We Give Them Hope.
If they leave here hopeless... we have failed.***

We all see the homeless on the streets. We think we should do something and wonder what action to take. We feel compassion but we also feel apprehension. We look at this person and ask if this could ever be us. We shake our heads and can't believe someone is living this way, **here in Palm Springs.**

What if the next time you pass a homeless person you had a response to that voice inside? What if you could say:

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*I did do something...
I'm already part of the solution...
I am involved...*

What if the next time you thought *someone should help this person*, you knew who to call to get that help?

Across the Coachella Valley tonight, 1000 people will go to sleep without food or shelter. I want to ask you to join us at the Well in the Desert as we help the homeless.

Consider what it must be like to live on the streets alone, hungry, tired, and afraid. Consider what it means when you find a place to get a hot meal. Think about the relief in finding a resource when you have nowhere to turn. Appreciate the value of finding a guiding hand and a friendly smile when none other can be found.

Please let me share some of the plans we have for the future. We need to consolidate our services and make our operation more efficient and effective in working with the homeless in Palm Springs. We would love to find a donation of one or two acres of land in the Palm Springs industrial area or along the Gene Autry corridor.

That would allow us to begin our campus and expand the benefits we provide both to the community and to the poor in Palm Springs. We envision a campus with the needed structures to house our services. In the main facility we will have a dining room with commercial kitchen, food pantry, ice machine, refrigerators and freezers. This will serve our meal preparation and hot meal program. This area would also house facilities like a game room, TV room, and music room. The facility will have showers, lockers, and up to 25 beds, for emergency housing.

Another building will house our Social Services, counseling, group meetings of AA, drug rehab, anger management, etc. This area would include a resource room for job search, computer training, and a library. This facility would also be used for our Town Hall meetings, and community events.

We envision a smaller room for Board meetings, meetings with community leaders and other agencies, this room could also be used by other agencies and community groups.

We already give many of our clients useful work and chores to do so they can feel they're part of the community, part of a family. This would expand our ability to give these people jobs and help them off the streets.

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Many of our clients are working within our organization as their first step back into a normal life. We have volunteers working in our offices, assisting with the daily meals, the Saturday grocery distribution, helping with the check-in and orientation process, keeping watch over the grounds outside our facility at Sunrise Park and many other jobs.

The campus area will create more maintenance jobs; many of them being done by our clients. It will have grass areas and landscaping as well as areas for vehicle maintenance.

We want to develop our own campus thrift store, providing even more productive jobs for many of our people. When they get off the street and back to making a contribution they are making the first step in rebuilding their lives.

The homeless are here with us today and they need our help today. Homelessness is growing in America. Many people are at risk today that never imagined they could become homeless. When it happens they are not prepared and they don't know what to do. They don't know how to start to rebuild. They don't know where to go or who to turn to.

We Know What To Do.

***If you're ready to make a difference
If you want to become a part of the solution
If you want to know that you have already done your part
Then send a tax deductible donation to the Well in the Desert, Today.***

We have so many stories of the successes we have achieved in healing these broken lives. We understand their lives; we understand why they got into this situation and how to help them out of it.

We have a different approach to the homeless in our community. We don't see them as a problem of society. We see them as people needing help.

We provide the ray of hope they need to begin to restart. We give them food, we give them shelter and we give them belief in their future. We help them find the path back. We make a difference.

With your help we can expand our program. We can give them a safe environment with people who have been in their shoes. People who can help each other grow and work back to a better, more normal life. **Together we can control this problem, get these people off the street and rebuild these lives.**

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Thank you for taking the time to listen. Please consider joining with us in providing for the poor and homeless in our community.

Sincerely,

Arlene Rosenthal

PS: Please take a minute to fill out our enclosed survey.

At the Well of the Desert we feel we are not only serving the homeless but we are also the servants of our generous donors. By filling out and returning our survey, you help us get to know you better.

We also welcome your comments at our website at www.wellinthedesert.org.

We work with the homeless by getting to know them, treating them like people and meeting them at their point of need. We have the same desire to get to know how you. We genuinely want to know how you feel and what you think about the homeless situation.

If you give us your e-mail address we'll send you the results of the survey when it's completed and add you to our mailing list to receive occasional updates on what we are doing and the progress being made.

Please consider sending a generous, tax deductible donation.

You have my promise that we will make every dollar count for the hungry, the homeless and the needy on our valley.

You have my promise that you will feel differently the next time you pass a homeless person on the street
You'll know you've helped.



***The Well is here for Them
and The Well is here for You.***