

MODERN LUXURY

LOCAL  
HEROES

Los Angeles

# In Gratitude

The recent wildfires prove that in times of crisis, Angelenos come together stronger than ever. Here, we honor the hometown heroes and global warriors who united to help those in need restore hope in trying times.

by LAURAECKSTEIN JONES

## GEORGIE SMITH

When the L.A. fires displaced families across the city, Georgie Smith, CEO and founder of A Sense of Home ([asenseofhome.org](http://asenseofhome.org)), launched Home Bank LA ([homebankla.org](http://homebankla.org)) to provide fully furnished home environments for those who lost everything. “By day three of the fires, we were inundated with requests for our insights into rentals,” Smith shares. “We worked with realtors to create lists, and then we immediately saw the void... empty rentals.”

Smith and her team moved quickly. “We found a donated warehouse space adjacent to Altadena, launched a website, integrated our custom software, worked with software engineers to evolve the software to meet the specific need, raised funds, hired up staff, communicated with our community, spoke with all furniture and home goods partners and began a new pipeline of in-kind donations and volunteers,” she explains. “We had over 150 applicants in only one week.”

Their approach is deeply personal. “We don’t just provide furniture. HBLA provides a custom-designed home, especially for each applicant,” Smith explains. “Each item is selected per the individual or family’s needs, dreams, goals and favorite colors.”

The impact is clear. “The general response is that this is the most needed service,” says Smith, who knows the work is far from over. “Home Bank LA is here for the long haul. The rebuild will take years.” While the initial community response was incredible, Smith hopes it continues over time. “I would love to see it every day but not in response to catastrophic events,” she says.



From top: A Sense of Home and Home Bank LA founder Georgie Smith; volunteers share a moment of joy.