



A California public benefit corporation and grassroots 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 9/12/07

## Putting a Human Face on Homelessness in San Diego

**Community Picnic at Balboa Park brings warm lunches to those in need,  
with featured speaker City Councilmember Donna Frye**

**San Diego, California** --- It was nearly a year ago that Rachel Jensen was sitting around with her girlfriends complaining about issues that concerned them – the homeless guy no one paid attention to that she saw at the bus stop everyday on her way to work, gang violence, global warming – when the idea struck! Let's pool our skills and resources to formulate solutions, not just get irritated and complain. Rachel invited her girlfriends over and proposed the idea of a "Girls Think Tank" – the response was overwhelmingly positive and the group took off. "There's strength in numbers," says Ms. Jensen, who is now Co-Chair of the Girls Think Tank, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. "Together we overcome the feeling that we are helpless to make a difference in our community." With a dozen or so dedicated members, the Girls Think Tank has taken on homelessness in San Diego as its first issue and has been assessing the needs (both on a personal and advocacy level) of that community.

One of the most effective things the Girls Think Tank has done is put a human face on the issue – the group goes out and meets the homeless of San Diego, hands out street survival packs (blankets, clothes, water, toiletries); circulates the stories of these seemingly invisible people to personalize their plight; and figures out what is most urgently needed. The most urgent needs identified are transitional programs and more public restrooms and drinking fountains. "If you've walked around downtown you know which streets wreak of urine, day in and day out. Water is a survival issue for people living on the street. These are the bare minimum essentials for subsistence living," says Ms. Jensen. "It's a shame in a city of this much prosperity to have such an underserved population of people in dire need. We can not continue to ignore them when we walk by. Let's end homelessness in San Diego, within our lifetime."

The Girls Think Tank's strategy is two-fold: hands-on activism and advocating for services for the homeless community. The Girls Think Tank's public relations chair, Alreen Haeggquist, explained: "We are trying to rally support from our local representatives and the community at large, so together, we can help provide basic necessities for the homeless community. We cannot continue ignoring such a large group of our community. What is a small donation to you, buys a meal for someone in need."

As part of their goal to raise awareness about the needs of these neglected members of the community, the **Girls Think Tank is holding a community picnic and fundraiser at Balboa Park on Saturday, September 29, 2007, from noon to 4:00 p.m. Councilmember Donna Frye, long-time advocate on these issues, will speak at the event**, as will homeless advocate "Water Man" David Ross. There will be performances by DJ Quist, Corina Rose, and Capoeira Brasil San Diego. Members of the homeless community will attend, and for the price of your picnic lunch, you will be buying a warm lunch for someone in need. People are encouraged to donate blankets, sleeping bags, socks, clothes, and toiletries.

For more information about the GTT or the upcoming event at Balboa Park, contact [girlsthintank@gmail.com](mailto:girlsthintank@gmail.com) or visit us at [www.girlsthintank.com](http://www.girlsthintank.com).

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## **Putting a Human Face on Homelessness in San Diego**

**Community picnic at Balboa Park brings warm lunches to those in need**

**WHO:** THE GIRLS THINK TANK

**WHAT:** Community Picnic and Fundraiser for the Homeless at Balboa Park. For the price of admission, you are buying a lunch for someone in need!

**WHERE:** Balboa Park, War Memorial Lawn (Park Blvd & Zoo Drive)

**WHEN:** Saturday, September 29, 2007, from noon to 4:00 p.m.  
Admission is \$10 and includes food, drink, entertainment, speakers, and a warm lunch for a person in need.

**MORE INFO:** Alreen Haeggquist, [alreen@haeggquistlaw.com](mailto:alreen@haeggquistlaw.com), 619/955-8218 (P.R. Chair)  
Rachel Jensen, [rachelj@csqrr.com](mailto:rachelj@csqrr.com), 619/228-1686 (Co-Chair)

**FEATURED SPEAKERS:**

San Diego City Councilmember Donna Frye  
Homeless advocate (“Water Man”) David Ross

**PERFORMANCES BY:**

DJ Quist  
Corina Rose  
Capoeira Brasil San Diego

**ABOUT THE GIRLS THINK TANK:**

The Girls Think Tank was started last year by a group of local women who wanted to do more than just complain about the issues that concerned them: homelessness, gang violence, global warming. “Together we overcome the feeling that we are helpless to make a difference.” With a dozen or so core members, the Girls Think Tank has taken on the issue of homelessness in San Diego as its first issue and has been assessing the needs (both on a personal and advocacy level) of that community. One of the most effective things the Girls Think Tank is doing is putting a human face on the issue – the group goes out and meets homeless residents of San Diego, hands out survival packs (blankets, clothes, water, toiletries) that they get donated; circulates the stories of these seemingly invisible people to personalize their plight; and figures out what is most urgently needed. The Girls Think Tank’s strategy is two-fold: hands-on activism and advocating for services for this community. “We are starting to meet with our local representative for support on these basic necessities for the homeless in our community and are also asking people to come out and help provide basic necessities for these people. What is a small donation to you, buys a meal for someone in need.” For more information about the GTT and our current projects, contact us by email at [girlsthintank@gmail.com](mailto:girlsthintank@gmail.com) or visit us at [www.girlsthintank.com](http://www.girlsthintank.com).