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**Downtown Women's Center Celebrates 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Successful Event  
Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Actress Natasha Rothwell in Attendance**

LOS ANGELES – On Thursday, October 18, 2018 the Downtown Women’s Center (DWC) hosted its annual fundraising gala, Dinner With A Cause, at Vibiana in downtown Los Angeles. Elected officials and community leaders sipped on a specially crafted Tito’s vodka “1978” cocktails, named in honor of the organization’s founding year. Actress Natasha Rothwell kept the crowd entertained throughout the evening, reminding everyone of the reason they were in attendance:

*“In the 40 years since DWC has opened, the women’s homeless population has grown dramatically in Los Angeles. Rather than shying away from the challenge, [DWC] stepped up. Responding to the self-identified needs of the women they serve, DWC has expanded their programming, increased their budget, and grew their staff... Last year, DWC served more women than ever before in their history and I know that together, we can house every woman in Los Angeles.”*

The successful event was highlighted by speeches from DWC CEO Lisa Watson, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, and DWC Advocate Ericka Newsome:

DWC CEO Lisa Watson:

*“For all women, the security of a permanent home is the foundation for which we will fight until we see the day that there is no woman unhoused in Los Angeles.”*

Congresswoman Maxine Waters:

*“Ending women’s homelessness requires a sensitivity to these needs of homeless women and organizations like the Downtown Women’s Center are leading the charge in not only fulfilling these needs but in treating women with the respect and dignity that they deserve.”*

DWC Advocate Ericka Newsome:

*“My life changed when I found the Downtown Women’s Center. The moment I walked through the doors, I immediately felt welcome. The people at the front desk didn’t ignore me, they welcomed me with open arms and made me feel like I belonged. They explained the rules and how things worked. It wasn’t like a shelter where they push you in and out like cattle. It was a functional, positive environment. I saw that this place was different.*

*Just because I was homeless, doesn’t mean I got there because of bad choices. I wasn’t addicted to drugs or alcohol. I wasn’t lazy. I followed all the rules. I am well educated and had a good job. But it wasn’t enough. It was the high cost of housing in Los Angeles that drove me into homelessness.”*

The annual event also honored exceptional community leaders in the fight to end homelessness. DWC was proud to honor Anthem Blue Cross Foundation recognizing their commitment to enhancing the health and well-being of local communities. In addition, DWC honored Councilmember Jose Huizar and Richelle Huizar for the work they have done to champion successful efforts to address the city's affordable housing crisis. And finally, DWC honored Sondra Salas of Universal Studios Hollywood, who runs DWC's monthly enrichment workshop, Whole Woman Saturdays.

Dinner With A Cause raised critically needed funds for the organization's wide-ranging services that the Downtown Women's Center provides to over 4,000 women experiencing homelessness every year.

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### **About Downtown Women's Center**

The Downtown Women's Center (DWC) is the only organization in Los Angeles focused exclusively on serving and empowering women experiencing homelessness and formerly homeless women. DWC envisions a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability. Its mission is to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy. Founded in 1978, DWC was the first permanent supportive housing provider for women in the U.S. Learn more at [www.DowntownWomensCenter.org](http://www.DowntownWomensCenter.org).