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### **Forum Convened to Address Black Homelessness**

*A morning dedicated to tackling the disproportionate number of Blacks experiencing poverty and homelessness.*

LOS ANGELES - Sanctuary of Hope, a local nonprofit youth development and human service organization for Transitional Age Youth, will convene a “Narrative of Ending Black Homelessness”, an awareness and movement-building event for Black History Month on February 27, from 10 am - 1 pm at Holman United Methodist Church, 3320 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018. Doors open at 9:30 am.

A Narrative of Black Homelessness will highlight the intersectionality of race and homelessness and the need for better culturally-specific solutions for impact. Topics will include housing, justice system, employment, and gentrification. The forum will be moderated by community activist Karren Lane with two panels consisting of thought leaders: Povi-Tamu Bryant, Black Workers Center; Earl Edwards, UCLA Black Male Institute; Damien Goodmon, Crenshaw Subway Coalition; Tiffany Johnson, A New Way of Life; Veronica Lewis, Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care Services (HOPICS); Ishimine Caldwell, Coalition for Responsible Community Development; Reba Stevens, Community Advocate; Pete White, Los Angeles Community Action Network.

Nearly 25% of Black families across the nation live in poverty. Social and structural problems that affect Black communities do not receive concentrated attention and is often subjugated or intertwined with broader issues of homelessness and poverty. The achievement gap in education, lack of jobs, access to housing, over representation in the criminal justice system, and cuts to major government programs are contributors to the high ratios of vulnerability.

According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's 2017 Homeless Youth Point-In-Time Count, 40% of Los Angeles County's homeless are Black in a county where Blacks represent 9% of the total population – a 28% increase from the prior year.

“A Narrative of Ending Black Homelessness will be an awakening movement to bring long overdue attention to Black poverty and homelessness and to call for culturally-specific prevention and intervention strategies,” explains Janet Denise Kelly, Executive Director of Sanctuary of Hope. “We've got to be frank and deliberate about stopping the pipeline and revolving door of Black people into these systems and to address racial inequity so that we lift Black people out conditions that have a historical and intergenerational genesis.”

“Because the crisis of homelessness among Blacks has reached pandemic proportions, strategic and practical, innovative and multi-dimensional solutions must be sought with cultural competency and intersectionality at its heart. Anything else will be charity without dignity and compassion without systemic transformation,” Rev. Kelvin Sauls, Senior Pastor of Holman United Methodist Church and Commissioner for the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority exclaims.

A Narrative of Ending Black Homelessness is a free community event. Attendees are asked to RSVP at [www.thesoh.org/events](http://www.thesoh.org/events).

Sponsors are Holman United Methodist Church, The Good Seed CDC, St. Joseph Center, Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches, UCLA Black Male Institute, The Positive Results Corporation, and The Guynn Family Foundation. Interested sponsors should email [info@thesoh.org](mailto:info@thesoh.org) for more details.

**About Sanctuary of Hope**

*Sanctuary of Hope's mission is to provide a caring and multi-cultural approach to services that will help young adults become self-sufficient and lead prosperous lives. For more information, visit the organization's website at [www.thesoh.org](http://www.thesoh.org).*