

{ Who are the people you see every day? }

No. 53 in a series.



People We See

in downtown Los Angeles.



Meet Jose Plata.

AGE: "I'm 48."
BIRTHPLACE: "Fresno."
MARITAL STATUS: "Divorced. I have a son and daughter, 15 and 7."
FAMILY: "I have two sisters. One lives in Germany."
PARENTS MARRIED OR DIVORCED? "Both parents are deceased."
MILITARY SERVICE: "No."
WHERE DO YOU LIVE? "Right here on the sidewalk at Main and Third."
WHEN DID YOU MOVE TO LOS ANGELES? "Two years ago."
WHY DID YOU MOVE TO LOS ANGELES?
 "To look for work. I was released from prison."
EDUCATION: "I'm a high school graduate, with a little bit of college."
PLAYED SPORTS IN HIGH SCHOOL?
 "I played football, on the junior varsity."
RELIGION: "Mormon."
MEDICATIONS: "I'm a diabetic, so I take medicine for diabetes."
FAVORITE ACTOR: "Oh man, it's gotta be Steven Seagal."
FAVORITE ACTRESS: "Jennifer Lopez and Demi Moore."
FAVORITE MOVIE: "Animal House."
FAVORITE TV SHOW: "I love the CSI series."
FAVORITE CANDY: "Boston Baked Beans . . . the candy, of course."
FAVORITE FOOD: "Rib-eye steak."
FAVORITE MUSIC: "I really like Fleetwood Mac."
FAVORITE PLACE IN THE CITY: "Long Beach, right next to the ocean."
LAST BOOK READ: "The Lifeguard by James Patterson."
HIS STORY: "Pot, that was the problem. They call pot the gateway drug. Sure enough, I ended up doing meth, and from there my life spun out of control. I ended up getting fired from Brinks and going to prison for four years for a crime I didn't commit. The relationship with my wife had pretty much disintegrated at the time of my arrest. We were both doing drugs and the straw that broke the camel's back was when our son died immediately following childbirth, seven minutes after to be exact. We blamed each other and we never recovered. Then I went to prison. Two months after I got out of prison, my mom died, which really threw my life into a tailspin. I was kicked out of my house and had a restraining order on me . . . and that is when my nights on the street began. Until recently I've been sleeping on the side of the freeway, but I prefer where I'm at now, Third and Main. I'd spend the nights in the missions, but the restrictions are way too tough. You have to be in by 10 p.m., and they wake you up at 4 a.m., which to me is way too early to hit the streets again. So, that's my story."
FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY: "Riding my gold Schwinn."
WHO ARE YOUR FRIENDS? "I know a bunch of guys on the streets, and I'd like to think of them as friends."
LAST JOB: "I worked for Brinks Security for 18 years. Unfortunately I was fired for something I didn't do and was sent to prison."
LAST THING EATEN: "I had some coffee and pizza."
MOST HELPFUL ORGANIZATION: "The Union Mission."
ITEMS ALWAYS WITH YOU:
 "My cross. Well, actually it's a rosary. I wear it around my neck."
IF YOU WERE MAYOR, HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THE HOMELESS SITUATION? "I'd figure out how to house all the homeless."
WHERE WILL YOU BE IN FIVE YEARS?
 "I hope I'll have a job and a roof over my head."
WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH \$1 MILLION?
 "I'd help other homeless people."
ADVICE FOR EVERYDAY PEOPLE: "Best advice for your readers is to not start any kind of drug, and keep your kids away from troubled peers."
MAKE A WISH: "I would love to have my old life back, you know, the one I didn't want. I'd also like to have my security officer badge back."
MOST PRIZED POSSESSION: "My self worth."

The Club gave Jose a Bucket and a Blanket (see left), a toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, two pairs of socks, shampoo, hand wipes, some food, \$20 and bottled water.

The interview took place Sept. 13 at Third and Main Streets downtown.

Photos by Angel Gomez and John Hawkins.

Buckets and Blankets!

Join us as we help those who live on the streets with Buckets and Blankets. Donate to the cause as the Club distributes food, toiletries and blankets to those in need (blankets cost \$7 each).



Buckets and Blankets is produced in cooperation with the **Club Angels** program and **Creative Solutions** – Fred Fowiks and Sue Manzo, LAFD.

Contact John Hawkins or Angel Gomez, and we'll take it from there:

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{ In this monthly feature, Club CEO John Hawkins, and Director of Member Services Angel Gomez, introduce you to people you see every day, but you might not know who they are. The Club reminds you that we all have names and stories to tell. }