JOIN THE MOVEMENT
Our mission is to change the way the world sees and serves our neighbors experiencing homelessness.
Restore Dignity, Hope, and Humanity with Radical Hospitality®

LavaMae® teaches community leaders around the world to deliver mobile showers and other essential care services to unhoused people using a model of extraordinary care.
Homelessness in San Francisco has been a wrenching problem for decades, so seemingly intractable that most residents simply look away.
In 2013, Doniece Sandoval had three experiences that compelled her to open her eyes and truly see—and then to act.

First she witnessed three of her neighbors, all men in their 80s struggling against the tide of gentrification, get evicted. They were forced to live in their cars, and then even those refuges were repossessed. All three ended up on the street.

Around the same time, she recalls, "I took a cab ride that changed my life. As we hit the Tenderloin, a neighborhood with the highest concentration of homelessness in San Francisco, the cab driver turned to me and said, 'Welcome to the land of broken dreams.' I looked out the window and my first thought was that not a single person on that street had dreamed they would grow up to be homeless. That thought of them as children really pierced me, because at that time my own daughter was five years old."

A few months later in the design district, Sandoval passed a young woman who was panhandling. "She was distraught, disheveled, and she kept saying over and over that she would never be clean. While I knew her words probably meant many things, I got curious about what her chances were of getting physically clean."

Not good, it turned out. Sandoval researched the question, and what she found shocked her: the city had only 16 public shower stalls for about 7,000 unhoused people. A few weeks later she read that the city transit agency was retiring old buses. And then it clicked: "The bells went off in my head and I got this crazy idea to take those buses and convert them into mobile showers and toilets."

She drew city insiders and corporate partners into her vision, pushed through the implementation hurdles, and worked with a designer to create visually appealing, thoughtfully appointed rolling facilities. Barely a year later, Lava Mae (a play on "wash me" in Spanish) began taking dignity, hope, and a fresh sense of opportunity to the streets.
Within weeks of the June 2014 launch, Sandoval was struck by a powerful yet nuanced quality in the service that two of her team members provided. They had a secret salve that healed Lava Mae guests. It came from looking them in the eye, learning their names and stories, wishing them well with genuine feeling, and generally recognizing their common humanity. She realized that the way service is delivered is more transformative than the service itself—and Lava Mae’s core Radical Hospitality® approach was born.
"I walk down the streets with my head held high"

"I don't feel offended standing next to people"

"You could feel like a million bucks"

"They're like my Tuesday family"
Lava Mae’s launch struck a chord. The need on the streets was obvious—people could feel it in their own skin—and that need combined with a strong brand, savvy communications, and effusive guests sparked widespread media coverage.

That attention brought inquiries from around the world from people who wanted Lava Mae-style services in their own communities, and as Lava Mae grew, expanding service to Los Angeles and then to Oakland, so did the requests for assistance.
In January 2020, the organization rebranded as LavaMaeˣ—for exponential growth and impact acceleration.

Lava Mae met its five-year impact goal 16 months early, exceeding 30,000 guests served in September 2019. By then, the organization had fielded more than 4,250 inquiries from city agencies, nonprofits, governments, refugee aid organizations, and individuals in the U.S. and 39 other countries seeking to provide Lava Mae-like services. Its do-it-yourself toolkit for mobile shower and care services had been downloaded over 2,700 times, and the Lava Mae team had inspired, advised, or trained 157 organizations worldwide.

Poised to leap to a new level, Lava Mae saw meeting the surging demand for street-based services as its new calling. In January 2020, the organization rebranded as LavaMaeˣ—for exponential growth and impact acceleration.

LavaMaeˣ maintains direct service in our home cities to provide real-life training and engage guests in testing product and service innovations, but primarily focuses on teaching people around the world to bring mobile showers and other essential care services to their own streets, where unhoused neighbors need them most.

That need is immense: The 2019 point-in-time count in the U.S. identified about 568,000 people experiencing homelessness, and that’s likely an undercount. Some estimates of the true total exceed 1.5 million people. Getting an accurate picture of global homelessness is extremely challenging, but the last global survey—by the United Nations in 2005—estimated that 100 million people were homeless worldwide.

In the face of this crisis, LavaMaeˣ’s mission is to change the way the world sees and serves people experiencing homelessness. Our current impact goal is to create a global network of communities launching and sustaining LavaMaeˣ-designed programs that serve 100,000 people moving through homelessness by 2024. The vision: a world where hygiene is treated as a human right and communities everywhere mobilize to provide Radical Hospitality.
Driving impact with a culture of innovation

LavaMae\textsuperscript{x} maintains service on the streets of San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles to keep our finger on the pulse of the street, provide real-life training to affiliates, and develop new essential care programs.
Beginning with our pioneering mobile showers concept, the original bus conversions (we now use trailers), and the creation of Radical Hospitality, LavaMae* has nurtured a culture of innovation.

We dedicate at least 10% of team members’ time to innovating new products and services based on what we learn from guests on the street.

This human-centered design approach drove our development of Pop-Up Care Villages (launched in 2016), Hygiene+ service (launched in 2018), hygiene kit distribution (launched in 2020), and a high-capacity DIY handwashing station (launched in 2020), which LavaMae* rapidly prototyped and deployed at the height of the pandemic to make clean hands accessible to all.

Pop-Up Care Villages (PUCVs) and Hygiene+ locations model collaborative, multiple-provider service delivery. At LavaMae* PUCVs, guests can get haircuts, medical care, legal advice, employment assistance, and other free services. At Hygiene+ locations, LavaMae* partners with providers to bring targeted services such as medical care, clothing, and food to shower sites on a regular basis.

Anyone can build the handwashing stations using our DIY toolkit and supplies available at hardware stores, starting with a 32-gallon trash can. Unexpectedly, the most prolific handwashing deployer has been Red Feather, which helps Navajo Nation and Hopi Nation residents make home health and safety upgrades. Up to 70,000 people (40%) in the Navajo Nation lack running water in their homes.

The station is also useful in disaster recovery and refugee situations.

“They have been burned so many times that it’s hard for them to trust the system again. Radical Hospitality is about making people feel welcome, and it’s a big part of how we show up with LavaMae*”

Katie Machado
UC San Francisco Street Nursing Team
Since debuting in 2013 as Lava Mae, LavaMae’s impact from our direct services includes:

- **32,500+**
  Guests served with showers and care services

- **86,000+**
  Showers delivered to our grateful guests

- **53+**
  Pop-Up Care Villages hosted, mobilizing 250+ service partners and recruited 1,700+ volunteers

- **800+**
  Handwashing stations deployed in 17+ communities, providing 1+ million handwashes

- **8,000+**
  Toolkit downloads for shower service, Pop-Up Care Villages, and DIY handwashing stations

- **10,000+**
  COVID-19 hygiene kits distributed to 35+ locations in the SF Bay Area and Los Angeles
Scaling to support a global network of mobile care providers

LavaMae’s total impact far exceeds our direct service: LavaMae has directly trained and helped launch 49 service providers since we began beta testing our consulting program in 2018.
2018
Consulting beta-testing begins, resulting in 13 new program launches within two years

2020
Consulting services launch, resulting in 26 new program launches within two years

2022
LavaMae®-trained service providers have served 47,000+ guests with showers and care services since 2018
Recognizing that the most sustainable care initiatives come from the communities where unhoused people live, LavaMae® aims to accelerate rather than dictate local response

We do that using a mix of do-it-yourself toolkits, group and one-on-one advising, seed funding allocation, and a community platform that links advisers in a global network of other providers.

LavaMae® provides free resources, including mobile shower, Pop-Up Care Village, and handwashing station toolkits, at LavaMae® Connect (launched in 2021), a global community space where people bringing essential care services to the street can access online training, solve problems, and share innovations. We also offer one-on-one training in operating on-street services and safely managing guests, and often counsel affiliates for a year or more after launch.

Active programs and prospective provider numbers are growing: LavaMae®’s training, advising, DIY toolkits, and inspirational model have spurred more than 340 providers in 280 communities in 16 countries to launch LavaMae®-designed programs. Currently, we are consulting with over 40 providers, and more than 1,000 people—from 600 cities in 29 countries—are active members on the Connect platform.

“LavaMae® sets a standard for quality. Every element of the shower service is designed to provide a sense of dignity and hope to people moving through homelessness. Radical Hospitality helps them move on to the next step in their lives”

~ Lance Olinski
Streetside Showers
McKinney Texas
Supercharging the multiplier effect: new funding brings more care everywhere

The Right To Shower, a Unilever brand built as a social enterprise, has been a key partner in scaling our impact.
The Right To Shower donates profits to shower initiatives that help people moving through homelessness, including LavaMae®. In turn, LavaMae® draws on our expertise to advise the brand, identifying, vetting, and recommending grants.

These small grants, typically up to $20,000 per project, have an outsized impact. Most recipients use the money to buy or build out a shower trailer, and it’s often the difference between them starting service or stalling out. With our model proven and high-demand for LavaMae®-designed services, the only barrier to bringing Radical Hospitality to more streets across the U.S. and the world is funding.

This funding was essential to our program. We are a small, grassroots organization; and funding from The Right To Shower springboarded us forward to be able to offer over 100 showers a month to those in need.

Ricka Davis-Sheard
S.H.A.R.E Community
Antioch, CA
To meet the global demand for our work, LavaMae is raising $10 million over the next three years.

The investment will provide seed funding for service providers, enable program support and impact measurement, and fuel our innovation to reach our 2024 impact goal.
Seed funding for service providers

We work with dozens of organizations that could launch or scale their service right away with seed funding. New funding will also allow us to vet a much larger group waiting in the wings.

The need for this funding is urgent given the pandemic-driven increase in unhoused people and the hundreds of people on the LavaMae* Connect platform who want to serve them.

With launch costs for mobile showers ranging from $55,000 to $85,000, depending on the size of the trailer, including maintenance and operational costs, we’ve identified a three-year seed funding model that allows a provider to establish a sustainable foundation for success.

Year One
Up to $20,000 in seed funding from LavaMae* for a provider that has demonstrated the ability to galvanize their community is often the last piece needed to bring care services to the street.

Year Two
Up to $20,000 the following year, a provider can expand service hours and new locations.

Year Three
Up to $20,000 the last year, a provider can purchase another mobile shower trailer and continue to expand services and reach more communities.

Seed money goes even further with Pop-Up Care Villages: up to $5,000 enables a new provider to rally care providers to bring critical services to the streets, gain visibility, get a sense of unhoused neighbors’ needs, and start building relationships.
Program support and impact measurement

Multi-year funding will enable LavaMae to continue to utilize our direct services as training grounds, provide in-depth toolkits, online training, and troubleshooting through LavaMae Connect, and offer ongoing advising to ensure their success. In addition to supporting service providers, LavaMae vets them for readiness to make optimal use of seed funding and tracks their impact by collecting data and guest stories year over year. This enables funders to efficiently catalyze and measure the effectiveness of grassroots organizations throughout a region.

Innovation

The third key investment area is focused on product development and service model innovation that will contribute to our long-term financial sustainability.

This includes manufacturing a "shower-in-a-box"—an idea in the wings that emerged as a pressing need when the pandemic made it harder than ever for people to stay clean. This portable shower will also be valuable in other situations where people need portable hygiene.

This investment area also includes an expansion of our consulting program that will provide customized training for businesses and large nonprofit enterprises on Radical Hospitality, and much more.
Changing the way the world sees and serves our neighbors experiencing homelessness

With proven leadership and programs, LavaMae* is ideally positioned to accelerate adoption of our model and reach tens of thousands of people in need.
Kris Kepler, CEO

Kris Kepler, who took over from Sandoval as CEO in 2020, has guided LavaMae through our pivot from a focus on delivering mobile care services to a focus on teaching others to provide LavaMae-designed programs.

Kepler came to LavaMae with a 20-year history in user experience design, and she applies that mindset to developing products and services for the unhoused.

Doniece Sandoval, Founder

Doniece founded LavaMae (then Lava Mae) in 2013 as a solution to the lack of showers and toilets available to her unhoused neighbors in San Francisco. She won Toyota’s Mother of Invention award in 2015 and was named a CNN Hero in 2017.

These leaders and the full LavaMae team are dedicated people from diverse backgrounds who have deep personal connections to this work.

Our team is known for championing:

- Dedication
- Ingenuity
- Growth Mentality
- Creativity
- User-design
- Collaboration
- Compassion
The programs LavaMae\textsuperscript{x} and our provider network deliver are not mere band-aids

They address some of the root causes of extended homelessness: lack of access to hygiene and feelings of hopelessness generated by failed interactions with tattered safety-net programs.

Our overly complex, underfunded, fragmented social welfare systems leave many people to fend for themselves—and yet the needs will only increase with the fallout from the pandemic and the emergence of climate refugees.

The ingenuity and resilience of people who live on the streets are a constant inspiration to us, but those personal resources are not inexhaustible. LavaMae\textsuperscript{x}-designed programs and our Radical Hospitality approach restore dignity, rekindle optimism, and fuel a sense of opportunity for people on the verge of giving up.

They help people tap into their power to persevere. And they model a community-driven, human-centered approach that could guide the reconstruction of our social safety net.

Everyone deserves to be clean, be seen, and be treated as a valuable member of our community, worthy of love and respect.

We’ve seen the impact of this approach, and we are spreading it around the globe—as fast as our resources allow us to move.
Join Us

Now is the time for you to take a leap forward and build a world where everyone has access to hygiene and dignity