



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 1, 2021

Media Contact:

Sonya Blake, President and CEO

sblake@economicalliance.org

818-379-7000 ext. 106

Ken Craft Slated to Receive the 2022 Stars of the Valley Humanitarian Award from The Valley Economic Alliance

From Rally to the Valley to Drumstick Dash to Tiny Home Villages, Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission's innovative founder and CEO recognized for his leadership in preventing, reducing, and eliminating poverty, hunger, and homelessness in the San Fernando Valley.

SHERMAN OAKS, CA (Dec. 1, 2021) The Valley Economic Alliance announced that Ken Craft, founder and CEO of Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission, was selected to receive the 2022 Star of the Valley Humanitarian Award at the Valley of the Stars Awards Gala on Friday evening, April 8, 2022. The in-person event themed "The Sky's The Limit" will be held at the Castaway Burbank located at 1250 E. Harvard Road in Burbank, CA.

Previous Valley of the Stars Humanitarian Award honorees include Judge Harry Pregerson, the Eisner Foundation with Michael and Jane Eisner, David Fleming, Dennis McCarthy, Ricky Gelb, the Pump Brothers, Patrick McClenahan, and Mel Wilson.

"The Valley is fortunate to have many shining examples of leadership, innovation and community service, but no one outshines Ken Craft," said Sonya Blake, Alliance president and CEO. "His bold development of tiny homes to address the needs of our unhoused neighbors is leading the state and the nation. We are proud to recognize that he has chosen the San Fernando Valley as his headquarters location and field of service and to honor him as a Star of the Valley."

In February of this year, Hope of the Valley launched the first Tiny Home Village in the city of Los Angeles with funding secured for five additional villages. The homes are an innovative, affordable, and scalable solution to the humanitarian crisis of homelessness by providing interim housing.

"The streets shouldn't be the waiting room for permanent housing," quoted Craft.



Some of the valley's most vulnerable have been hardest hit since the start of the pandemic. With needs increasing and opportunities for fundraising limited due to public health mandates and restrictions, Craft became innovative – and ambitious – this year creating the Rally to the Valley, a 100-mile ultra-marathon to end homelessness. He and Rowan Vansleve, chief financial officer, charted a 100-mile course spanning eight days in March that wove the duo through its Antelope, Santa Clarita, San Fernando and Simi Valley locations.

“At Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission, the goal is to meet the needs of the whole person — spiritually, emotionally, and physically,” Craft explained. “Its mission is to attract people and resources to assist in the effort of meeting the needs of every hungry and homeless man, woman and child in our local area.”

Founded in 2009, Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission began as a small ministry run out of San Pablo Lutheran Church in Sun Valley where volunteers cooked and served hot meals to homeless men, women, and children. Expanding services to include life-skills classes, case management, and transitional housing facilities, the mission relocated its homeless services to Van Nuys in 2015.

Today, the nonprofit's operations are spread over 22 facilities, including six tiny home communities opened this year in North Hollywood, Tarzana, and Reseda, as well as breaking ground on the New Trebek Center, a 107-bed bridge housing center in Northridge named after the late *Jeopardy* host Alex Trebek. While they finished 2020 with 9 shelters encompassing 507 beds, once the Trebek Center opens in March 2022, the nonprofit will have a total of 16 shelters with a total of 1,532 beds.

“Through our projects addressing homelessness in the West Valley, I've worked closely with Ken and the Valley is simply a better place because of him,” said Los Angeles Councilmember Bob Blumenfield. “There is no one like him and I'm incredibly grateful for his partnership, friendship and his unparalleled dedication towards helping those who need a hand. He truly is a Star of the Valley.”

Hope of the Valley annually provides over 1,226,400 nutritious meals, 2,640 medical and mental health referrals, and 408,800 nights of safe shelter. Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission is the only rescue mission headquartered in the San Fernando Valley.

“Ken Craft's extraordinary leadership and limitless compassion have given a brighter future to countless suffering people in the San Fernando Valley,” said Los Angeles Councilmember Paul Krekorian. “Thousands of people literally owe their lives to Ken Craft and Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission for lifting them up during their darkest days. By his example, Ken inspires all of us to strive to be better people, and he gives us confidence that we can solve the crisis of homelessness. Congratulations to my dear friend Ken on his well-deserved receipt of the 2022 Star of the Valley Humanitarian Award.”



Presented by Community Foundation of the Valleys and in partnership with The Valley Economic Alliance, Craft is also scheduled to speak at the Homelessness and Housing Conference on “The Challenge of Homelessness” moderated by Wendy Greuel, chair of the LA Homeless Services Authority Commission, on Friday, Dec. 3, 2021, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Pierce College in Woodland Hills. For the complete conference agenda and tickets, visit <https://valleygiving.org/homelessness-housing-conference>

ABOUT THE VALLEY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

The Valley Economic Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization comprised of business, government, education, and community leaders. Our mission is to engage and unite Valley stakeholders to raise standards of living and economic vitality across the San Fernando Valley, a five-city region encompassing Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale, Los Angeles, and San Fernando. This region consists of more than 1.9 million residents, over 160,000 businesses and covering more than 350 square miles. To learn more about The Valley Economic Alliance, visit www.TheValley.net or phone (818) 379-7000.

ABOUT THE VALLEY OF THE STARS AWARDS

One of the most anticipated honors bestowed in Los Angeles, the prestigious Star of the Valley Awards celebrates the businesses, people, and personalities that contribute to the vitality of the San Fernando Valley. After nearly two years of pause, pivot and pandemic protocols, the Valley rebounds as an economic driver poised to shine with a renewed brilliance, energy, and strength. The sky's the limit for the San Fernando Valley's future with sponsorship opportunities available as a 2022 Valley of the Stars Gala Sponsor. Contact Jacqui Matsumoto, Director of Investor Relations at 818.379.7000, ext. 113 or jmatsumoto@economicalliance.org for details.