



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Hope offered to homeless families in the South Bay**

A car accident, an unexpected medical bill, a surprise layoff—those are just some of the setbacks that can send a family teetering on the brink into the abyss of homelessness.

Luckily, Harbor Interfaith Services, a nonprofit agency based in San Pedro, is there to help homeless and working poor families in the South Bay. The agency, founded in 1975, offers a variety of programs that help families lift themselves out of crisis and onto the road toward self-sufficiency.

HIS' emergency family shelter offers families a place to stay for up to 90 days. It is the only shelter in the South Bay that specifically serves families by offering the dignity and safety of private units with their own kitchens and bathrooms. While at the shelter, families save 80% of their income so they can afford a down payment on permanent housing when they leave. Families must pass a criminal background check and a drug screening to qualify and they must commit to work or go to school. Intensive life-skills classes on topics such as budgeting and parenting are mandatory.

Accelerated Learning and Living, the agency's transitional housing program, offers homeless families a place to live while they pursue an education to improve their employment options. Families can live in the apartment for up to 18 months and receive assistance with education costs during their stay. Clients have gone on to become schoolteachers, nurses and medical assistants, while others have been accepted at prestigious universities.

Our Family Resource Center, which includes our food pantry, serves approximately 13,000 families each year. Here, families can receive emergency groceries and personal care items up to four times a year. While most people come to us because they are hungry, we do more than feed them. We can provide clothing, one-time rental assistance, family counseling, transportation vouchers, assistance with government benefits, money for books, tuition and uniforms—almost anything a family needs to lift themselves up and into a better life.

HIS also offers licensed childcare and after-school care. Knowing that their children are in a safe and nurturing environment allows parents to devote their full energy into putting their lives together.

More than five years after leaving HIS, 98 percent of program graduates continue living on their own in decent, affordable housing. That statistic alone proves there is hope for homeless families.

*The mission of Harbor Interfaith Services is to empower the homeless and working poor to achieve self-sufficiency by providing support services, including shelter, transitional housing, food, job placement, advocacy, childcare, education and life-skills training.*

*For more information please visit the Harbor Interfaith Services Web site at [www.harborinterfaith.org](http://www.harborinterfaith.org).*

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