

BET TZEDEK NOW

Dear Friends,

Not all of us could be there in 1974 for Bet Tzedek's founding, but we're thrilled that so many of you could be with us earlier this month on May 2nd for our **50th Anniversary Dinner Gala!**

We thank the 800 guests who joined us as we celebrated our fifty-year journey from a modest, volunteer-run nonprofit to a nationally recognized force for economic and social justice.



Bet Tzedek's 2024 Gala: A Night to Remember, 50 Years in the Making



LA County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath opened the evening with an inspirational reminder of the importance of pursuing justice.



Together, we honored **Adam S. Umanoff**, EVP and General Counsel of Edison International, with the 2024 **Luis Lainer Founder's Award** for his exceptional philanthropic efforts on behalf of Bet Tzedek and staunch support for pro bono at Edison International.



We saluted 2024 **Rose L. Schiff Commitment to Justice Award** recipients **Angel City Football Club** for their inspiring dedication to the community they call home, including their support for small businesses.



The evening's first honoree was our colleague **Amy Peckner**, Bet Tzedek's Senior Development Officer, who was presented with the 2024 **Jack H. Skirball Community Justice Award** for her tireless fundraising efforts which, before Thursday, had resulted in over \$25 million dollars for Bet Tzedek.

After Thursday night's event, we can say Amy has helped raise more than \$27 million dollars because **thanks to you and our gala sponsors, this year's gala raised \$2,391,724 and counting**, as more gifts continue to come in. Funds which will ensure our attorneys and advocates can continue providing free, comprehensive legal services on behalf of thousands of low-income individuals and families across Los Angeles County.



Bet Tzedek President & CEO Diego Cartagena

While there is no doubt Bet Tzedek has grown, it was clear that we have retained a very special sense of purpose and community. In the room at the gala earlier this month were longtime community partners, as well as new allies, each reflecting Los Angeles' beautiful diversity. We also saw supporters who brought their partners, children, and grandchildren, the future bearers of Bet Tzedek's torch.

We all came together and were uplifted by the sense of community and unity to which Stan, Luis, and the founders were committed when they built Bet Tzedek and that we all now carry forth.

We are SO close to hitting our goal of \$2.5M — which will allow Bet Tzedek to continue our various programs, from protecting clients facing eviction to assisting vulnerable seniors and supporting our conservatorship clinics.

As Board chair Samantha Millman and Board member Darrell Brown said at the event, the first 50 years were just the beginning. We look forward to seeing you next year at the 2025 Dinner Gala!

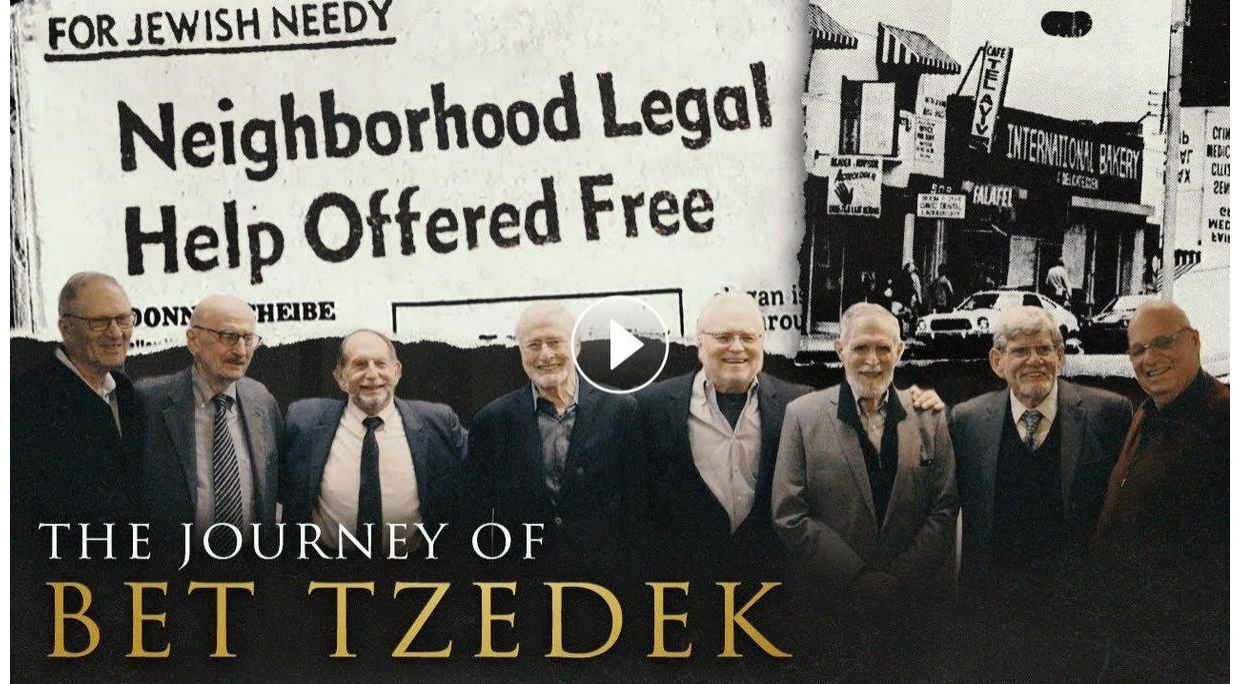
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**Watch a Moving Short Film By WorkingNation
About Bet Tzedek's Founding**



Our founders, some of whom have reunited for the **first time in 30 years**, came together for a powerful short documentary about our inception, mission, and milestones, titled "The Journey of Bet Tzedek." Thank you to **WorkingNation**, a nonprofit documentary production company founded by Art Bilger, for telling our story with beauty and grace. We'd love for you to watch and share the video this Jewish American Heritage Month!

BT in the 1990s & AANHPI Heritage, Jewish American Heritage, and Older Americans Month

Los Angeles Times

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GIVING
A weekly look at
those who help.

When the
poor of
Los Angeles
are victimized
by con artists
and illegal
business
practices,
they turn to
Bet Tzedek.



The staff of Bet Tzedek, comprising paid employees and volunteers, handles some 10,000 cases each year on behalf of the disadvantaged.

Justice for All

By
**BETTUANE
LEVINE**
TIMES
STAFF
WRITER

The old man lived in a car with his dog, parked in front of the only home he had ever known.

"No, I'm not homeless," he told anyone who asked. "The people in my house are strangers, and they won't let me in."

It took the lawyers of Bet Tzedek, which offers free legal services to the poor, to unravel the man's tortured tale. Yes, he had lived in that house with his mother all his life. And, yes, he became the home's owner when she died.

But he was mentally infirm and physically disabled and had never lived on his own before. He felt helpless and confused until two men showed up to become his friends. They took him to doctors, the market, and out for some

fun. They showered him with kindness and earned his trust. Then they had him sign papers so his house could be repaired. They even put him up in a motel 50 miles away—"Just until the repairs are finished," they said.

He never heard from them again.

Attorney David Lash, executive director of Bet Tzedek, cites the case not because it is unusual, but because it is so typical of what happens every day to people with no access to legal help.

"They often lose the basic necessities of life, and sometimes life itself," he said.

The helpless man's "friends" were con artists out to steal his house, Lash said. One of the papers he signed gave them full title to the property, which they sold as soon as they installed

him in the motel. He could never go home again. (Bet Tzedek lawyers eventually got the man the full cash value of his house, and the con artists were jailed.)

Bet Tzedek handles about 10,000 cases each year—cases of poor people who have been scammed, defrauded, abused, denied benefits they deserve, wrongfully evicted from apartments or nursing homes; people who plunk down life savings to buy a car and then find out they are only leasing it. The list of legal atrocities seems endless, and Lash, 44, says it is. Each year brings new evictions; people washing away because they aren't fed properly at nursing homes; young families who rent apartments

Please see Bet Tzedek, E3

Bet Tzedek's front page story in the L.A. Times in 1999.

This month, we are covering Bet Tzedek's milestones and the sociopolitical climate of Los Angeles in the **1990s**, along with **Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month**, **Jewish American Heritage Month**, and **Older Americans Month**. Follow along on our social media accounts, found at the bottom of this news digest, to learn more and join the conversation. You can see previous posts that document our history and milestones since our founding in 1974!

Also, check out our [BT Now from last May](#) that thoroughly captures our decades-long service for older Americans, our roots in the Jewish American community, and our celebration of the AANHPI community.

BT in the Media: Spectrum News 1, L.A. Stories

In-Depth Feature



Spectrum News 1's "L.A. Stories with Giselle Fernandez" aired an **in-depth feature on Bet Tzedek** and our 50th anniversary, the incredible work we do every day, CEO Diego Cartagena's story, and three clients whose lives we've changed for the better.

[Watch the Full Episode](#)

More Action Needed to Protect Garment Workers in the State and Beyond

Our partner Garment Worker Center was featured in this [Marketplace by APM segment](#), which exposes the exploitation of garment workers in California even after the Garment Worker Protection Act (SB 62) passed — and addresses the need for national legislation to protect these essential workers.

"For 20 years, 'Lorena' (not her real name) was a garment worker at a small factory in Los Angeles' Fashion District. Every day, she went to work and sewed something like 30 t-shirt collars or 50 backpack zippers, depending on that day's assignment, and she was paid a few cents per item. That kind of pay is actually illegal now under California's 2022 Garment Workers Protection Act, which banned the piece rate and required that workers be paid by the hour.

But at Lorena's factory, nothing changed. Until she decided to take a stand against low wages and tough working conditions: 'Tú crees que está bien, lo que no está pagando el patrón, verdad no?''* she asked her coworkers. **Do you think it's fair what the owner pays us?*

In the second installment of our two-part series on fast fashion, producer Alice Wilder brings us the story of Lorena's fight for fair pay, and the impact this had on her personal and professional lives."

Pro Bono Call: Help a Widowed Mother and Her Disabled Son Preserve Their Home

Case Description: A mother and young adult living with an intellectual disability need your help to secure their home. Mom and Dad were unmarried and shared three kids. In 2012, they lost one of their sons who had become severely disabled due to medical malpractice. At the time of their son's death, the family was living in the home purchased by the special needs trust of the deceased son. After the son's death, the trustee of SNT signed a quitclaim deed giving the house 50% to Mom and 50% to Dad as tenants in common. Mom and Dad continued to live in the home with their two remaining children: a young developmentally disabled son who is conservator and daughter. Dad recently passed away without doing any estate planning.

Mom called Bet Tzedek about estate planning to protect herself and her disabled son. Our attorneys explained that Dad's share of the house needs to be probated. His heirs are son and daughter. Mom doesn't have the money for probate since the only asset is the family home that they will continue to live in. Mom's goal is for her and son to be able to live in and benefit from the home.

Special Notes: Pro bono attorney should explore if conservatorship over the estate of son is necessary to represent his interest in the probate. The mother only speaks Spanish.

Staffing: This case is best suited for a probate attorney who speaks Spanish or is able to secure a translator.

If interested, contact Director of Pro Bono Programs, Sara Levine, at slevine@bettzedek.org.

Join the Bet Tzedek Team!

Have a passion for helping underserved residents in the community? Want to work alongside dedicated staff and volunteers who help up to 100,000 people per year?

Here are some critical positions we need to fill, plus more (see button below):

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