

Giving Goes Interactive

on The Streets of New York

Virtual Demonstration Illustrates the Difference a Donation Can Make

New York, NY, March 4, 2010

A street-based innovation in charitable giving that amplifies the growing use of mobile donations by adding an interactive virtual demonstration was launched on building sides in downtown New York today by digital innovation agency Sarkissian Mason, on behalf of Pathways to Housing, a New York-based agency that provides apartments and services for the homeless.

Pedestrians in downtown Manhattan will encounter a video projection of a homeless man — life-size — on the street, asleep but shivering. A call to action to remove this virtual person via text message appears on the projection. Once a passerby interacts with his/her mobile phone, hidden software activates a separate video loop that causes a door to appear in the wall, through which the homeless person enters into a new home. A text message is then sent to the passerby's mobile phone with a code to donate to Pathways to Housing.

“Technology is dramatically changing the model of charitable giving,” explained Sarkissian Mason CEO, Patrick Sarkissian. “Not only is it now easier to solicit funds through mobile codes, but the lower cost per donation has made giving more mainstream. For New Yorkers, we thought providing not only a simple way to give but also a demonstration of what their donation can do — help get homeless individuals off the street — was a creative and compelling way to use this new technology.”

Sarkissian Mason came up with the non-traditional donation concept after re-launching Pathways to Housing's website and noticing the growing trend of charitable giving via mobile text codes. The virtual demonstrations will be projected on the sides of buildings from March 4th through March 6th in pre-selected downtown locations. Information on where to find the demonstration will be posted to the Pathways to Housing's Facebook page at: <http://facebook.com/pathwaystohousing>.

“Pathways to Housing takes a non-traditional approach to providing services and solutions to those in need, so trying a new way to connect with donors made a great deal of sense to us,” explained Sam Tsemberis, Pathways' Founder and CEO.

Founded in 1992, Pathways to Housing is the originator of the Housing First model of addressing homelessness among people with psychiatric disabilities. Housing First is simple: we provide housing first, then add supportive treatment services in the areas of mental and physical health, substance abuse, education, and employment. Since its founding, Pathways has housed more than 600 people in New York alone, and the program maintains an 85%, 5-year retention rate. In addition to its New York headquarters, Pathways to Housing now has program offices in Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and Burlington, VT., and the model has been replicated in more than 40 cities across the United States.

Sarkissian Mason is an independent marketing services agency specializing in the creation and development of breakthrough digital brand solutions for its clients. Founded in 1998, Sarkissian Mason has been a pioneer in helping its clients adapt new technology solutions to better connect with consumers. Its clients include leading Fortune 500 companies including Mazda, Boeing, Chrysler Financial, Nike, and others. Sarkissian Mason is headquartered in New York with offices in Detroit, Arizona, and California.