

Rita Pacheco is an award winning plein air and studio oil artist who is a close friend of the San Clemente Art Association. In 2015, Rita was awarded 1st Place in the 14th Annual Paint San Clemente competition; in addition, in 2016 she took the 2nd Place award home. During her years competing in the SCAA event, Rita has won several Honorable Mention awards. Rita has performed several demonstrations as part of our "Monthly Professional Artist Demonstrations".

During a fund-raiser/plein air event near her home in Carlsbad, CA, Rita was inspired to partner with a local organization associated with the homeless. And this is where this awesome story begins.

"Months ago, I participated in a fund-raiser/plein air event nearby. I started early in the morning, under the shade of a bush to offer my painting and my palette shade. Not a soul was around. But soon, I realized I was surrounded by a group of busy people. I happened to be painting in an area where several homeless people gathered. I listened to the conversations around me as I painted, and became more aware of their reality. The homeless had no privacy or "boundaries" to speak of. They were chained, in a way, to the others and some were quite hostile toward one another. Due to a lack of resources, people with mental health issues and/or addictions have nowhere to go. The group of people who gathered may be the only "family" each had. These few individuals made me wonder about the sad situation of ALL homeless.

I was in the early planning stages of my annual studio sale, and I felt inspired to look into an organization in my home town of San Diego to partner with. I remembered the San Diego Rescue Mission, since my husband and I had donated to their cause. When I called a spokesperson from the Mission to inquire about offering a percentage of my profits to their cause, I was asked if I wanted to "tour" the facility. Of course I agreed, and was given a one-on-one tour that lasted over an hour. I was so incredibly impressed with the Rescue Mission, and was very excited and inspired further to reach out to my collectors for their benefit.

The San Diego Rescue Mission is a faith based program, so relies on our donations to operate as they receive no government funding. They provide emergency care, meals, critical and recuperative care, education and life skills for needy men, women and children. Their facility is in an old hospital building right off the Interstate-5. The first person to greet me was a (former) homeless man, who was making an effort to transform his life and refine his skills to gain employment in the future. Michelle Smith, Events Manager for the Rescue Mission, hosted me as we walked the entire building together. As we explored, Michelle enlightened me about their many services throughout the building. I could see for myself how the men and women of the shelter were being cared for and taught life skills. There were several men transitioning towards self-sufficiency and working hard in the kitchen. These men provide more than a thousand meals a day! I marveled at the Children's Center Preschool and my eyes were opened. Many people cannot afford to prepare their children for their school years like I was able to do!

My sale began with an email campaign to my Rita Pacheco Fine Art Email List, and I advertised on Facebook and Instagram. I had brochures made, and reserved a venue in my community. I had good friends to help me with set up, and one of my dear friends made delicious gourmet treats for the

occasion. When the event was over, we had brought in over \$3100 for the Rescue Mission! It was such a rewarding event, I'm certain I'll repeat it for November, 2017!"