

After Nearly 20 Years, LA Dream Center Finally Does This

What began as a dream and started out as a shell, is now a “dream come true” for Los Angeles Dream Center visionaries, Phoenix First Assembly of God Senior Pastor Tommy Barnett and his son, pastor Matthew Barnett

In 1996, with Matthew pastoring a small “home missions” church in L.A., the father-and-son duo led the way in purchasing the former Queen of Angels hospital complex for the bargain price of \$3.9 million. It was 15 floors of dream ministries to the destitute, troubled and victimized.

“When the Queen of Angels Hospital was purchased, it was just a shell,” explains Clint Carlton, director of public relations for The Dream Center. “Being vacant for many years before the purchase, the 15 floors of building needed to be brought up to fire code. The cost to do that was over \$1 million per floor. So The Dream Center started working floor by floor, bringing it up to code while sustaining the ministries on a small budget.”

Through the efforts of volunteers and as funds became available, the Dream Center slowly brought floors into code and expanded the capacity of their ministries or brought new ministries online. However, the ongoing challenge was that the center simply didn’t have enough rooms for individuals and families in need of housing.

But then, after investing \$25 million and transforming nine floors into housing, the federal government provided the answer to seeing the dream finally fulfilled through a program called the New Market Tax Credit. As a result and through the recommendations of government officials, in 2012 the Dream

Center received a grant for nearly \$50 million dollars in tax credits (worth about \$15 million) to bring it up to code and refurbish the remainder of the Dream Center.

Now, 20 years after Matthew Barnett began his ministry in L.A., the Dream Center is finally completed and recently received permission from the city to fully occupy the entire complex.

“With the completion of the building, we will add about 30 percent more families and individuals [from 650 people to more than 900] that wouldn’t have the chance to take advantage of our programs,” Carlton says.

Some of the more than 250 ministries the Dream Center now offers, in addition to housing, include feeding the homeless and ministries to drug addicts, gang members, unwed mothers, AIDS victims and scores of additional ministry efforts.

For more information on The Dream Center, see its website or Facebook page.