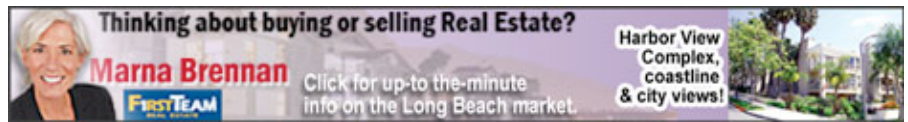


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Dinner, Auction Will Mark Shelter's 35th Anniversary

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By Kelly Garrison
Features Editor

Site relocations, new staff members and developing programs have changed the face of the Long Beach Rescue Mission over time, but founder Wayne Teuerle says that his vision for the shelter has remained consistent since its beginnings 35 years ago.

In 1972, he and his wife, Janet, opened the mission to help people find temporary shelter as they recovered from cycles of homelessness. Since then, Teuerle said, his Christian-based mission has helped thousands of people. On Thursday (Sept. 20), an event will celebrate its 35th anniversary with a dinner, silent auction and awards ceremony.

“(The goal) has always been the same: to share the love of Christ with those in need through the provision of emergency services, food, clothing and shelter — and in the process, to help rebuild lives from the inside out,” said President and CEO Jim Lewis, who has worked at the mission for a year. “But our vision also has been clarified. Our job is to reconcile people to God, to themselves and to society.”

The dinner will honor major supporters, such as Wayne and Janet Teuerle, and will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. at The Grand, 4101 E. Willow St. Guests will hear an overview of the mission's history and programs and can bid on silent auction items such as golf outings, plane tickets, theme park passes and a lithograph signed by marine artist Wyland.

Situated on Pacific Avenue, the mission began providing services in 1972. Its resources have

grown to include both job training and an education center.

The nonprofit organization is comprised of two separate homes, one for men and one for women and their children. Its programs, Lewis explained, provides emergency food, clothing, shelter and spiritual guidance to needy men, women and children.

“It started as ‘three hots and a cot,’” he said. “It grew to a more structured environment that helps people recover from addictions and deal with issues that have brought them to being homeless.”

Lewis said the mission is currently assessing what improvements can be made to its housing assistance program, which provides homeless people with shelter and emotional support while they find jobs. One of the mission’s newest programs is case management, which was added to its services this year.

“We’re making it so that we can more easily measure program outcomes,” he said. “It will be more structured... We’re doing strategic planning to see how the program has grown and to assess the needs of the community. We’d like to try and consider how best to use our resources.”

Other additions throughout the past year have helped renovate structures used by the mission. Fixes so far have totaled \$300,000 in cost and include new kitchen equipment, renovated restrooms, painting, carpeting and tile work, but Lewis is looking to spend another \$200,000 — money that he said “is already in place.” The organization relies solely on donations from churches, private organizations and individuals.

“It’s very much about infrastructure right now, but we’re hoping to do a façade enhancement on both buildings,” Lewis said.

Teuerle said that the changes in place are consistent with the mission’s goals.

“Jim has the same thoughts and mentality that we had when we started it,” he said. “He’s a man of vision. He’s bringing it back into shape, and everything is moving ahead now... We’re thrilled with the lives that have been changed.”

Tickets for the 35th anniversary dinner cost \$40 or

\$350 for a table of 10. Call 591-1292, ext. 10 or visit www.lbrm.org.