

Walk the Talk

May 23, 2026



Join the **Los Angeles Poverty Department** for the 2026 *and 8th* edition of its biennial **Walk the Talk Parade and Performance** chronicling the ongoing history of Skid Row, celebrating the accomplishments of the Skid Row community, and honoring some of the individuals whose initiatives have made extraordinary contributions to Skid Row, making a difference in people's lives every day.

Saturday, May 23, 2026, 12:00 – 4:00PM

The parade route starts at noon at the Skid Row History Museum & Archive, 250 S. Broadway, LA, CA 90012

THE 2026 HONOREES *in order of parade route*

Iron Donato – Skid Row artist and engaged community member.

Stephanie Bell - Skid Row actress and singer who leads by example.

Al Ballesteros – Executive Director of JWCH Health Clinics.

Pastor Blue - Founder and Co-Director of Blue Hollywood Street Sanctuary.

Amelia Rayno - Co-Executive Director of Blue Hollywood Street Sanctuary.

Tom Grode – Omnipresent community advocate, writer and performer.

Sean Gregory - Community activist, LA CAN member, currently staff member at Venice Community Housing.

Soma Snakeoil – Co-founder and Executive Director of The Sidewalk Project.

Anthony Ruffin – Site Manager of the Skid Row Care Campus and the Maple Campus for LA County's Department of Health Services.

SEE PARADE ROUTE INSIDE

Led by **TOP SHELF BRASS**, a band known for fusing modern pop hits with the traditional New Orleans “second-line” brass sound, together with community musicians, the parade makes its way through Skid Row, stopping at eight locations determined by the parade honorees as the place they associate with their work, the parade will wind its way through Skid Row.

At each stop **Los Angeles Poverty Department actors** will do a short performance, distilled from lengthy interviews with the individual(s) being celebrated. The audience is encouraged to follow this fun, funky and festive parade.

Portraits of each honoree are held aloft during the parade. Artist **Van Hanos** is painting portraits of this year's honorees and collaborating sculptor **Jory Rabinovitz** is designing unique pickets so that the portraits will be simultaneously held high while functioning as walking sticks for those carrying them.

ABOUT WALK THE TALK

Walk the Talk enlists community brain power to identify initiatives and people whose actions have helped weave the social fabric of Skid Row. Walk the Talk is a peoples' history of the community. LA Poverty Department tells the parts of the story that you won't hear elsewhere: the story of the community as told by the community. Walk the Talk supports LAPD's larger social practice methodology, a body of acclaimed work widely acknowledged as “*some of the most uncompromising political theater.*” (Artforum)

ABOUT LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT

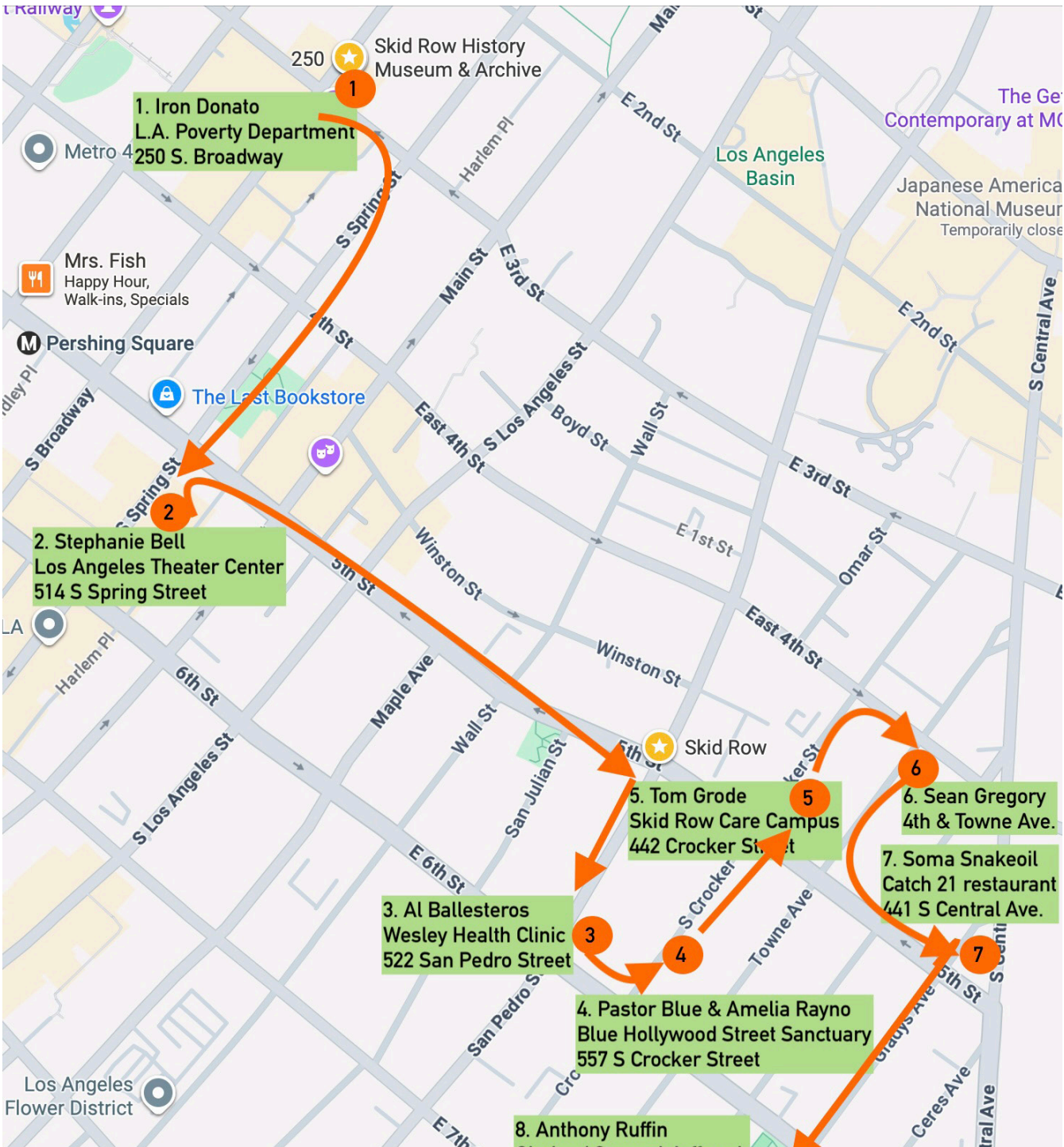
Founded by Artistic Director John Malpede in 1985, Los Angeles Poverty Department is made up of people who make art and live and work in Skid Row. LAPD creates performances and multidisciplinary artworks that connect the experience of people living in poverty to the social forces that shape their lives and communities. LAPD's works express the realities, hopes, dreams and rights of people who live and work in L.A.'s Skid Row.

Skid Row History Museum & Archive
A project of L.A. Poverty Department
250 S. Broadway, Los Angeles CA 90012

LAPD
LOS ANGELES POVERTY DEPARTMENT

Parade Route

Saturday, May 23, noon - 4pm



Sites of 15-minute performances along the parade route.
The parade starts at NOON at the Skid Row History Museum & Archive

- 1

Iron Donato
Skid Row History Museum & Archive
250 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Iron: Helping others changed my world. I believe that helping others is the price we pay to be on this planet.
- 2

Stephanie Bell
Los Angeles Theater Center
514 S Spring St, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Stephanie: Whatever you're going through, there's a song to help you to come out of it.
- 3

Al Ballesteros
Wesley Health Clinic
522 San Pedro St, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Al: I believe people deserve health care.
- 4

Pastor Blue and Amelia Rayno
Blue Hollywood Street Sanctuary
557 S Crocker St, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Blue: ...everything that I ever went through was a preparation for the job that I do right now.
- 5

Amelia: I don't think that I ever could have planned a pathway from white, suburban Raleigh, NC to Crocker Street and Blue in LA.
- 6

Tom Grode
Between UMEYA and Skid Row Care Campus
442 Crocker Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Tom: There's this real David and Goliath dynamic of Skid Row.
- 7

Sean Gregory
Corner of 4th and Towne Avenue
512 East 4th St, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Sean: It's the people. It's y'all. I just like who I'm surrounded by.
- 8

Soma Snakeoil
Catch 21 restaurant
441 S Central Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90013

Soma: Art was a core aspect of what kept us healthy in very unhealthy, unsafe, and poor situations.
- 9

Anthony Ruffin
General Jeff Memorial Park
808 East 6th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021

Anthony: A lot of stuff that starts on Skid Row ends up going countywide.

1

IRON DONATO

Iron is a longtime dedicated and engaged community member. He uses his art, poetry, songs, and theater performances to advocate for and to raise awareness for people in need. He contributes to many community groups and initiatives where he is front and center making his voice heard. Iron has been through a lot, and has not only survived, but kept his kindness and good nature intact. He keeps showing up and dazzles—in both his performances and literally, with his taste for all things bling.



2

STEPHANIE BELL

Stephanie Bell is a radiant example of resilience, creativity, and leadership rising from within the Skid Row community. Through her art and advocacy, Stephanie shares her story with honesty and power, helping audiences and neighbors alike reimagine what healing and community can look like. For years, she provided food for her neighborhood from her SRO Hotel, showing her compassion and dedication for people in need. Stephanie’s consistent participation and the love she unassumingly emanates means she’s an anchor at any Skid Row neighborhood event or activity she is at, whether she’s seen as a collaborator, an auntie, a sister, or a friend.



3

AL BALLESTEROS

Al Ballesteros is the President & Chief Executive Officer of JWCH Institute. He is also a Commissioner and past Co-Chair of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, appointed by the LA County Board of Supervisors. With quiet strength and long-term commitment, he has been a steadfast champion of holistic wellness in Skid Row for decades. Al continues to be an advocate for inclusive systems that empower, rather than pathologize, the people of Skid Row. His quiet strength and long-term commitment embody the spirit of service that Walk the Talk seeks to honor.



4

PASTOR BLUE & AMELIA RAYNO

Pastor Blue created the Blue Hollywood Sanctuary on the sidewalk of 5th and Crocker street, an incredible example of 24/7 in-the-streets presence for many people seeking community, access to services, and somewhere to use safely. He has tirelessly worked (for free) in the Skid Row community for the past 5-6 years, creating a safe and loving space of acceptance, love and true community for very vulnerable people.



Amelia is a journalist. After working on a documentary in El Salvador, she came to Skid Row, met Blue and started partnering with him. She cultivates community with her constant, in-the-street, welcoming and non-judgmental presence, does casework, and works with organizations such as the Public Library to bring resources to those in need.



5

TOM GRODE

Tom has relentlessly connected incredible people and stakeholders in the neighborhood for years. Tom’s Skid Row T-shirt collection deserves a nomination of its own, each shirt is a testament to an organization or grassroots movement he’s been a part of. Tom is involved in everything Skid Row — Skid Row Action Plan, Skid Row Now & 2040, ReFresh Spot, LA Poverty Department, Urban Voices Project, among many other community-led initiatives. Tom is always down to show someone around the neighborhood, with enthusiasm he creates relationships with people and brings them into the fold of what’s going on.



6

SEAN GREGORY

Sean Gregory has worked and lived in Skid Row for 16 years. He has consistently been a righteous and engaged LA CAN member, standing up for the neighborhood on many campaigns. Sean was active in Occupy LA, and the Skid Row Improvement Coalition that led to the realization of the Skid Row ReFresh Spot, where he was on staff. He has a boots-on-the-ground approach. Sean has been the stage manager at the Festival for All Skid Row Artists since its beginning in 2010. He is currently on the staff of Venice Community Housing. He’s an amazing cook and a golfer who doesn’t let the frustrations of the game mess with his head.



7

SOMA SNAKEOIL

Soma Snakeoil is a fearless cultural organizer, harm-reductionist, and artist whose leadership of The Sidewalk Project has redefined what radical care looks like in Skid Row. With compassion rooted in lived experience, Soma has built a thriving mutual-aid hub that merges art, harm reduction and wellness, giving dignified support to the most overlooked residents--sex workers, people living with drug addiction, queer and trans people, and specifically women and femmes. And notably, Sidewalk makes connections and collaborations with similar projects across the country and beyond.



8

ANTHONY RUFFIN

Anthony Ruffin is the Site Manager of the Skid Row Care Campus and the Maple Campus and a long-time health outreach worker for the Department of Health Services. He has worked all over LA County, but as he says, Skid Row is special to him because his father and stepmother lived—and passed—here. Anthony is an amazingly dedicated health outreach worker. He says: “Putting on your safety belt in your car is harm reduction.” He doesn’t blow his own horn. But he is always available to help for the people who need him.



Why Walk the Talk In 1976, an amazing, enlightened moment of LA city governance occurred when a zoning plan, initiated by Skid Row advocates, was put in place that preserved the biggest stash of low-income housing in Los Angeles County - in other words, instead of bringing in the wrecking balls, it preserved the Skid Row neighborhood and prevented the displacement of its residents. In the 50 years since then, long-term permanent residents of the neighborhood, along with Skid Row organizations and workers, have made mighty contributions toward preserving the neighborhood and making it livable. It was Skid Row residents who got City Council to enact a moratorium on hotel conversion, during the height of the early 2000’s real estate bubble feeding frenzy. It was Skid Row residents who started providing trashcans and cleaning up the streets, when the city wouldn’t. It was Skid Row residents that got the Parks Department to reinvest in General Jeff/ Gladys Park. Skid Row residents envisioned the ReFresh Spot and the Skid Row Care Campus.

Right now, there are dueling narratives about who comprises the “downtown community,” new residents claim that they are creating community downtown, but often without understanding the decades of accomplishments by Skid Row residents and grass roots groups. Walk the Talk is intended to highlight these achievements while fostering an understanding of how Skid Row people and institutions contribute to the wellbeing of the entire city and county. As the site of many groundbreaking and empowering solutions to social problems, Skid Row is a valuable social incubator for communities everywhere.

LA Poverty Department began chronicling the social history of Skid Row with its 2002 month-long installation, “Is there History on Skid Row?” at 112 Winston Street. This was followed by our 2008 gallery exhibition “The Skid Row History Museum” at The Box Gallery. Our chronicling of the neighborhood’s achievements continued with our first Walk the Talk parade and conversations in 2012 and continued with our 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020 and 2022 and 2024 Walk the Talk parades.

In 2014, we decided to start The Skid Row History Museum & Archive, for the same reason we started Walk the Talk: as a bulwark against the displacement of Skid Row. The materials assembled in the archive, including the interviews with each Walk the Talk honoree, are enormously powerful in setting the record straight and preventing misrepresentations of history and current events. The entire collection of Walk the Talk, including interviews and performances on each of the 95 honorees, is available on our dedicated Walk the Talk website.

‘The collective acts as curator and archivist of their neighborhood. Homeless communities are barely acknowledged by most institutions, much less thought to have histories and textured pasts. The LAPD turns that generalization on its head, pointing to the area’s ‘amazing community assets.’ --- Ryan Wong, ARTslant



WALK THE TALK 2012 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY MR. BRAINWASH - FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

TOP ROW Richard Fulton opened “5th Street Dick’s Coffeehouse” in Leimert Park; Catherine Morris & Jeff Dietrich joined the LA Catholic Worker in 1970; Officer James Rich was a LA County Police Officer and a guard at the DPSS 4th Place office serving Skid Row; Robert Chambers Co-founded The Homeless Writers Coalition in 1988; Rosa Arzola & Jill Halverson, Rosa inspired Jill to establish the Downtown Women’s Center in 1975; Walter “Redd” Moore, a veteran living in Skid Row, became a recovery counselor after living in a cardboard box for a decade; Mark Holsinger, director of the LA Mission opened its 156,000-square-foot facility at 303 East 5th St.

SECOND ROW Pastor William Monroe Campbell started Project Open Door; Harry Rogers organizer with the Homeless Organizing Team; Darlene Berry the first female hotel manager and manager of the two parks for SRO Housing Cooperation; Ms. Lee & Mr. Lee opened D+D Deli in Skid Row in 1997; Andy Raubeson the first executive director of SRO Housing Corporation in 1984; Orlando Ward public affairs director for the Midnight Mission; Nancy Mintie founded Inner City Law Center in 1980; Clyde Casey, in 1988 he created “Another Planet” an outdoor cultural space, open 24 hours, on the corner of Wall and Boyd Streets, the site of a former gas station.

THIRD ROW Adam Bennion was one of the leaders of Love Camp (1987), Tanya Tull founded Para los Niños (1980), co-founded L.A. Family Housing Corporation (1983) and A Community of Friends and Beyond Shelter (1988), Mike Neely founded the Homeless Outreach Program (1989), Flo Hawkins a painter and portraitist, worked on the Skid Row mural “What I See Can Be Me” on 5th street, Robert Sundance a Sioux Indian from the Rosebud reservation, sued the city and county, demanding better treatment for intoxicated people; Judge Harry L. Hupp presided over a landmark case, Sundance vs. Municipal Court in 1975. Hupp ruled that alcoholism is a disease, not a crime, Alice Callaghan started Las Familias del Pueblo and Skid Row Housing Trust (1989); Manuel Compito (aka OGMAn) founded OG’s N Service Association, a beautification program that brings painted trash cans to Skid Row (2007) and the 3-on-3 Basketball League at Gladys Park, Lillian Abel Calamari initiated an art workshop open to all Skid Row residents in 1992 with SRO Housing Corporation.

FOURTH ROW Mollie Lowery started Lamp Community on San Julian Street (1985); Wendell Blassingame started free “Movies on the Nickel” at the James Wood Community Center in 2004; Dr. Dennis Bleakley was a physician at the John Wesley Clinic (2000); S.S. Jones blues guitarist, organized the Skid Row Musicians Network in the Leonide Hotel with hotel manager Bill Edwards in 2000; Pete White co-founded Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN) in 1999; Tony & Lucy Stallworth founded the Karaoke Coffee Club in 1997, hosted at Central City Community Outreach; Ted Hayes started Justiceville in the playground of the Catholic Worker in 1985 and opened Dome Village in 1993; Scott Chamberlain became the founding pastor of Skid Row’s Central City Church of the Nazarene and Executive Director of Central City Community Outreach, where he fostered a sense of community, from 1988-2003.



WALK THE TALK 2014 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY BRIAN DICK
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Charles Porter with UCEPP since 1999, works to bring agency to Skid Row and instill a sense of pride in the residents by creating workshops for youth and adults to learn about their heritage and culture. **Zelenne Carnedas**, while working for Social Model Recovery Program, in 1996, began United Coalition East Prevention Project, focusing on preventative solutions to alcohol and drug issues in Skid Row. **Clancy Imislund** got sober at the Midnight Mission and became the Mission’s director for 40 years. **Captain Duffy** was, for eleven years, captain of Skid Row Firehouse #9, the nation’s busiest station. **Michael Blaze** founded Skid Row Photography Club, Unified Fathers for Life and Veterans in Photography. He has made 150 films about Skid Row and always has a camera in his hand. **Joan Sotiros** was the director of St. Vincent DePaul Manning Center for 19 years, from 1993 -2012. **Dr. Mongo** in Skid Row from the 1960’s, is well known in LA poetry circles, with a PhD in philosophy. **General Jeff**, a first-generation West Coast rapper and activist, started Issues and Solutions in Skid Row in 2006. One of his first projects was the Gladys Park Improvement Project. ->



WALK THE TALK 2016 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY PAIROJ PICHETMETAKUL
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

General Dogon, community organizer and civil rights activist with LA Community Action Network, instrumental in LACAN’s Community Watch program and training Skid Row residents Know Your Rights. **Becky Dennison**, as co-director of LACAN, made important contributions to their housing campaigns that achieved a citywide moratorium on residential hotel conversions and “No Net Loss” housing policy. **A. J. Martin**, as a volunteer, was for several years responsible for community access to Gladys Park. **Carol Sobel** civil rights attorney who successfully litigated lawsuits against the City of LA for their policies that criminalize homeless residents of Skid Row, including the Jones Case (1418.D). **Hayk Makhmuryan**, Lamp/Studio 526 Fine Arts program coordinator (2008- 2022) expanded the program from visual arts to include music and writing, and opened it up to the entire Skid Row community. **Christopher Mack**, lead Community Outreach Worker for the JWCH Institute Skid Row Community Clinic. His infectious spirit resulted in the creation of Urban Voices Project. He’s the co-founder of UVP. **Katherine McNenny**, co-founder of Industrial District Green, initiates local area greening projects. **KevinMichael Key**, community organizer, wearing many hats, worked for the community non-stop. ->



WALK THE TALK 2018 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY CRUSHOW HERRING -
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Tiffany Rose founded My Friends House LA in 2008, providing life-sustaining staples to the homeless. **Steve Diaz** as Deputy Director of Organizing at LACAN, Steve fought the practice of the “28 Day Shuffle,” and educated tenants at the Frontier, Roslyn, Alexandria, Huntington and Bristol Hotels of their rights. **Bobby Buck** is Skid Row’s video/photographer and founded the The Bobby Buck Show in 2014. **Vijay Gupta**, a violinist, founded Street Symphony in 2011, placing music at the heart of social justice. **Demetra Wilson-Washington**, aka Lady Dee Dee, is the outreach Minister with Central City Community Church and a member of the church Praise Team, working with Skid Row’s homeless veterans. **Andy Bales** Executive Director of the Union Rescue Mission who created shelter for families. **Eddie H.** Skid Row advocate was active in creating the ReFresh Spot, working with UCEPP, LACAN. **Pastor Cue**, is the founder of The Row “Church Without Walls”. A former Virgin Records rapper, Cue left the music industry in 1994 to follow God, becoming an evangelist and activist. ->





WALK THE TALK 2020 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY MAN ONE
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

<- **Coach Ron Crockett**, got involved with the Funky Trashcan Campaign, ran the Fun Zone Reading Club for kids at the Huntington Hotel (2008-2011), is a leader of the Skid Row Brigade, and announcer for the Skid Row Three on Three Street Basketball League.
Danny Park & Andrew Kang are social entrepreneurs who started Skid Row Coffee and the Skid Row Peoples Market on the corner of 5th street and San Pedro.
Gary Blasi, a public interest lawyer, co-founded The Legal Aid Foundations’ Eviction Defense Center in 1983 and formed the Homeless Litigation Team in 1985.
Angelia “Big Mama” Harper started “Love is the Key” providing foot care and home cooked meals to Skid Row residents.
Stephanie Arnold Williams is an informal multi-service provider.
Leeav Sofer is Co-Founding Director of the Urban Voices Project choir.
Leslie Croom Skid Row Advocate, started at the VOA Drop-In Center and joined the staff at UCEPP.



WALK THE TALK 2022 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY DAKARAI AKIL
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

<-**Mr. Pancake aka George Herod**, an activist, healer and spiritual giant for the “BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE” of Skid Row, working with Los Angeles Community Action Network.
Suzette Shaw Skid Row resident voice for Black women and for Black history in Skid Row.
Ukal Bean a rapper extraordinaire for over 20 years and the empresario at the King Eddie’s open mic.
Chella Coleman a kick ass organizer and artist, participating in liberation work for many years.
Kate Richards-Geller a music therapist and executive director of Urban Voices Project.
Crushow Herring a talented performer, amazing artist, advocate and athlete, responsible for many murals in Skid Row and community activist standing up for Skid Row with the Sidewalk Project.
Alisa Orduna did amazing work as Mayor Garcetti’s Homeless Policy Director from 2016 until 2018 and was instrumental in creating the ReFreshSpot. She is a trusted friend of many Skid Row organizations.
Ray Lewis is the leader of the Ase Ashe drummers. He has studied African healing techniques and is a Reiki practitioner and he shares his knowledge with the community.



WALK THE TALK 2024 HONOREES - PORTRAITS DESIGNED BY HAYK MAKHMURYAN
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

<- **Clancey Cornell** volunteered at the Lamp Arts Studio and then at LA Poverty Department’s Festival for All Skid Row Artists and was the first archivist at the Skid Row History Museum & Archive.
Kayo Anderson is minister of music and artistic development with The Row Church Without Walls and Creating Justice LA.
Lorinda Smith is a stage and film actor, a writer, singer, and advocate against domestic violence. She leads Open Mic at the Skid Row History Museum, and is the MC of the Festival for All Skid Row Artists.
Linda Leigh is a healer and artist, involved with Street Symphony, UVP, Studio 526, Skid Row Coffee, LA CAN Food and Wellness Committee, the ReFresh Spot and the Skid Row Action Plan.
Adelene Betha grew up in Skid Row and worked with UCEPP. She is a Senior Peer Support Specialist with the Downtown Women’s Center and Co-chair of the LA City Skid Row Park Advisory Board.
Gary Brown “Downtown” Gary Brown - musician, painter, with art shows for 20+ years in Skid Row.
Sieglinde von Deffner is L.A. County Skid Row coordinator for the Department of Health Services.
Sir Oliver has produced numerous Bob Marley Day and Jamaican Independence Day festivals in Skid Row in the most grassroots way. He is responsible for the City of LA’s recognition of Bob Marley Day.



RESPONSES TO THE WALK THE TALK ARCHIVE

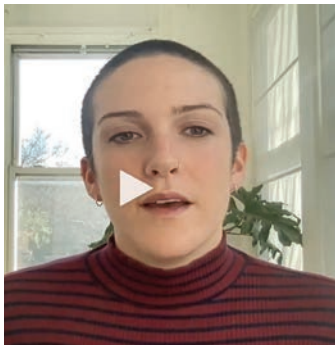
The conversation doesn't end with the parade. All the oral histories, and footage of the performances, go into the Walk the Talk Archive, an interactive online archive that allows researchers and community members to continue to learn from and respond to these stories.

Over the years, scholars and community members have created responses to the Walk the Talk Archive where they reflect on what they've found there and continue the conversation. Represented here are a sample of responses to the archive. You can find much more online.



—Ananya Roy -Inaugural Director of the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA.

Skid Row, as a community, has been built through collective imaginations and practices. I do not mean to romanticize the very real struggles in Skid Row, including those against constant policing. But it is... this assertion of rights, of power built in the streets, that will remake our cities, here in Los Angeles and elsewhere in the world.



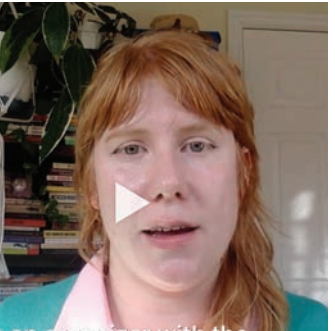
—Terra Graziani -researcher and tenant organizer in Brooklyn, NY. She helps run the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project (AEMP).

In the five years since I've been in community with LAPD, the archive has grounded me countless times as I work through organizing campaigns, research projects, and just living in LA. In short, people in Skid Row continue to cook up ideas to transform conditions, and the Walk the Talk Archive lets us learn from them year after year.



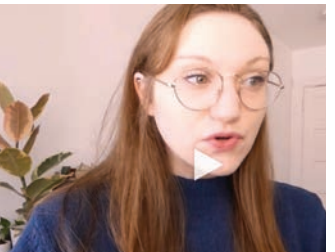
—Melvin Ishmael Johnson on KevinMichael Key's interview -founder of Qumran theater.

We've still got some very important warriors down in Skid Row, still trying to make KevinMichael's dream come forth as a recovery zone. So, Kevin laid the foundation, and it's up to us now to finish the vision that he had for Skid Row.



—Annie Powers -tenant organizer and historian whose work focuses on political movements of poor and unhoused communities.

It is vital to be more than just academic coroners, explaining and exploring the devastating conditions of racial capitalism without imagining ways to change those conditions, abolish that system. The Walk the Talk Archive allows us to take cues from the world-building, art-making, freedom, and dreaming of those who have fought for their liberation as unhoused people.



—Victoria Romano -PhD student in Digital Composition at the University of California, Riverside.

As a site-specific ritual performance, Walk the Talk serves to reinforce Skid Row's "spirit of place" by telling the story of its caretakers and its cultivators. It focuses the community's vision for their socio-political future.



For years, I was a reporter and an editor for local news outlets. I discovered the Walk the Talk archive years ago when I worked for KPCC. I was doing a story on the museum, and I discovered the archive there, and I've been using it ever since to add depth and understanding to my own reporting. Later, when I became an editor, I started recommending the archive as background material for young reporters who are going to be working on stories either in Skid Row or reporting on homelessness or other aspects of the city. And that's because it offers a ground-level, first- person view of the community of Skid Row and a better understanding of the issues affecting the lives of people who live in the area from the perspective of folks who are deeply embedded in the community. —Eric Zassenhaus -former senior editor at KPCC/ LAist and content manager at Tribune.



—Michele Lancione -Professor of Geography at the Polytechnic of Turin, Italy and co-founder and editor of the Radical Housing Journal.

Usually, archives are thought to be stored away in the past, but this is not what the Walk the Talk Archive is. The name says it all. This is a live archive. It is about walking. This is a promenade, a performance. With all its life stories and its beautiful interactive format, the archive becomes a way to desire liberation. And this is the liberation from violent, racialized histories of housing injustice in LA, but also a liberation for a more radical and emancipatory housing future beyond LA too.



—Michelle Caswell -Associate Professor of Archival Studies in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA.

Dominant Western white archival practices have resulted in extraction and harm and exploitation. Community archives, like the Skid Row History Museum & Archive, have revealed just how harmful that kind of transactional model has been. They also point us in a new direction. They show us how we can imagine and can build archives based on relationships rather than transactions, how we can be bound together through sharing and listening and telling our own stories for mutual co-liberation.



—Chella Coleman -Black trans-femme activist on being a Walk the Talk honoree.

Let's be real. I can do the same work that a white person would do, and the white person would get more praise. Let's just be real. There's so much labor that Black women specifically have done for the community. And so, I think the visibility of my work has been, you know—I don't think I should be congratulated for it. I think it should be seen so that people can keep doing that work.



—Allie Prescott -graduate student at UCLA working on her Masters in Social Welfare focusing on Social and Economic Justice.

Listening to these narratives, I learned about Skid Row history—a history filled with many challenges, but also many moments of love, hope, and transformation. The archive is not just a crucial tool for research, but also for preserving Skid Row history and the voices of many people who have been a part of the story.



—Charles Porter -Senior Director, Prevention Services at Social Model Recovery Systems (SMRS) - with United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP) since 1999.

I think it's important to control the narrative about Skid Row. Because what we hear about Skid Row is not what we see celebrated in the honorees, and the movements linked to the honorees, and the activism in the community. Us being able to highlight the advocacy, and vision, and the genius, and the passion, and the resilience of the community is important in doing archival work like this.



Top Shelf Brass Band

Originally from Riverside County, **Top Shelf Brass Band** is a high energy group, known for fusing modern pop hits with the traditional New Orleans “second-line” brass sound. Formed in 2012 by a group of friends from the Riverside City College marching band, they have since performed globally, including tours in Europe and appearances on major stages like the NBA All-Star Halftime Show and LA institutions like the Dodgers.



Portraits by Van Hanos and pickets by Jory Rabinovitz
Portraits of each honoree are held aloft during the parade. Artist Van Hanos is painting portraits of this year’s honorees and collaborating sculptor Jory Rabinovitz is designing unique pickets so that the portraits will be simultaneously held high while functioning as walking sticks for those carrying them.

Van Hanos is an American painter whose work has been shown throughout the US and Europe. While Van now lives and works in Brussels, Belgium, he currently has a solo exhibition at The Chateau Shatto Gallery in Los Angeles. Van Hanos was born in Edison NJ in 1979. His approach to painting is best undefined, forsaking particular modes or methods. Ranging from landscape to portraiture, beyond categorization as either figuration or abstraction, his work navigates perceptual shifts and thematic rupture. His work always beckons the viewer to look closer — as what one first experiences is undoubtedly bound to shift upon continued investigation.

Jory Rabinovitz is an artist working between sculpture and writing currently living in Los Angeles. His work has been shown at numerous institutions and galleries including the Sculpture Center, Socrates Sculpture Park, Martos Gallery and Abrons Art’s Center.



WALK THE TALK 2026 CAST & CREW

LAPD’s Walk The Talk 2026 is performed by Stephanie Bell, Henriëtte Brouwers, Iron Donato, Tom Grode, Jaiye Kamson, Tiffany Nelson, John Malpede, Will Monette, Lorraine Morland, Anthony ‘ToneTone’ Taylor and Richard Volis.

THANK YOU! to all our pals and partners who have worked to make Walk the Talk happen. And that includes **L.A. Poverty Department production staff:** Henry Apodaca, Sara Bluemead, John Malpede and Henriëtte Brouwers and Zach Rutland. The **‘parade monitors’ and volunteers:** Carlina Perna, Cathy Gudis, Michael Alexander, Clancey Cornell, Phillip and Roma Hernandez, Emily Benoff, Franny Alfano, Felipe Cervera, Laine Matkin, Erika Caol, Julia Carnahan, Andrew Kaila, Matt Stewart, Vanessa Martinez, Andrea Weikert and Brenda Ann Kenneally. **Photographer** Austin Hines, **Videographer** David de Rozas. The **L.A. Catholic Worker** for lending us their shopping carts, **portrait artist** Van Hanos and **walking sticks** artist Jory Rabinovitz, the **Top Shelf Brass Band!** and all the musicians who participated, and the **L.A. Department of Transportation**.

WALK THE TALK ARCHIVE / WEBSITE

Walk the Talk celebrates the visionaries and community-builders of Skid Row with a parade and performance shaped by their own conversations with the wider community. Walk the Talk begins as a series of oral history interviews with the honorees, which are then developed into performances celebrating their contributions.

The website provides access to all the people whose real-world accomplishments ---from 1970 until today, have been celebrated in Walk the Talk. The website, created by artist / technologist Rob Ochshorn and his company Reduct, includes hour-long video interviews, and transcripts of the interviews for each honoree as well as videos and scripts of the scenes distilled from the interviews and performed by Los Angeles Poverty Department in each Walk the Talk performance / parade, from 2012-2026.



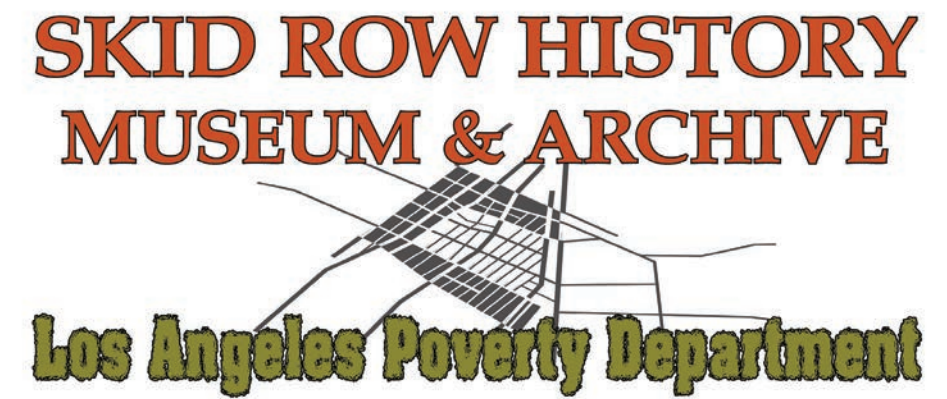
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