

LAWEEKLY



JANUARY 17-23, 2025 | VOL. 37 / NO. 11 | LAWEEKLY.COM

ENGULFED

As LA Endures the Most Destructive Fires in Its History,
Angelenos Step Up to Help

THE LOS ANGELES FILM SCHOOL®

OPEN HOUSE JAN 25

More than a tour. Are you ready to create your future? RSVP today!

LAFILM.EDU/OPENHOUSE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATIONAL DEBT, EARNINGS, AND COMPLETION RATES OF STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED THIS SCHOOL CAN BE FOUND AT: LAFILM.EDU

© 2025 The Los Angeles Film School. All rights reserved. The term "The Los Angeles Film School" and The Los Angeles Film School logo are either service marks or registered service marks of The Los Angeles Film School. Accredited College, ACCSC. VA-Approved by CSAAVE. 01/25



CONTENTS



ON THE COVER:

Image courtesy Jesse Rodriguez,
[@jesse.shoots](http://jesse.shoots)

Cover design by Laura E. White

FOOD 3

We still need tasty treats.
BY MICHELE STUEVEN

FOOD 5

No alcohol? No problem, we have treats for that too.
BY MICHELE STUEVEN

CULTURE 6-7

Coming together in the worst of times proves we still have community.
BY MARK STEFANOS

CULTURE 8

The fires through the lens of local photographer, Jesse Rodriguez.
BY MARK STEFANOS

CLASSIFIED 3



EDITOR IN CHIEF: MARK STEFANOS
PRODUCTION AND DESIGN: LAURA E. WHITE
FOR STREET MEDIA



LAWEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

A&J Capital, Inc. seeks **Project Mgmt. Specialist**. Salary \$88,109/yr. Mstrs. in Engineering or rel. req'd. Risk mgmt, progress tracking, budget mgmt. Work site: Alhambra, CA. Mail resume to: 1609 W. Valley Blvd. #328, Alhambra, CA 91803

PRINCIPAL R&D ENGINEER (Valencia, CA) - Responsible for improving/controlling design & manufacturability of implantable neurological devices. May require to travel/telecommute. \$76,066 to \$146,259 per year. Send resumes to: Susan Cardinal, Boston Scientific, GlobalTalentAcq@bsci.com. Ref: H4872-00869 EOE

Farmers Group (Woodland Hills, CA) seeks **Agile Developer V** to contribute to development/design/testing & deployment of system functionality. Must have GW Certified Ace - PolicyCenter Configuration & GW Certified Specialist - InsuranceSuite Integration certs. Remote work option w/req. travel to local offices as needed, if w/ in 50 mi. of remote worksite. Salary: \$176,134/yr. Apply at Farmers.com/Careers. Job ID: 27023

Digital Media Quality Assurance Analyst. HS Diploma/GED+2 yr exp as Digital Media Quality Assurance Analyst or any occ. in digital media and/or technical support rtd field req'd. Salary: \$71,282/yr. Worksite: Torrance, CA. Send resume to: Quick Digital Media Inc.; 370 Crenshaw Blvd. #E202G Torrance, CA 90503; Attn: Hatanaka.

Managing Director, Investing & Strategic Advisory (Los Angeles, CA) Manage investments & due diligence for global TMT finance/investment Co. Execute investments across public, private, growth, & VC. Reqs a bachelor's in economics or finance; 5 yrs' post-grad, progressive exp in the job or in M&A/Investment Banking VP role w/ investment banking in TMT, global deal structuring, M&A, fin'l modeling. A remote work option available anywhere in USA. 25% travel. \$139,339 - \$170,000. Resumes: HR, The Forest Road Company, LLC, 2121 Avenue of the Stars, #2450, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

Financial Analyst, F/T. Bachelor's in economics, business, or any related. Mail resume: Freight Around Logistics LLC, 1224 E Broadway, Ste 201, Glendale, CA 91205

Mizuho Bank, Ltd. in Los Angeles, CA seeks **Credit Analyst**: Prepare in-depth credit analyses of prospective & existing corporate clients. \$77,000-\$97,000/yr. Telecommuting is permitted. **To apply, send resume to Mizuho Bank, Ltd.** Attn: Sarina DePeri, 1271 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. Please refer to the Job Title and this posting for consideration. EOE.

Architectural Designer, Long Beach, CA. Gathering the necessary measurements, dimensions, & other routine calculations for dsgn layouts. Salary is \$64,397.00/yr. Master's deg or foreign equiv in Interior Dsgn or Interior Architecture & 2 yrs of exp in the job offd or a rtd occupation w/ similar job duty. Must have exp w/ multiple projects, diverse project typologies, advanced residential & hospitality dsgn portfolio in the luxury mkt. AutoCAD, Photoshop, InDesign, Adobe & 3D design. Mail resumes to: Environ Architecture, Inc., 100 Oceangate, Ste P200, Long Beach, CA 90802.

Senior Rabbi. Lead prayer services & conduct religious life cycle events such as weddings, funerals, etc. Provide spiritual counseling in accordance w/ Jewish law, practices, & Sephardic traditions. Jobsite: Los Angeles, CA. Min. 10 yrs. exp. as Sr. Rabbi, or Rabbi + Rabbinical Ordination Cert. + knowledge of Jewish law & proficiency in Hebrew language (read, write, & speak) req'd. Salary: \$107,494/yr. Fax CV to Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel, Attn: R. Eli @ (310) 470-9238

Management Analyst: provide analyses & strategic recommendations on bank's busi. operations. MS/MA in mgmt., intl. busi., econ. or rtd. 40hrs/wk; pay range: \$112921- \$120000/yr. Send resume to CTBC Bank Corp. (USA), Attn: Pearl Liu, 801 S. Figueroa St., Ste 2300, Los Angeles, CA 90017

Dassault Systemes Americas Corp has the following multiple openings in Long Beach, California (job opportunities available at all levels, e.g., Principal, Senior and Lead levels): **DELMI Supply Chain Operations Industry Process Consultant Senior Managers** (36237): Analyze and coordinate the ongoing logistical functions of a firm or organization. Telecommuting permitted. Domestic travel required up to 10%. Salary Range: \$165,000 to \$168,000. Salary to be commensurate with position level/experience. Standard Benefits. To apply, all applicants must submit resume to <https://www.jobpostingtoday.com/> and reference ID#. Employment and background checks may be required.

FOOD

WHAT'S POPPING UP

Welcome To The Kasbah

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



Kasbah

COURTESY IIIAGENCY



Cassoulet Night

COURTESY SUZANNE LANZA

Kasbah, from Thomas Fuks (Amour, Puzzle), will open within nightlife destination and restaurant Members on Sunset on Wed., Jan 29 bringing Hollywood authentic Moroccan food in a truly glamorous and storied Hollywood setting.

It's a nostalgic nod to the storied history of the building that used to house the famous Hollywood haunt Dar Maghreb, which ended its 39-year run in 2012.

The kitchen is a collaboration between Fuks, founder of 111 Hospitality, and Chef Rachida Mahzuz. The lush space is hidden within the maze of Members, where you can dine at Kasbah first and then dance the night away in the newly renovated nightclub.

Born and raised in Casablanca, the heart of Morocco, Mahzuz brings the legacy of her home to LA with signature dishes including harissa soup and tagine, prepared with either lamb or chicken.

"Kasbah has been a dream in the making for nearly a year, and it's finally coming to life," Fuks tells *L.A. Weekly*. "The vision was to bring back the magic of Dar Maghreb to Los Angeles with an authentic Moroccan experience, led by our chef Rachida, a Moroccan chef who has a way of cooking that feels like love on a plate. After the fires devastated our community, we decided to delay our opening to late January, taking time to regroup and focus on what truly matters. When we open, it won't just be about the food—it'll be about giving back, sharing meals with those impacted

by the fires, and honoring the resilience of our incredible community. During friends and family the week before opening, we'll be offering free meals to evacuees and first responders. Kasbah is more than just a restaurant; it's about family, community, and the connections we share over a meal."

Follow [@kasbah_by_members](https://twitter.com/kasbah_by_members) for updates.

Cassoulet Night at A.O.C. returns on Sunday, Jan. 19 celebrating the Southern French country classic that features a slow-cooked duck confit, sausage, and white beans. The three-course menu features a salad of young greens and blue cheese, walnuts, and wildflower honey, Cassoulet de Maison with duck confit, pork confit, garlic sausage, and thyme breadcrumbs with Paula Wolfert's Tarte aux Noix à la Masseube with crème fraîche and Armagnac prunes for dessert.

Cassoulet Night is priced at \$95 per guest, menu only; advance ticket purchase required. To reserve, contact A.O.C. at 310.859.9859 or book online at [OpenTable Experience](http://OpenTableExperience). Cassoulet Night at A.O.C. is served from 5:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. for one night only.

Want to enjoy your Cassoulet at home? Cassoulet to Go is priced at \$55 per guest and may be ordered online on Toast. Note that take-out orders are for the Cassoulet only and do not include the prix fixe menu. Orders may be picked up or scheduled for delivery only on Monday, Jan. 20, and Tuesday, Jan. 21, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

N HOLLYWOOD • SHERMAN OAKS • PASADENA • OXNARD • CANOGA PARK • LOS ANGELES



VALENTINE'S SPECIAL
20% OFF
everything naughty & nice

ROMANTIX

20% off a single item in-store only.
One coupon per customer, must be 18 or older, not valid with any other or sale items. No Cash Value.
Expires 3/31/2025

PROMO CODE: VC20

ROMANTIX ADULT STORE

Lingerie • Sex Toys • Fetish • Pride Gear • Hosiery

visit us in-store or online at: romantix.com

THERE'S A LOT TO SAY ABOUT A DRY JANUARY

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

To kick off the New Year, United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a new [Surgeon General's Advisory on Alcohol and Cancer Risk](#), outlining the direct link between alcohol consumption and increased cancer risk.

According to the U.S. Department of Health And Human Services, alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of cancer in the United States, after tobacco and obesity, increasing the risk for at least seven types of cancer. While scientific evidence for this connection has been growing over the past four decades, less than half of Americans recognize it as a risk factor for cancer.

The Surgeon General's Advisory includes a series of recommendations to increase awareness to help minimize alcohol-related cancer cases and deaths, including updating the existing Surgeon General's health warning label on alcohol-containing beverages.

"Alcohol is a well-established, preventable cause of cancer responsible for about 100,000 cases of cancer and 20,000 cancer deaths annually in the United States – greater than the 13,500 alcohol-associated traffic crash fatalities per year in the U.S. – yet the majority of Americans are unaware of this risk," Murthy said in a press release. "This Advisory lays out steps we can all take to increase awareness of alcohol's cancer risk and minimize harm."

Over the past few years, non-alcoholic spirits have exploded on the market. On the heels of the report, here are some fun and tasty ways to celebrate a dry January – and the added bonus? Most mocktails are cheaper than their boozy cousins.

For those embracing the sober-ish lifestyle, Nobu Los Angeles has a list of mocktails permanently available on their beverage menu. For January, there will be a limited-time mocktail called the Coco Shiso, made up of coconut water, agave, yuzu juice, and shiso leaves. Permanent selections include the Yuzu Strawberry Calpico made with strawberry Calpico, yuzu and mint, the Lychee Passion made with passion fruit, lychee and pineapple, a Dry Bonsai made with Lyres London Dry Gin, cucumber, yuzu, lychee and shiso as well as the Espresso made with Lyres Coffee Liqueur, house-made cold brew, oat milk, Kuromitsu, and orange.

The [Videre rooftop](#) has created a low

and no-alcohol drink menu called A New Year's Quest. The Ceremony Punch with zero-proof Ritual gin, strawberry matcha, coconut milk, and lemon and The Last Banana Muffin with coffee-infused blood orange Mommenpop and banana liquor provide a fun pick-me-up without the hangover. The Root of Resilience is a pleasurable combination of zero-proof Ritual tequila, jicama-lime oleo saccharum, lime, orange, agave and soda.

Kick the year off at Country rooftop bar, [Desert 5 Spot](#) to enjoy the popular Bootloose on Wednesdays starting at 7 p.m. Line dance and two-step with legendary dance instructors, Mike and Diana, and sing your heart out at Cowboy Karaoke at 10 p.m. In between dance lessons, try the Jolene mocktail, a strawberry watermelon blend with soda water and agave with a Tajin rim.

Bar Lis, the French Riviera-inspired lounge in Hollywood, blends the South of France with Southern California. There's Jazz Eclectic LA on Tuesdays or DJ sets on weekends. The lounge now offers four non-alcoholic drinks to pair with light bites. The Bandi de la Mer is a spiced espresso and sweet Free Spirits Vermouth blend topped with ginger beer; Four Fourths is a smooth mix of Free Spirits Milano aperitif, oat milk, maple syrup, and cinnamon; La Fleur d'Elise features Free Spirits Tequila and passionfruit purée; and Bandiera Rossa combines Free Spirits Gin with ancho chile and cacao.

As the first US location of a Tokyo-originated cocktail destination, Rokusho in Hollywood specializes in vintage tequilas and Japanese spirits. However, the thoughtful balancing of flavors extends into their non-alcoholic beverages with their Homemade Yuzu Soda. Notes of citrus, vegetal sweetness, and light bubbly minerality create this refreshing drink to be enjoyed while cozying up to the new Japanese restaurant's sleek concrete bar top.

Santa Monica's Art Deco hotel The Georgian first opened in 1933, the same year prohibition was abolished in the United States. Historically, the hotel was an excellent place to rendezvous for a martini, but as the Hollywood crowd opts for a sober lifestyle, The Georgian now offers non-alcoholic options that still give that movie star glow. At Sirena, the ground

floor California Italian eatery in a pink accented dining room, you can sip on an Early Shirley, a take on the beloved Shirley Temple with a strawberry basil twist.

[1212 Santa Monica](#) and [La Bohème](#) have great selections of refreshing and alcohol-free mocktails including the Tropical Sunrise with pineapple juice, orange juice, coconut cream, a cucumber fizz with cucumber, ginger, lychee juice and soda water and the Pink Dragon Fruit with lychee, sour mix and soda. The Blackberry Delight combines blackberry puree, simple syrup and soda water.

The new beverage menu at STK Steakhouse features a wide lineup of wines, mocktails, and low-alcohol options, including:

Zero-Alcohol Wines (Under 0.5% ABV | \$15)

Sparkling Wine: Mionetto, Veneto, Italy

Chardonnay: Luminara, Napa Valley, CA

Sauvignon Blanc: Seaglass, Central Coast, CA

Red Blend: Luminara, Napa Valley, CA

Artfully Crafted Mocktails (\$17)

Spicy Pineapple Margarita: Lyre's Agave Blanco Spirit, agave, orange, pineapple, fresh lime juice, and jalapeño for a bold, tangy kick.

Coconut Blackberry Gin Smash: Lyre's Dry London Spirit, fresh lime juice, coconut purée, and blackberries for a tropical twist.

Espresso Martini: Lyre's Coffee Originale and White Cane Spirit, real Madagascar vanilla, and Owen's nitro-infused espresso—a rich and indulgent pick-me-up.

Aperol Spritz: Lyre's Italian Spritz and Mionetto Non-Alcoholic Sparkling Wine—a bubbly, bittersweet delight.

Low-ABV Selections (7%-8.5% ABV | \$15)

Chardonnay: Butter 'Light,' CA (8.5%)

Sauvignon Blanc: Kim Crawford 'Illuminate,' NZ (7%)

Pinot Noir: Meiomi 'Bright,' CA (8%)

Soho House has extended its drinks offering across North America to include an expanded selection of 'No & Low' cocktail alternatives for its members to enjoy. The latest No & Low cocktail menu has been curated by Erin Davey, Head of Bars for the US, who is passionate about creating a diverse, thoughtful selection of non-alcoholic cocktails for Soho House members. The Palomar is an exotic blend of Pentire Adrift, Three Spirit Livener, Schisandra

berry, guayusa, green tea, and grapefruit soda. The Pick Me Up combines Seedlip Spice, espresso, and demerara. The Eastern Standard Fizz features Seedlip Garden, cucumber, mint, lime, and soda and the Vibrante Spritz is a booze-free alternative to the classic, using Giffard Aperitivo, tonic, and orange.

And here's some Dry January news from the last brand you probably ever expected: Halo Top. The light ice cream brand is selling Dry January kits working with a certified sommelier and alcohol flavor expert to identify the most satisfying alternatives for those craving boozy flavors. The Halo Top Swap Pints and tasting notes include:

The Halo Top Strawberry label has been swapped to say Pinot Noir: The bright and lifted red fruit of Halo Top Strawberry is perfect for the red wine lover. Notes of high-toned red fruit evoke aromatic flowers like red roses and hibiscus, this luscious substitute will not disappoint.

The Halo Top Chocolate Caramel Brownie label has been swapped to say Old Fashioned: The depth of your favorite whiskey cocktail with notes of caramelized brown sugar and dark chocolate. With Halo Top Chocolate Caramel Brownie, you won't miss the whiskey.

The Halo Top Sea Salt Caramel label has been swapped to say Reposado Margarita: Craving a thirst-quenching salt-rimmed margarita? Halo Top Sea Salt Caramel takes the place of a rich Reposado Tequila margarita with notes of toasted oak, caramel, and sea salt.

The Halo Top Cookies & Cream label has been swapped to say Creamy Espresso Martini: A favorite cold weather martini needs a creamy, cold ice cream substitute. Halo Top Cookies and Cream has notes of dark chocolate that play to a background of sweet cream with a silky-smooth finish.

The Halo Top Swap pints each come in a stylish kit featuring two premium, custom-crafted bowls with gold rims to match the brand's pint lids. The glassware bowls in each kit will coincide with the boozy vice each flavor is meant to substitute – bowls will resemble a wine glass, whisky glass, margarita glass, and martini glass – and come with two opulent gold spoons.

If you're craving a good dry rub, [Epic Wings](#)' has new menu items including Salt & Pepper wings, Garlic Parmesan Fries, and Lemon Pepper Fries available until Friday, Jan. 31. [E]

CULTURE

WHILE FIRES RAGE, ANGELENOS STEP UP TO HELP

BY MARK STEFANOS



Anderson Munger YMCA



St. Phillip Newman Center
ALL IMAGES COURTESY MARK STEFANOS

Krista Corbello was working with Caltech students when she got word that her home on the Altadena/Pasadena border was in the first round of evacuation orders the evening of January 7, when all the fires started.

“They were looking at the maps and the cross streets and they were insisting that I don’t go back home. And I said, ‘Well, what if I just go get a go-bag?’ My students were like, ‘No, don’t, don’t go back.’ And so I stayed on campus,” Krista said.

She slept over at a friend’s place that night. The next day, they scrounged together some clothes to tide her over for a few days, and she began spearheading the efforts to transform the Newman Center, a young adult ministry that she directs at St. Philip the Apostle Church in Pasadena, into a fire relief site.

Krista is one of the thousands of Angelenos who donned masks and rolled up their sleeves to support fire victims at resource centers across the Southland, all while fires still rage across the region. Countless others filled their cars with donations and waited in long lines to make sure those resource sites stayed stocked. Organizers we spoke with shared the same story over and over — requests made for donations and volunteers are met with an overwhelming response

from a public itching to support.

Many, like Krista, were impacted by the fires themselves but still stepped up to help. Krista spent the rest of the week working all day in the center then sleeping there at night, alongside others displaced by the fire who sought refuge at the church. “I truly think God has been providing. I told Him, ‘You multiplied bread and loaves, you can multiply my sleep and energy.’”

In an initial debate within her organization, Krista pushed the idea of turning the Newman Center into a relief zone — maybe because she was born in Los Angeles but grew up in Louisiana where hurricanes trained her on the importance of emergency relief. That decision has led to big impacts. Soon, the Newman Center had registered nearly 300 volunteers, coming from all colors and creeds — only 55% of them belonging to the parish. “People wanted to help each other, even if their ankles were swollen and their eyes were red.”

The needs of the community were equally large. They built a list of 108 families in search of specialized goods, of which 54 are families that have entirely lost their homes. With the support of the church and the public, the Newman Center has been able to answer the needs of all of them. And those numbers don’t include the walk-ins that they’ve serviced who stream through all day.

got any smoke. But I know that part of my community is here. This is LA. And I just — I can’t not. I have skills, I have hands, and I can’t not be here.”

Elijah estimated that 400 volunteers showed up over the span of three hours Saturday evening. The logistics of a massive ad-hoc relief and volunteer effort is like building a ship mid-voyage. But Elijah explained that the system they had running absolved the need for lots of management. You show up, you get assigned a location, and then a volunteer there would explain to you what to do. Then before you leave, you train the next volunteer, and so forth.

The PCC site setup included a drop-off and pickup zone for goods on the first floor of the parking structure, as well as an outdoor swap-meet-style bazaar where people can pick out clothes and goods from racks. Everything was organized and people were in good spirits. There were moments when volunteers were unsure of how to be useful, but then a big truck would pull up and throngs would come from different corners of the site to help unload.

It was a heartening sight for Elijah — “To see people coming together in a joyful way is pretty cool. It shows the strength of this community, as LA in general — as Altadena, as the Pacific Palisades. Anybody who hates on LA doesn’t see this.”

PCC was just one of many locations where the YMCA was gathering volunteers to help. In Koreatown, the Anderson Munger YMCA used a stream of volunteers to collect donations from the area, get them sorted, and then distributed out to where they were needed. To transfer unloaded goods from the street to a storage room in the back, volunteers formed a human chain — 94 people deep.

Cindy Oliva, operations executive director for the Anderson Munger and Koreatown YMCAs, explained that anyone who wanted to could walk up to volunteer and be put to work. “Once they head to the welcoming table, we assign them to a specific station. And from there, we have staff who are dispatching and we have another working on logistics, reaching out to different shelters and organizations that are accepting the donations,” she said, “If volunteers are willing to drive, we’ll dispatch them out. We just have a little bit of everything going on.”

Down the street at Love Hour, the Koreatown bar/restaurant co-owned by Mike Pak, Duy Nguyen and Jimmy Han, a team of skilled volunteers took an independent but similar approach to their service. The team,

Krista said she’s been motivated by families who have lost everything but are still showing up to help. Her favorite image from Saturday was that of an eight-year-old girl, who had come with her family in search of support, turning to a woman in devastation and asking her if she needed help taking bags to her car. “I truly see the unadulterated charity in it, and that’s what I mean when I say awe. I see God in it,” Krista said.

So far, Krista’s home has been spared from the fire’s wrath. She’s not paying attention to the fires anyway — she hasn’t lived at that spot very long and she only has energy to focus on relief efforts. She said the people of LA showing up reminded her of where she grew up. “The South is really warm and generous, and I’ve seen that here right now — it feels like a hug.”

Across the street from the Newman Center is Pasadena City College — the parking lot of which has been turned into a relief site teeming with volunteers, cars of people donating items, and those seeking support. Managed by the YMCA, the request for volunteers was sent far and loud on social media.

Elijah Kaak, a producer from Pomona, heard the call and showed up, and was one of several volunteers manning the volunteer check-in booth. “It’s wild because in Pomona I feel like I’m almost secluded from everything. We hardly got any winds, hardly



Dream Center



PCC YMCA



Dream Center

composed mostly of friends congregated by the Koreatown Run Club, transformed a warehouse owned by Love Hour into a makeshift collection and distribution center.

“Mike started doing a drive on Thursday night because there were so many people in the community that wanted to just drop things off,” said Kenzie Floyd, who was helping organize. A day later, they became overwhelmed with donations, so they opened up the warehouse and put on their logistics hats.

“I found that the biggest challenge, the biggest gap, is we’ve got the inventory, we have the manpower — but who needs what, and how do we get it to the right people?” added Angie Han, who was also taking a lead.

The team explained that instead of spinning their wheels, they were giving themselves time Saturday afternoon to recalibrate to make sure they were making the biggest impact. “Basically, we decided let’s get 10, 15 people on just looking through the documents of who actually is in need of what,” Angie said. They were then distributing goods directly to fire stations, organizations like the National Guard, and families in need.

One thing they didn’t have to worry about was the outpouring of support from their community. “Last night, we were like, maybe we could use six trucks or something tomorrow. Let’s make a Google form. When we woke up this morning, there were 300-something people who had signed up their trucks in the form,” said Kenzie. “Which is amazing. It’s such a good problem to have.”

The Dream Center in Echo Park was also deploying a rewire when we visited Sunday, their fourth day of operation.

“We just changed the entire logistics of our line today, and I just got a text that said, ‘Looks like the average wait time for cars is 35 minutes to get loaded up,’” Aaron Befort, assistant to Dream Center founder Matthew Barnett, told us, “Yesterday, we were here in two hours, three hours for cars, so now we’re here in 35 minutes. I think we finally did it.”

The operation was indeed a well-oiled machine. The Echo Park nonprofit, housed at what was once the site of Queen of Angels Hospital, has transformed into a loud, bustling city of relief efforts.

“Yesterday was our third day, and we had over 1,200 local Angelenos come and help us sort through the donations of 150,000 pieces of clothing. We’ve had over 350 pallets dropped on this campus in the last four days of every single kind of relief and aid you can think of,” Aaron said, “We are so

thankful for our local Angeleno volunteers that showed up to help sort, package, and send it right out in the relief line.”

Cars backed up on the surrounding streets, but volunteers were stationed at most intersections keeping lines flowing. Other volunteers wrote down on paper the need of each vehicle — what they were delivering if they were donating, or what they were in need of if they were picking up — then stuck that paper on the car’s windshield. Once the car enters the long, efficiently laid out courtyard, a team of volunteers would quickly fulfill the slip like a to-go order, either forming human chains to unload donations, or filling trash bags and stacking trunks with three to five days of supplies.

Like the team at Love Hour, Aaron also advised those looking to help to seek out an organization or family’s specific list of needs, instead of just donating willy-nilly. And he said the Dream Center is committed to helping this cause for the long haul — “As soon as the efforts here are done on our Dream Center campus, our efforts are going to shift immediately to help go to the disaster spots.”

“I’ve lived on this campus in Echo Park for 22 years, and we have never seen the type of call to action from Los Angeles as we’ve seen this week. It’s been so unified. The love from everybody of just wanting to help somebody,” Aaron said. “Our founder, Matthew Barnett, is using the tagline, ‘we see the displaced helping the displaced everywhere right now,’ this week during the Los Angeles fires — and that has brought us to tears, and it’s brought us to our knees in humbleness.”

Aaron added — “But then we have to get right back up on our feet because there’s a lot of work to be done.”

For up-to-date resources in support of fire relief efforts, visit our website LAWeekly.com

Contact the Newman Center at St. Philip the Apostle Church at StPhilipTheApostle.org

Contact the YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles at ymcala.org

Contact Love Hour at love-hour.com and [@lovehourlosangeles](https://www.instagram.com/lovehourlosangeles) on Instagram.

Contact the Dream Center at dreamcenter.org and [@adreamcenter](https://www.instagram.com/adreamcenter) on Instagram

CULTURE

HARROWING SCENES FROM THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE FIRE IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY HISTORY

BY MARK STEFANOS

The Southland became consumed with fires that have left 24 dead and over 12,000 structures damaged or destroyed, as of Sunday evening, Jan. 12.

Starting on Tuesday, Jan. 7, a dry winter season coupled with hurricane-speed Santa Ana winds resulted in several fires causing massive evacuations. The Palisades fire is now deemed the most destructive fire in Los Angeles County history, and the Palisades and Eaton fires now rank third and fourth most destructive in state history, respectively.

The Palisades fire is centered in the Pacific Palisades, causing extensive destruction in Malibu, and evacuations in Santa Monica, Brentwood and Calabasas. At points, the fire threatened to burn north to the valley, threatening communities in Encino, Sherman Oaks and Tarzana. As

of time of writing, the fire is 23,713 acres in size and 12% contained, and responsible for eight deaths.

The Eaton fire is centered in Altadena, impacting Pasadena and surrounding areas, resulting in devastating losses. As of time of writing, the fire is 14,117 acres in size and 27% contained, and responsible for 16 deaths.

Additional fires sprung up but were contained by firefighters, including the Hurst fire, impacting Sylmar and surrounding areas; the Lidia fire, impacting Acton and surrounding areas; the Sunset fire, impacting Runyon Canyon, Hollywood Hills, Hollywood and Los Feliz; and the Kenneth fire, impacting West Hills and surrounding areas.

For up-to-date information on the fires, visit the Watch Duty app at app.watchduty.org.



Images captured in the Altadena and Pasadena area

COURTESY JESSE RODRIGUEZ. @JESSE.SHOTS