



PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Chris Maikish, Sr. Manager, Communications
communications@inner-cityarts.org

The Rosenthal Theater in Skid Row transforms into temporary family shelter

Inner-City Arts shows creative resolve by addressing emergency housing need during COVID-19 quarantine crisis

Los Angeles, CA, April 2020 — With its student and teacher populations now engaged in distance learning, Inner-City Arts has taken emergency steps to open its campus to families in need from Union Rescue Mission. As of last week, the arts nonprofit has been outfitted to temporarily house seven families, consisting of 13 parents and 20 children ranging in age from one month to teenagers.

When Inner-City Arts received an urgent call late in the day from Union Rescue Mission that several families needed a safe quarantine environment due to COVID-19 exposure and overcrowding, the arts nonprofit opened its doors within 90 minutes to receive the families, including five infants. Inner-City Arts had been encouraging this use of its space since mid-March when the art campus' pandemic-related closure moved all programming online and canceled on-campus activities, including the first theater performance exclusively for Skid Row families. Intent to continue with needed arts healing for the community, the nonprofit also pivoted by sending art supply care kits to facilitate creative learning activities for shelter families.

Since April 14, the families have found safety and security within the transformed Inner-City Arts spaces.

Co-Artistic Director Michael Sample said, "We believe in the limitless potential of art and relationships to heal, and we are grateful for the opportunity to reimagine our campus in a way that can help our neighbors at this time. This is a space founded in creativity and built by love, and love means caring for our neighbors, as we see exemplified by so many helpers across the world right now."

Normally in use for a broad range of performing arts events of up to 300 people, The Rosenthal Theater and its adjoining dressing rooms are now outfitted with air mattresses and adorned by art work made by the families themselves, while the 11,500 square-foot rooftop parking lot has become a makeshift soccer field and outside playground.

While Union Rescue Mission staff ensures the health and welfare of the families, Inner-City Arts is engaged in what it does best: creative arts learning for underserved populations. Sample highlighted activities from the families' second day:

“We learned a song about gratitude, taking time to share what we were grateful for and drawing images of things that bring us happiness. We took time to study the skyline from the rooftop lot, including a mindfulness activity involving breath and smelling rosemary collected from our campus. We finished the evening with a game of freeze dance for some physical fun, and a movie viewing before bedtime. While the situation has its challenges, our intention is that by the end of this time together, these children and families will have created important, special memories with each other—and the legacy of the experience will be one of love and hope.”

Opened on the campus in 2008 through the generous support of board members Phil and Monica Rosenthal, The Rosenthal Theater is a home for innovative and diverse programming that seeks to nurture and illuminate the creative spirit of young people and adults by enabling them to make, present, and experience new work.

“These families will always have a home here: today it is a physical home. When we are past the crisis of COVID-19, it will serve as their artistic home,” shared Monica Rosenthal. “Michael Sample’s vision and follow-through, along with (CEO) Bob Smiland’s leadership, have realized the initial inspiration for The Rosenthal Theater: to build a creative space that serves the community in which it was built. Phil and I couldn’t be prouder to be supporters of Inner-City Arts than we are at this moment.”

At a glance, Inner-City Arts is working outside the box of its mission—yet it remains committed to serving families, students, and educators through the kind of care and arts engagement that can transform this moment. Inner-City Arts is calling on local businesses and organizations to creatively leverage their resources and infrastructure to support our Los Angeles community experiencing hardship.

ABOUT UNION RESCUE MISSION

Union Rescue Mission (URM) is one of the largest missions of its kind in America — bringing help and hope to men, women, and children experiencing homelessness in Downtown Los Angeles. URM.ORG

ABOUT INNER-CITY ARTS

Founded in 1989, Inner-City Arts is a learning oasis in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles. Under the guidance of professional teaching artists, Inner-City Arts’ students are immersed in a safe and supportive environment where they may engage in a variety of visual and performing art forms in a studio setting. Services include core classes during the instructional day for grade K-8 students, after school and weekend workshops for teens and creativity based professional development training for educators. Children who attend Inner-City Arts develop skills that are highly valued in the 21st century workforce such as collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. WWW.INNER-CITYARTS.ORG

###

Please direct questions and media inquiries to Chris Maikish, Senior Manager, Communications at communications@inner-cityarts.org.

Union Rescue Mission is seeking the public's support during the COVID-19 crisis. If you or your organization would like to discuss ways you can support its mission, call (213) 347-6300 or send a message to thewayhome@urm.org. Donors are also encouraged to make direct contributions to Union Rescue Mission at www.urm.org.

Those seeking to support Inner-City Arts' efforts to help youth and families with creative arts learning—those staying at The Rosenthal Theater and the many students sheltering in place—can get involved at www.inner-cityarts.org/get-involved.