



## Central City Lutheran Mission

Hope, Heal, Empower

A Blessed Holiday Season to You and Yours!

Central City Lutheran Mission (CCLM) hosts a Las Posadas, the nine evening Spanish-tradition drama of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter December 16-24. Joseph pleads in Spanish song from outside the door "In the name of Heaven, I ask of you shelter..." From inside the house, the people sing back various reasons to turn away the travelers. At the turning point is this exchange as Joseph pleads with the man of the house:



*My wife is Mary,  
she is the Queen of Heaven,  
she will be mother  
to the Divine Word.*

Is that you Joseph?  
Your wife is Mary?  
**Enter pilgrims  
I didn't recognize you.**

Then we sing as the pilgrims are welcomed: *Entren, santos peregrinos, Reciban este rincón, No de esta pobre morada, Sino de mi corazón. Enter holy pilgrims, Receive this corner, Not of this poor dwelling, But of my heart.*

CCLM is an ideal place to act out Las Posadas. With your support, CCLM provides the survival basics of shelter, food, clothing, and guidance. In 2015, 573 different men stayed in the emergency shelter for 16,662 shelter nights, 40,536 ate meals, 97 distinct people slept 15,916 bed nights in reentry, transitional, or permanent supportive housing. Many others felt your generosity through our thrift store, after school program, computer lab, English or Aerobics classes, sewing cooperative, or case management and referral services.

CCLM is also ideal for dramatizing Las Posadas because we are located in a City with tremendous unmet needs. At times we fear that we cannot safely care for the one at the door and also wonder if our pleas on behalf of our beloved exhausted sojourners will be heard. Our shelter and housing has criteria and fills up so some who come to us are sent to other partners, providing a few supplies and guidance. When an unusual crowd shows up, we might run low on food. Our staff have limited hours to offer services. With our pilgrims, we have to trust that God dwells with us in our need.

In the insert, you'll read about how we initially told the resident we call "Doug" that our men's shelter couldn't help him. He came anyway. Sometimes you have no option but to show up at the door and keep asking. Thank God for that persistence you hear in Las Posadas - not one ask, but many. That resilience is needed to get the traveler over the rough spots in what can be a long road.

The Las Posadas celebration reinforces a core CCLM value that each person we encounter, regardless of their history or religion, appearance or need, their burden or their gift, carries the image of God and is to be recognized as a pilgrim on a divine journey. We are privileged to be an inn along that journey. We provide a place of hope, healing, and empowerment for people in need of material support and in need of wholeness.

We ask you to financially support CCLM so we can continue to receive and give to those most vulnerable in San Bernardino, to feed, clothe, shelter, and educate every person who comes to CCLM. Thank you for your partnership in mission.

Please send a Christmas gift in the enclosed envelope.

*Maria Medina*

Maria Medina, Area Director

"By the Grace of God, CCLM is a community of hope, healing, and empowerment in the heart of the city."  
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### Holy Pilgrim on the Road

"Doug" (not his real name) entered the emergency shelter in winter. We initially told him that the shelter could not help him. He was allergic to much of the food we serve, dependent on a walker, and described needing to be in an assisted living facility. He had been discharged from a nursing home to the street after losing his health insurance. He came anyway. When he arrived, his possessions were in a plastic grocery bag tied to a walker behind which he pulled himself along.

Doug struggled. He was in pain. He ended up in the emergency room several times. With help, he obtained Medi-Cal and applied for disability benefits. And appealed. And saw many doctors. He filed more paperwork. And waited...and tried again. Doug was not patient, but thankfully he was persistent.

Understanding the importance of health insurance, Doug helped other shelter men obtain Medi-Cal. He became one of our "resident volunteers", men staying in the shelter responsible for landscaping, kitchen, maintenance, cleaning, shelter security, computer lab, office work, and who work alongside students, church groups, donors, and other community volunteers. These volunteers enable CCLM to do so much in many programs while operating on minimal staff.

Eventually, Doug entered our transitional housing program, which offers 8 shelter men a bed in a house with case management support for up to 2 years to transition to permanent housing.

Twenty months after he arrived, having faced many disappointments, changed strategies, and used many different resources, Doug finally received his disability pay. He had been a professional truck driver for over 30 years. His body would no longer tolerate that, but being too vital to not work, he took initial steps towards establishing a freight-related home-based business.

In the fall of 2015, twenty-one months after he arrived, Doug, who barely walked himself in, drove himself out. Off to rent a place in the driver's seat of his own set of used wheels, paid for by back disability pay. His health was better than when he came in - still disabled, but looking forward to work and life. He went home to a big birthday party. The last 2 years were a long haul, but this trucker is home at last.

### Join CCLM in New Efforts in 2016

While continuing CCLM's ongoing shelter, housing, food, and educational programs, we are excited to inform you of new opportunities coming in 2016.

- ***LSS Community Care Leadership & Merger***

As CCLM continues to work on details and relationships of the merger with Lutheran Social Services of Southern California, we welcome Ronald Drews as President/CEO, effective December 7, 2015. Ron served for the past thirteen years as the President/CEO for Lutheran Social Services of New York.

- ***Adult Classes – Onsite & Congregation***

Thanks to a Women of the ELCA (WELCA) grant and a Latino Ministry grant, both from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, CCLM will be able to assist our sewing cooperative, ESL, and adult class participants in building business skills. We are also looking for congregational partners and individuals wanting to participate in basic conversational Spanish classes and immersion experiences to build relationships between Spanish and English speaking neighbors. Contact: Maria Medina, (909) 332-6066.

- ***Parenting Classes & Supplies***

CCLM is exploring with our various partners providing parenting classes along with related supplies. Contact: Maria Medina, (909) 332-6066.

- ***After School Program Volunteer Hunt***

The CCLM After School Program is set up to receive many and various types of volunteers to surround our kids with additional care and attention. We need volunteers interested in spending time at the CCLM campus and people of all ages who are willing to provide social support for the children and their families. Call Jessica Esquivel at (909) 381-6921.

- ***Access Center Partnership***

The percentage of City residents in the shelter continues to increase and the partnership with the San Bernardino Homeless Access Center results in many mutually beneficial referrals. We anticipate even more cooperative work with the Access Center in 2016.