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WISEPlace to host free day of self-esteem for area homeless women

JCC Cares organizes over 50 local volunteers for 6th annual "It's All About You" event

Santa Ana, Ca. – January is a great month to set goals, assess strategies for the upcoming year and polish up your look. For area women working to exit homelessness and re-enter the community and workforce, the WISEPlace 6th annual *It's All About You* event is a great place to start. The free event for homeless women will take place at WISEPlace in Santa Ana, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Sunday, January 15. Women must be preregistered to attend.

WISEPlace is a nonprofit transitional housing and empowerment program in Santa Ana, serving unaccompanied homeless women. WISEPlace supports homeless women through their journey back to independence by providing basic needs – food, clothing and shelter – in addition to wrap-around services. They have been serving unaccompanied homeless women in the community for almost 30 years and have served women in the community for over 90 years.

In addition to WISEPlace residents and alumni, women receiving services from local agencies Grandma's House of Hope, Colette's Childrens Home, Families Forward and WTLC are also invited to participate.

Volunteers and employees from area health and beauty businesses will be on hand to provide free haircuts and styles, manicures, massages and facials. Organized by JCC Cares, the philanthropy club of the Merage JCC, the day will include homemade lunch, personal shopping assistance and pampering. There will also be an opportunity for women receiving services to give back that day by making dog toys that will be donated to an Orange County animal rescue.

"Beauty is our duty, inside and out," said Caryn Altman, event founder and organizer. Altman, along with JCC Cares member Julie Sherman, have worked to enlist free services from Paul Mitchell School, American Institute of Massage Therapy and Beach Beauty Bar among others. Donations of clothing were collected throughout the year and will be delivered to WISEPlace on rolling racks that will fill the gymnasium of the historic facility.

"Independence starts with self-esteem," said WISEPlace Executive Director Kathleen Davis Bowman. "Women have to feel good about themselves to believe they are capable of independence. For a women, knowing that she looks good does wonders for her confidence and ultimately her success," Bowman said, of the resident's ultimate goal to become employed and permanently housed.

Over 100 women are expected at Sunday's event, according to Altman, who caps attendance each year to ensure everyone who signed up receives the services they want.

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