

Angels Manager Joe Maddon lends a hand to Orange County homeless families



New Angels manager Joe Maddon, left, spent part of his Tuesday evening at the Orange County Rescue Mission's Village of Hope in Tustin, helping to feed and clothe hundreds of homeless families. Maddon's charitable foundation, Respect90, organized a dinner and provided socks, shirts and backpacks to the kids and their parents. (Photo by Jeff Fletcher, SCNG staff)



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TUSTIN — The turnaround that Joe Maddon is trying to lead with the Angels is nothing compared to what is facing the people he met on Tuesday night.

Maddon spent part of his evening at the [Orange County Rescue Mission's Village of Hope](#), helping to feed and clothe hundreds of homeless families.

Maddon, whose [Respect90](#) organization has coordinated events at each of the stops where he's managed, walked away from this event impressed.

"This might be the best I've seen," Maddon said. "It's a complete program. It's not just about a meal. It's not just about some counseling. It's about getting people back on their feet and keeping families together and sending them back to the workforce with a lot of dignity and feeling good about themselves."

The Village of Hope is a full-service facility for homeless families, offering dormitory-style living, with a communal dining area and medical facilities. Jim Palmer, the president of the Orange County Rescue Mission, said it is "the most comprehensive facility in the country for homeless women and children."

The facility can house 265 people, and it was nearly at capacity on the night that Maddon's group came by.

Respect90 – so named because Maddon asks his players to respect the game by running hard all 90 feet to first base – was created five years ago because of Maddon’s desire to give back to the communities where he’s lived. While managing the Tampa Bay Rays and Chicago Cubs, he held events in Tampa, Chicago and his hometown of Hazelton, Pa. Maddon had been looking for a place in Orange County since he was hired by the Angels in October, and this event came together in just three weeks, Palmer said.

The dinner was catered by [Louie’s By the Bay](#), a Newport Beach Italian restaurant.

As kids and their parents munched on pasta, salad and cheesecake, Maddon spent 45 minutes bopping around the room, shaking hands and taking pictures and meeting the people.

“It’s really awesome because so often support is through a check we get in the mail,” Palmer said. “To have someone of his caliber and heart say ‘I want to come down and talk to folks and be part of their lives,’ that’s outstanding.”

Maddon also helped hand out socks, shirts and backpacks to the families.

“They may be struggling a little bit, but they are on their way back,” Maddon said. “The kids are really bright. The kids converse really well. The grown-ups are grateful and polite.”

A few of them were even Angels fans, wanting to engage Maddon with talk about how the team was looking as it prepares for spring training in less than two weeks.

“The pitching has to answer the bell,” Maddon told reporters. “The pitching is going to dictate our success or not success. You can anticipate a certain level of play from the offense and the defense and the position players. Whatever we can extrapolate from the pitching staff will take us to the playoffs and beyond. My goal is to be in the playoffs this year, not next year.”