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Mailbag: Synagogues also comprise Family Promise

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September 28, 2010 | 7:20 p.m.

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I wish to offer both a clarification and an update to the article written by Gretchen Meier on Family Promise of East San Fernando Valley ("Family Promise making progress," Sept. 25).



It is indeed a network of 23 congregations serving homeless families in this area. However, contrary to the otherwise fine report on Family Promise, the network comprises not only churches, but several synagogues as well. The synagogue of which I have the honor of serving as spiritual leader is one of the founding congregations of Family Promise of East San Fernando Valley. Members of Burbank Temple Emanu El serve on the Family Promise board of directors and provide some of the food, support and fellowship so aptly described in the article.

All involved in this program, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mormons and others are united in responding to the prophetic voice in scripture that instructs us to feed the hungry, house the homeless, cloth the naked and comfort the afflicted. One of the most exciting aspects of Family Promise

is that it is a truly interfaith program — it is not a ministry of any one faith community. Equally important, Family Promise is led and operated by lay people — clergy are not the leaders, merely advisors.

Every member of every network congregation has the opportunity to engage in the service of God by directly serving fellow human beings who are in need.

The overnight "Cardboard Box City" on Sept. 25 mentioned at the end of the article was a wonderful

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success. Hundreds of people, ranging in age from preschool to advanced retirement years, gathered in a fundraising and consciousness-raising effort to make real, however briefly, the plight of the homeless in our midst. Sharing a soup kitchen meal, joining together in conversation, song and worship, sleeping in a box or tent in a church parking lot, participants came to better understand each other, as well as the real necessity for the truly unique Family Promise network.

As the article noted, it was indeed a privilege to reside in Box City.

Rabbi Richard Flom

Burbank

Editor's note: Flom is an advisory board member for Family Promise of East San Fernando Valley.

Major religions are based on hearsay

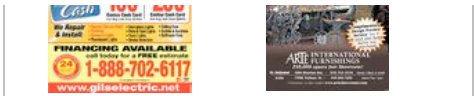
Is tolerance of the beliefs of others a tenet of Christianity? Ummm, no ("In Theory: Balancing science, religion," Sept. 22)?

For someone to advance a theological structure based on assumptions and hearsay, (name any religion); and then present it as fact "because I say so" while denigrating the belief system of another seems absurd, if not "goofy".

At very least, Stephen Hawking doesn't promise that eternal damnation will come to anyone who doesn't agree with his theories.

Jennifer Rabuchin

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