

Los Angeles Poverty Department  
presents

# Glimpses of Utopia: 16 - 23

Thursday, September 20, at 7:00 P.M.

at the Historic Fire Station Old 23 located 225 E. 5th Street, downtown

THIS EVENT IS FREE.

"Glimpses of Utopia" performance events are part of the Skid Row based theater group, Los Angeles Poverty Department's, project UTOPIA / dystopia. UTOPIA / dystopia, seeks to find out how flesh and blood people living and working downtown envision the future of downtown and what kind of downtown they would like to be a part of.



Tonight's performance event "Glimpses of Utopia: 16-23" follows our June event "7 Glimpses of Utopia" at JANM and July's "Glimpses of Utopia: 8-15" at the Red Dot Gallery. These events take the form of a Come Together, a community performance strategy conceived by UTOPIA / dystopia collaborating artist and 2006 Alpert Award winning visual artist Harrell Fletcher. (www.harrellfletcher.com; www.learningtoloveyoumore.com) LAPD'ers and others were asked to identify and invite someone they knew who was doing something laudable, and important, something that represents the best of the current and future downtown.



The people invited are asked to do a 10 minute presentation, in any form they see as appropriate, about what they are doing to downtown and how they would like to see the future of downtown evolve. The presentations can be a performance, a demonstration or a lecture. The presentations happen back to back, combining the insight and passion of both inviters and presenters. Taken all together, tonight's presentations become a performance event that provides " Glimpses of Utopia: 16 - 23"

## ABOUT LAPD's UTOPIA / dystopia

One person's utopia is another's dystopia. In the past 40 years, civic policy in Los Angeles has generated the twin towers of utopia and dystopia: Bunker Hill, the redeveloped high rise financial center; and below it, Skid Row. The current real estate boom is generating new social policy, including the possible displacement of the majority population of poor people living in the area.

LAPD is a community based theater in the heart of Los Angeles' Skid Row area; an area which has the largest concentration of truly affordable housing for very low-income residents and also the largest concentration of services for homeless people in Los Angeles County. The area also has a highly developed drug recovery culture, which includes free recovery programs. Skid Row is the home of numerous AA, NA And CA groups.

What is the future vision for downtown Los Angeles? A powerful urban core that will dominate the city in the future is taking shape. But, what shape? Is the desired "new urban lifestyle" an upscale monoculture, or, is the vitality of city life essentially about a dynamic cultural, racial and economic mix?

LAPD's UTOPIA / dystopia will engage long standing and new area residents to inform and broaden the public discourse, and use performance, public art, conversations, and convenings to articulate grassroots visions of the city's future. UTOPIA / dystopia will result in performances DEC. 6-9 at THE REDCAT THEATER that articulate the dreams and fears of people in the neighborhood.



Utopia movement in front of the Midnight Mission

Let us know if you want to get involved in any aspect of the project, including performing with us. Contact us at [www.lapovertydept.org](http://www.lapovertydept.org) or call 213 413-1077.



**PRESENTER: Daniel Taylor** has worked in the arts and entertainment and in community service causes for over 25 years. He has lived in the Skid Row area for 17 years. He is currently the caretaker of Los Angeles Historic Fire Station No.23 and is the Executive Director of CHAC the Corporation for History, Art and Culture. He is working to create a Community Cultural Center in Old 23.

*Mr. Taylor will speak on the "S.H.A.R.E. (Safe Haven Association for Recovery and Enterprise); which Dan envisions as an opportunity for a full service recovery community in downtown Los Angeles.*

**SELECTOR: John Malpede** is a theater director and actor. He founded the Los Angeles Poverty Department in 1985. From 1985 through 1899, he worked on Skid Row as an outreach paralegal with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles.



**PRESENTER: Wendell Blassingame** a resident of downtown L.A. (Central City East aka Skid Row) initiated showing movies at the James Wood Community Center Saturdays and Sundays, 3 – 10 PM. His event is called "Movies on the Nickel" happened every week – without fail -- for the past 3 1/2 years. He has received awards from Social Services Region # 1 as "Citizen of the Year" in L.A. County and he has also been recognized by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Wendell's other activities include providing free medical cards to community members every Wednesday, enabling them to see a doctor and/or receive medical treatment.

*Wendell believes that showing free movies provides a safe haven free of drugs and alcohol where one can learn to respect others and more importantly oneself.*

**SELECTOR: Lorinda Hawkins** is a native Californian. Her television credits include co-star roles on *Strong Medicine*, the *Wayans Bros*, and *Living Single*. She is most proud of her long career with children's educational programs such as E.T.C. (Educational Theater Company formerly known as Twelfth Night Repertory Co.), L.I.F.E. (Love is Feeding Everybody) which toured high schools and middle schools and *Shades of Violet* which toured juvenile detention camps educating about AIDS. Her most recent endeavor was her own company that performed bubble shows for disadvantaged youth called Bubble Trouble/ Effervesce. To God be all the glory.



**PRESENTERS: Mr. And Mrs. Lee** came from Korea to the US 40 years ago. They married here, gave birth to 3 children and are very proud of their 2 grand daughters whose pictures you can see on the top shelf in their convenience store on 6th Street:" D+D". They have had their shop in Skid Row for 11 years and have seen the neighborhood change and clean up. 'I love it here because there are so many nice people' said Mrs. Lee. Mr. Lee's expertise is with the bamboo flute. He served on the faculty at UCLA for over 20 years as a professor in the Ethnomusicology Department teaching Korean traditional music.

*Mr. Lee will play his bamboo flute for us and Mrs. Lee will talk about her Utopia for Skid Row.*



**SELECTOR: Dr. Bleakley** of the JWCH Clinic at the Weingart Center has seen a great deal on his years as a practitioner of the healing arts on Skid Row. He feels that if he prevents one person from suffering that ravages of tuberculosis, high blood pressure and other diet-related and contagious diseases then his years of service will not be in vain.



Gordon Turner is a Deputy City Attorney for the City of Los Angeles. He is leading the City's litigation against area hospitals and that discharge patients homeless patients to the streets by driving them or directing them to Skid Row. His other current cases are in the areas of child truancy, gangs and truancy and youth protection.

*Gordon will speak on patient dumping on Skid Row.*



Rosemary Anaya is currently the Director Economic Development and Community Outreach, in the Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney. Recently she held the position of Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of the Downtown Center Business Improvement District (DCBID) and Central City Association of Los Angeles, Inc (CCA).



**PRESENTER: Misako Tsuchiya** was born in Japan and has lived in the United States since 1981. She has been a certified Alexander Teacher since 1990 and also teaches Tai Chi and Qi Gong. Misako has been practicing Tai Chi and the Japanese healing art, Noguchi-Seitai, since 1975. She is interested in the body and mind relationship, and has taught many performance artists in Universities and High school students. After she met her husband Mo Nishida: a community worker with the Japanese American Community, she started to work with homeless people, AIDS patients and at risk people in prisons. One of her unique classes is in an adult school on Skid Row where she combines Alexander and meditation for people who are going for a job interview: 'to go to the interview without fear'. Every Monday and Wednesday from 12 till 12.30 she teaches a community class of Tai Chi in the open air in Little Tokyo; in front of the Japanese American Theatre.

*Misako will talk about her work and teach 10 min. Tai Chi class.*



**SELECTOR: Kevin Michael Key.** After using illegal drugs for over 40 years, "KevinMichael", has been a clean and sober member of the SKID ROW recovery community for the last 5 years. He tries to keep up the free Tai Chi classes when he has a chance.



**PRESENTER: General Dogon** was born in downtown LA and has lived here off and on for most of his life. He currently lives in a residential hotel on Main Street – which has become the front line of downtown gentrification. Dogon has been a longtime community activist and organizer and has worked with the Los Angeles Community Action Network for the past two years. He is a product of LA's criminal IN-justice system and now works night and day to ensure real justice for original downtown residents. General Dogon is an invaluable resource to the downtown community for many reasons, but especially in this time of increased policing and the unfair treatment that has resulted.

*General Dogon will talk about his vision for downtown.*

**SELETOR: Becky Dennison** is a member and Director of the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), - an organization building power among low-income residents of downtown to demand equity and justice. LA CAN is also a member of the Downtown Women's Action Coalition, which works to improve conditions for women living downtown and to prevent and end violence against women. Becky is one of Los Angeles' most fierce housing advocates!



**PRESENTER: Ron Chester Taylor** is a Vietnam era veteran, a degreed music teacher, a performer, and one of my oldest friends. I met him at the Midnight Mission food line, as we were both homeless at the time. Since then Ron has gotten a place to live, replaced his musical instruments, and once again is composing original music. He is a good example of a change in your attitude equaling a real change in your life.

*Ron will play some of his own compositions*

**SELECTOR: Henry Proctor** has been in downtown Los Angeles for 6 years. He started a cleaning business and now has many of the small business owners on Main Street as his clients. He has spent time on the streets. He has an idea of a shelter program for Veterans that would teach people how to fish, not just provide them with food to eat.



**PRESENTER: Trevor Duberry.** Trevor Duberry joined Chrysalis as Client Services Coordinator in 2000 and was quickly promoted to the position of Senior Employment Specialist in 2001, and recently assumed the position as Site Director in the downtown LA office. Trevor'd 10-plus years of experience as a Public Safety and Fire Life safely Director at Long Beach World Trade Center and LA Marriott Hotel has resulted in his appointment to serve as a member of the LA Civilian Response Program in the event of an earthquake or disaster.

**Quolesha Elba** works as entry level 3D computer modeler and volunteer at Chrysalis, a hand-up organization that helps people find employment.

*Trevor and Quoleshna will speak about empowerment employment in Skid Row LA.*

**SELECTOR: Riccardo Porter** is a Toastmaster, business consultant, and Los Angeles native. He has over 17 years Public Relations experience and 16 years theater and writing experience. He has worked for *Aware 1 Magazine*, the *Long Beach Times*, and has consulted for many companies and individuals. He views networking as his top strength and problem solving as his gift. He writes scripts and represents filmmakers. He is presently homeless; he lives downtown.



**About THE FIREHOUSE CULTURAL CENTER AND OUR COMMUNITY**  
By Daniel Taylor

**The purpose of a “Downtown Cultural Center” is to house and develop scientific, historic, artistic and civic, projects, exhibits and events for the cultural and commercial development of our Downtown community in the interest of our residents, workers and visitors.**

The Corporation for History, Art and Culture (CHAC) believes that Historic Fire Station Old 23 located 225 E. 5th Street in the Central City East community of Los Angeles must be administered and maintained in the public interest. Initially, CHAC’s plan is to restore this great building and to fully utilize its obvious architectural and acoustic assets in the most practical and beneficial way possible. Once restored, this United States and Municipal Historic Landmark, Fire Station 23, properly managed as a Central City East Cultural Center, will be a revenue generating machine which will contribute significantly to the development of our community’s precious human resources as well as Downtown’s culture and commerce.



Old 23 is already world famous as a location for many movie and other media productions. As a Cultural Center and community asset, it will serve the arts and community service organizations of our community. The Center will also endeavor to hire local residents for skilled and unskilled work both during and after restoration, whenever possible, thus serving as a source of income for our local residents.

This building will include an Exhibit Hall/Event Venue and a state of the art Multi-Media Production/Artist Training and Development Facility.

It will serve as a place to create, develop and present the culture of our local community through our technical and creative artists, thinkers and organizations and inspire us through the work of others from around the world.

It will enrich our lives daily with exhibits and presentations of art, science, history, and civic interest displays. Local artists will have a place to display their work, which will be changed according to the volume of artwork submitted. The art and campaigns of our community’s youth will also be regularly presented at the Center.

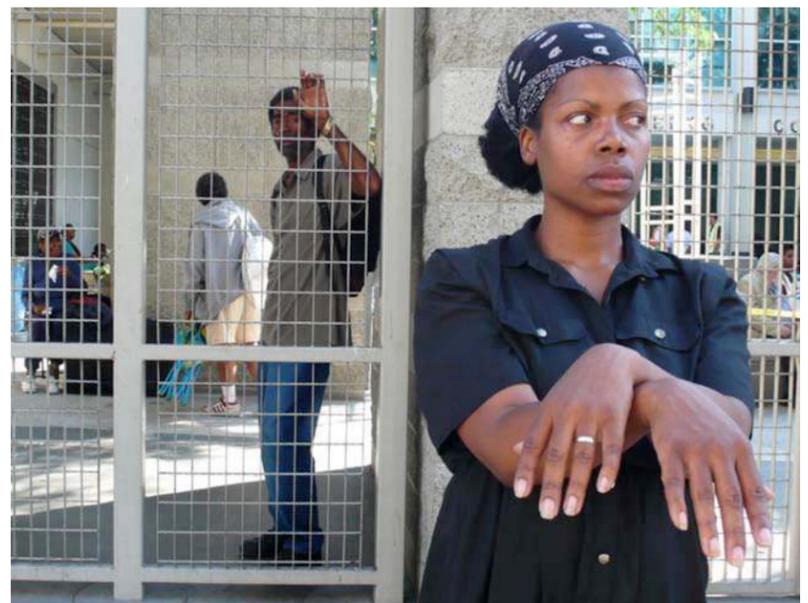
**About The Los Angeles Poverty Department:**

LAPD 's mission is to create performance work that connects lived experience to the social forces that shape the lives and communities of people living in poverty. The Poverty Department is committed to creating high-quality, challenging performance works that express the realities, hopes and dreams of people who live and work on Los Angeles’ Skid Row. LAPD is dedicated to building community and to the artistic and personal development of its members. Since 1985 LAPD has offered performance workshops that are free and open to the Skid Row community. The workshops take place at a variety of sites, with the in-kind support of a variety of community partners which have included: SRO Housing Corporation, St. Vincent’s Cardinal Manning Center, Inner-City Law Center, United Coalition East Prevention Project, LA Community Action Network and Central City Community Outreach.

*“... the Los Angeles Poverty Department, ( is) a truly unique part of the Southern California theater scene.” --- James Taylor, Theater Talk, KCRW-FM*

*“The Los Angeles Poverty Department has become one of the country’s most outspoken and profound Theater troupes.” --- Natalie Haddad, REAL DETROIT*

*“The Los Angeles Poverty Department, despite the homeless status of many of its members, has thrived for years from its downtown outpost and continues to offer theater that’s often stunning in its honesty and lacking in pretension.” --- C. Monaghan, LA Weekly*



**LAPD's UTOPIA / dystopia** project is supported, in part, by: LA County Arts Commission; The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs; The National Endowment for the Arts -Theater; the California Arts Council's Creating Public Value program; The MAP Fund, a program of Creative Capital, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts Institute for Community Development and the Arts. Additional funders of LAPD include The Nathan Cumming Foundation .

