

Artists Create Murals in Police Station "Soft Rooms"

The murals were placed in rooms where victimized children are held during police investigations.

Story by Lolita Lopez | Aired Tuesday, April 10, 2012



Caption: The rooms where victimized children of sexual abuse and neglect are held as police investigate their case are stark white with metal chairs and steel desks. The so-called "soft rooms" are found at various Los Angeles Police Department stations.

The rooms where victimized children of sexual abuse and neglect are held during police investigations are stark white with metal chairs and steel desks. The so-called "soft rooms" are found at various Los Angeles Police Department Stations.

"We see them when they walk into the station -- the fear and the tension of the unknown," said Captain Jorge Rodriguez, supervising officer at the LAPD Newton Area Station.

He added that a child could be held in these rooms for at least four hours until a permanent home or the Department of Children's Services steps in.

"When I saw the soft room, I knew it couldn't stop with the diaper bags," Adrienne Mack said. The mother of two and project manager at a health care business is also the head of the nonprofit organization, Preparing Parents Foundation.

For the last year, she has been working with law enforcement. She relies on donations and her own money to provide instant diaper bags and train police officers on how to handle infants. The diaper bags are now in three police stations in South Los Angeles.

Mack said she wanted to see where the children were taken and once she saw the rooms, she knew she had to make a change.

Mack began the mural project by making dozens of phone calls to artists and muralists, asking them to donate their time and talents to help transform the soft rooms. With no budget, she said many denied her on the spot.

Mack then called Los Angeles Trade Tech College and the school's director put her in touch with two local artists.

"It's for children so number one its something that I always wanted to do. It is for the community and it's helpful," artist "G", artist explained.

East LA natives G and Raul Gonzalez, donated their brush strokes and efforts to create the safari-inspired mural at the station located at 3400 S. Central Avenue.

The recently completed mural is their second project. The first beach-themed mural lives in a "soft room" at the 77th Precinct.

"We know that the color blue is a healing color, so we wanted to kind of bring that in," Gonzalez said when discussing the vision behind the Newton station mural. "The sunset itself gives you the idea that the sun is going to come back. There's a dark hour but the sun is going to come back."

The transformed room is only a beginning. It remains empty, in need of children's books, furniture, a television, anything and everything, Mack said to make agonizing hours for the children who come here more comforting.

"That's why I don't stop. That's why I make 30 to 40 calls. I beg. I knock. I cry. I will stand on one head, whatever I have to do to get the donations because its not about me. It's about the infants; they don't have a voice," Mack said.

For information or to make a donation, contact the Preparing Parents Foundation at 310-625-3211 or parentingfirst@aol.com.