



Year End Letter 2024

Dear Friends of LA Poverty Department,

Like it or not 2025 is about to arrive.

Believe it or not there is good news. And Los Angeles Poverty Department is focused on augmenting the positive impact of good things that are happening. Our main project this year has been "Welcome to the Covid Hotel." In realizing the project, we've continued to work with health professionals / front line workers all, --- the passionate doctors, nurses, street psychiatrists, and social workers who staffed the LA County Department of Health Services Quarantine and Isolation Medical Sites, providing houseless people a safe place to quarantine. 10,000 people used the sites and not only survived Covid, but had untreated medical conditions treated and gained temporary or permanent housing at the end of their quarantine period. The practices developed there, (no siloing-- i.e., integration of health, mental health and social services, harm reduction, and compassion,) are recognized advances in care and these practices are being implemented in new programs, including an ambitious Skid Row Health Campus and Safe Landing respite site --- that people can simply walk into (no referral necessary), to get off the streets and get linked to services and housing. We'll be integrally involved in the new health campus, doing performance workshops and realizing our history of Skid Row / Walk the Talk mural.



Our exhibition "Welcome to the Covid Hotel," closes December 14, but the momentum of 5 public conversations during the run of the exhibition, is resulting in a performance that LAPD will do on December 14, at 2pm, and then in the first half of 2025 we'll travel the performance to community locations throughout LA County (all 4,000 square miles of it) to advocate for respite care sites in every neighborhood and community.



Also, in February and March, SRHM&A will host a new exhibition: "Tents & Tenants: After Echo Park Lake" curated by the *After Echo Park Lake* research collective that brings together university and movement-based scholars with unhoused collaborators. The exhibition chronicles the harm done when blunt force is employed to remove a community of houseless people from public view.

Next up, in June, working with Artist Rosten Woo, we'll create an exhibition (and begin work on an LAPD performance) that investigates the residential hotel crisis in Skid Row, brought on by the implosion of Skid Row Housing Trust. For decades, non-profit residential hotels in Skid Row have been the permanent residences of thousands. These community members have played an indispensable role in advocating for the neighborhood and its future. Hotel conditions have deteriorated across the board, and the bankruptcy of SRHT brought this crisis to public view. De-stabilizing the resident hotel population threatens the stability of the entire neighborhood.

What else can I tell you? We had a blast of a Walk the Talk parade in May and the 15th annual Festival for All Skid Row Artists, with the largest crowd ever, in October --- at which we gave away our just published book on Charles Porter's 2023 exhibition at the Skid Row History Museum & Archive --- "Cosmology & Community: Networks of Liberation" that focused on manifold uses of the spiritual and artistic traditions of the African Diaspora to uplift individuals and organize the community.



We've just welcomed two new board members, both of whom have long histories of involvement with LAPD, Ronnie Walker, counselor at the Amity Foundation, and Kimberly Welch, UCLA performance Studies PhD, who is now finishing her law degree -also at UCLA. And speaking of PhD's, we're very happy to have Sara Fetherolf, as our ACLS post-doc fellow for the next 2 years. Sara is focusing on communications, including developing a book on our "Welcome to the Covid Hotel" project.

Our archive of Skid Row history continues to grow both in contents and utilization. We've recently received a collection from Nancy Mintie, founder of Skid Row's free legal services organization, Inner City Law, and are about to receive a collection of papers from the late Skid Row poet, Robert Chambers. The archive is increasingly used by scholars, and community members and has become a resource for other community archives.

Our space is popping, with activities 7 days a week. A motivation for creating our cultural space was and is to make it available to others who can't afford to rent space. Right now, we host activities every day of the week. These include book reading groups and a mutual aid mental health group by Public School LA, community led arts workshops, and community meetings like the LA Tenants Union-downtown local.

People come for our cultural activities and people come in to fulfill basic needs: to use our bathroom (including -regularly- Metro bus drivers), get clothing, food and water and referrals to services.

Whatever your reason might be, we'd love to see you stop by the Skid Row History Museum & Archive.

And kindly consider donating to support our work.

All the Best,

John Malpede
For LA Poverty Department.

Donate on our secure website: <https://www.lapovertydept.org/donate/> Or send a check to Los Angeles Poverty Department, POB 26190, Los Angeles CA 90026. Los Angeles Poverty Department is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Donations to Los Angeles Poverty Department are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.