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Rising Stars: Meet Vanessa Perez of San Bernardino



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Today we'd like to introduce you to Vanessa Perez

Hi Vanessa, please kick things off for us with an introduction to yourself and your story.

I was born and raised in the city of San Bernardino, attended school and college in San Bernardino as well. My desire was to become a journalist and move to New York City. However, I experienced a life changing moment when I met God and realized I was supposed to be in San Bernardino for a reason. While I was interning at a local radio I knew this was no longer for me, so I immediately quit and began my career search. While I was looking for a "real job" I happened to come across an internship opportunity in the Communications Department at Time for Change Foundation so I applied. After obtaining an internship in 2012 with Time for Change Foundation I was offered a position and the rest is history.

Under the mentorship of Founder Kim Carter, my commitment and leadership qualities flourished, propelling me from intern to Civic Engagement Specialist, to Associate Director, and now as the Executive Director. In this capacity, I play a pivotal role in steering the organization's strategic vision and policies, providing guidance and management to technical staff across planning, programming, fund development, marketing, and administration. As an agent for positive change, I advocate for equity and inclusivity, embodying my commitment to fostering a better world for all individuals. My passion for women's development and empowerment finds a profound outlet in my work as I co-founded, along with Kim Carter-Tillman, the Black and Brown Opportunities for Profit (BBOP) Center, an economic hub designed to empower women of color entrepreneurs. This initiative, rooted in my

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commitment to equity and opportunity, has become a cornerstone in the organization's efforts to uplift and support marginalized communities.

Would you say it's been a smooth road, and if not what are some of the biggest challenges you've faced along the way?

The biggest struggles I've realized are internal. I would say one of the biggest struggles is believing that I have what it takes to do all of the great things that I do. Obstacles come and unfortunate circumstances. You experience issues with staff, the economy, funding, legal issues, growth, so many things, and you learn how to get through them. You don't always have a manual for things, most of the time you experience things for the first time and have to figure it out. I've also learned that the struggles are your best teacher. They make you better and stronger.

Thanks for sharing that. So, maybe next you can tell us a bit more about your work?

Since 2002, Time for Change Foundation (TFCF) has empowered homeless women and children to achieve self-sufficiency using an array of evidence-based programs and housing to end cycles of homelessness, addiction, incarceration, and abuse. TFCF works to address systemic and structural barriers that Black and Indigenous and Other People of Color (BIPOC) and justice impacted women face while seeking to improve their economic conditions necessary to take care of their families. Our mission is to empower disenfranchised low-income individuals and families by building leadership through evidence-based programs and housing to create self-sufficiency and thriving communities. Our organization's three main goals are to create affordable housing opportunities for families we serve, to create entrepreneurial opportunities for BIPOC women and to create thriving communities. Starting with one six bed shelter in 2002, TFCF has grown immensely, and now operates with a budget of \$5 million, operates 18 facilities throughout California, and has profoundly impacted the lives of over 4,000 individuals. TFCF has a total of 17 employees with locations in the Inland Empire and Bay Area. Our headquarters, in San Bernardino is home to 10 employees, the BBOP Center in San Bernardino is home to four employees, and our Brighter Futures shelter in Hayward is home to three employees. I began at Time for Change as an intern in 2012 when we were celebrating our 10th year anniversary. I am tremendously proud of the growth we have had over the years. We have expanded our programs and have opened an entrepreneurship center for women of color to advance their economic status and help them create generational wealth. What makes us different is we don't take no for an answer and we believe that we can do the impossible. This is how we have come so far. We are also client centered and know that everything we do is for these women. We can't win without holding true to that.

Risk taking is a topic that people have widely differing views on – we'd love to hear your thoughts.

Ever since I started at Time for Change Foundation, we have always been doing something new, something that we have never done before. To this day, I am doing things I've never done, and with doing them, that involves taking risks, because you don't know what the outcome is going to be. There's always fear of failure, but there is always a 50% chance that you will succeed. You'll never know if you'll succeed unless you take that chance. You can't think about it, you just have to go for it.

Pricing:

- <https://www.timeforchangefoundation.org/contribute/donate/>

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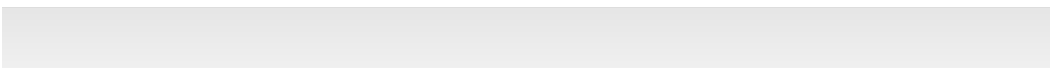
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Los Angeles is an incredible city - but it's so large and so vast and so diverse that all of us are missing out on tons of great people, businesses, organizations, events and more.

VoyageLA wants to highlight the best of LA - from freelance makeup artists that will dazzle you to the best Meetup groups in town.



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