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Kobe Bryant's New Charity To Fight Homelessness In LA

Kobe and Vanessa Bryant met with the press today at My Friend's Place, a haven for homeless youth based in Hollywood, to announce their intention to "help [homeless youth] kick butt" and build self-sufficient lives. The couple are forming a new charity initiative, the Kobe and Vanessa Bryant Family Foundation (KVBFF), to eradicate youth homelessness in Los Angeles. Bryant admitted that he and Vanessa still need a lot more education on issues of youth homelessness, but what he has learned so far has made a huge impact. Between 7,000 and 10,000 of LA's homeless are under the age of 24, a fact that Bryant said "shocked the hell out of me." He mentioned that as a father of two, the problem just "hits home more."

Bryant insisted on speaking only about his new non-profit organization and issues of homelessness, smacking down any questions concerning the Lakers. He quickly dismissed an inquiry about the team's new coach, Mike Brown, saying, "right now's not the time or the place...it's unfair to the kids." When asked if he was watching the current NBA finals, he merely paused and murmured, "uh, not really." Bryant turned the talk about basketball back to homelessness, stating that his career as a sports star cannot compare to what youth on the streets go through daily, which, in his words, takes "real determination." "On my way to games, I noticed children and families living on the streets blocks away from where I play," Bryant elaborated in a printed statement.

Also in attendance were Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and the President and CEO of homeless charity Step Up On Second, Tod Lipka. Yaroslavsky commended Bryant's initiative, calling homelessness "one of the great stains" on our city. Los Angeles has the largest homeless population out of any metropolitan area in the country. "On any given night, some 48,000 individuals are living on the streets of L.A.," Lipka added in a press release. In light of these staggering facts, Bryant, who has been based in L.A. since 1996, said that he and his wife "knew that [they] wanted to do something in [their] own backyard."

The Bryants' charity will partner with existing aid organizations like My Friend's Place in order to raise funds, improve services, and increase awareness about the pervasive problem of homeless youth in Los Angeles.

To learn more about reducing homelessness in Los Angeles, please visit the websites of [the Kobe and Vanessa Bryant Family Foundation](#), [Step Up On Second](#), and [My Friend's Place](#).