



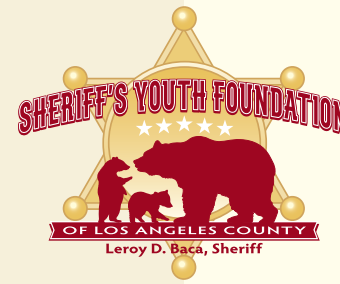
2012 ★ 2013 PROGRAMS



Dedicated to providing Los Angeles County youth with safe facilities, planned programs, and the vital tools they need to thrive and succeed in life.

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Dedicated to providing Los Angeles County youth with safe facilities, planned programs, and the vital tools they need to thrive and succeed in life.

Programs:

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Youth Activities League
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Success Through Awareness & Resistance
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Foundation Shows Youths a Path to a Better Life

Safe communities don't just "happen." It takes vigilance. It takes teamwork. It takes the collective desire of residents to live in a place where they feel safe, and their children are safe.

It takes hope.

If a child grows up seeing nothing other than a cycle of crime, drugs and abusive lifestyles, chances are that child will continue the cycle. But if the child sees a better way — a path to a productive, safe and happy life — the child will invariably size up the options, and choose well.

At the nonprofit Los Angeles County Sheriff's Youth Foundation, we show them that path to success. The Foundation and its team of deputies, civilian employees and volunteers help at-risk youth throughout the County to grow, be healthy and develop the tools they need to become successful adults.

Through the Foundation's seven mission-specific programs, the Sheriff's Youth Foundation steers kids clear from drugs and crime, helps them pursue positive after-school activities, and enables them to see a future for themselves as productive adults living in safe communities. The Foundation achieves successes every day, making positive impacts on youths throughout our vast county. It is one of the most gratifying aspects of working in law enforcement — being able to make a positive impact on one's community.

Those successes would not be happening without the generous support of many donors. Our nonprofit organization depends on contributions from the community, and we are grateful for each one. If you are already a supporter of the Foundation, we offer you our sincere thanks. And if you are considering becoming a contributor, in this brochure we provide information and success stories that illustrate the Foundation's valuable role in promoting communities that are safe and offer a higher quality of life for all.

We're proud of the Foundation's success in helping children and teens discover their own abilities to become happy, productive adults. We're proud to help them discover hope.

Leroy D. Baca
Sheriff, Los Angeles County

Sheriff's Youth Foundation of Los Angeles County • 4700 Ramona Blvd., 4th F



Message from the Executive Director

Bringing Real Solutions Directly to At-Risk Youths

People who pursue careers in law enforcement aren't prone to empty talk. They're typically people of action who want to make their communities better places to live, and they aren't the type to just sit idly and wonder if things will ever get better.

They do something about it.

That's why I am so proud to be associated with the Sheriff's Youth Foundation of Los Angeles County. Our Foundation isn't about meaningless chatter — it's about action. Our seven programs each fill a particular role as they work together to help achieve the Foundation's mission of steering youths toward lives of responsible adulthood. And they each do it in a specific, hands-on, action-oriented way.

Whether it's the STAR deputies taking drug and violence prevention education right to the schools, or the VIDA program directly changing the lives of at-risk kids, one at a time, or a boxing instructor at a Youth Activities League helping youth pursue physical fitness after school, everyone who is involved with the Sheriff's Youth Foundation touches the lives of our communities' youths in a positive and tangible way.

I'm not going to lie: It's rewarding.

As you read the stories of success from our seven Foundation programs in the following pages, you'll recognize that common thread. Each of the programs tackles the task of helping youths grow into happy, productive adults — thereby promoting safer communities — by approaching it in a way that has a very real and direct impact on the lives of our county's children. Sometimes the action that's needed is a bit of tough love, perhaps involving a tour of a county jail. Sometimes it's esteem-building, helping kids find what's best in themselves. Or it might just be help with homework after school.

The common thread, though, is action. The programs of the Sheriff's Youth Foundation enable us to bring resources to action in the interests of our communities' youths. After all we're not just going to hope for a better future. We're going to do something about it.

— A.J. Rotella Executive Director



Seven Programs, Each of Them a Star

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Youth Foundation utilizes seven individual programs to meet the needs of the youth of Los Angeles County, helping children and teens pursue happy, productive lives — and steer clear of crime, drugs and other issues that can damage young lives.

YAL

Youth Activities League (YAL) serves at-risk children ages 7-17 throughout the county. Our YAL centers provide tutoring, socialization, field trips, sports and other character-building activities during the all-important hours of 3 to 7 p.m.

STAR

Success Through Awareness and Resistance (STAR) provides drug, gang and violence prevention education directly to students in schools, reaching more than 46,000 students each month in cooperation with more than 202 schools countywide.

VIDA

The Vital Intervention Directional Alternative (VIDA) program is an intensive 16-week assistance, education and counseling program for at-risk youth whose behavior has demonstrated the possibility of leading to serious consequences. The deputy-staffed program steers youths toward positive life paths.

START

Sheriff's Teaching At-Risk Teens (START) educates at-risk youth about the consequences of their choices, by taking students on tours of the Men's Central Jail, where, in a real-life experience reminiscent of "Scared Straight," they hear directly from inmates who describe their experiences with incarceration.

BEAR

Bicycle Education and Registration (BEAR) is a five-week program in which deputies teach bicycle repair and safety, using bicycles that have been donated or confiscated. Students gain hands-on experience, and upon completion of the program they get to keep the bicycle they have been working on.

999 For Kids

999 For Kids helps medically fragile and vulnerable children, many of whom have suffered physical or emotional abuse. 999 For Kids raises funds to purchase medical equipment and wheelchairs, and to send the children to summer camps for the deaf, blind and those with other medical issues.

SHARE Tolerance

The name says it all: Stop Hate And Respect Everyone. SHARE Tolerance educates youths using a mobile theater in which deputies show a documentary on hate crimes. After the film, deputies lead discussions about tolerating others regardless of factors like race, religion and sexual orientation.

STAR Success Through Awareness And Resistance

Educating Kids on the Dangers of Drugs, Gangs and Violence



It's the most wide-reaching of all of the Sheriff's Youth Foundation programs: STAR (Success Through Awareness & Resistance) reaches more than 100,000 youths each year, delivering classroom programs that educate the County's children about the dangers of drugs, gangs and violence.

The classes are co-taught throughout Los Angeles County schools by specially trained Sheriff's Deputies and classroom teachers. STAR programs are at work in 202 schools within 31 school districts in 31 contract cities and the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

The drug prevention classes have been operating in Los Angeles County schools since 1985, and are primarily geared toward the last two grade levels of elementary school and the first two grade levels of middle school, but are also offered to other grades according to requests from the school districts.

Lessons cover proven prevention techniques to empower youth to fight the lures of drug use and gang membership, while improving their self-esteem. Issues include: why people use drugs; how to overcome peer pressure; how to actually "say no"; and how to improve self-esteem. Instruction also covers gangs and the dangers associated with membership, anger management and cultural awareness.

In addition to classroom lessons, STAR also conducts parent education classes in an effort to educate families about the warning signs of drug usage so they may be better able to deal with a problem before it escalates.

The U.S. Department of Education's Principles of Effectiveness and the "No Child Left Behind Act" require that schools provide



scientifically based programs that have been proven to be effective in preventing tobacco use, alcohol use, other drug use, and violence. STAR deputies provide such lessons from research-validated model programs, including:

- **Too Good for Drugs:** This prevention program includes developmentally appropriate curriculum for each grade level from kindergarten through 8th grade, and there's also a separate program available for high school students. The program incorporates role play, cooperative learning, games, small group activities and class discussions.
- **Too Good for Violence:** A companion program to Too Good For Drugs, this program reinforces and enhances social behaviors and skills, and is designed to improve children's ability to steer clear of conflict and violence. The program is available for students in grades kindergarten through 12.
- **Project ALERT:** Created and tested by RAND, the nation's leading drug policy think tank, Project ALERT is geared toward students in grades 7 and 8. It addresses the pro-drug mindset of modern teens and improves the chances that they will remain drug-free.
- **Drugs, Pregnancy and You:** This program addresses the problem of babies exposed to drugs by their mother's substance abuse. The effort, which includes medical professionals, informs high school students about the dangers of drug exposure during pregnancy.

STAR establishes a lasting partnership between law enforcement and the community. Deputies regularly participate in community events and provide public speaking engagements for community, church and business groups upon request.

The STAR program is a template for other programs through the nation. STAR's leadership is frequently contacted to train other law enforcement departments in STAR methods and curriculum.

STAR- The Vital Evidence:

Deputy Brings His Love of Teaching to STAR Program

Deputy Dave Horner discovered he loved to teach more than two decades ago while serving as a training officer at the Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Station. Then, Horner got a call from a friend assigned to the Substance Abuse Narcotics Education Bureau who told Horner he should apply to the unit. He decided to give it a try. He expected to stay two or three years, then move on to another assignment. Fast-forward 20 years and Dave is still working in what is now known as the Success Through Awareness & Resistance (STAR) Unit.

After beginning to teach 4th- to 7th-grade students in elementary and middle schools, Horner found he not only enjoyed what he was doing, but also he was able to make a difference in young people's lives. During a busy month in patrol he could take 20-plus people to jail. At the STAR unit, he has positive contact with more than 2,000 students every month. The young people get the chance to see deputy sheriffs in a positive way, a departure from the usual patrol, jail, or court type of contact.

Horner has found it rewarding to have such a positive impact on their lives. The comments from parents, community members, teachers and administrators helped to reinforce the fact that STAR deputies make a difference. During the past several years Horner has seen many of his former students as adults in various jobs and careers. On many occasions a young adult has asked, "Aren't you Deputy Horner? You were my deputy in elementary school!"

Several are teachers, and many have gone on to careers in the military, or as firefighters or lawyers. The most rewarding experiences, he says, have been to see several former students who are now Sheriff's Deputies. He is sure there are many factors that led to the choices they made to join the Sheriff's Department, and he likes to think that the time they spent with him in class helped. It most certainly did.

VIDA Vital Intervention Directional Alternative

Academy-Style Program Changes Lives for the Better



What does the VIDA program do? Nothing short of steering youths away from crime toward a positive life path, recognizing each youth's unique needs and circumstances, and building them into responsible, productive, happy and confident adults.

It's all in a day's work for the 23-deputy Vital Intervention Directional Alternative (VIDA) program.

The deputies take great pride in their 16-week academy-style program, which serves non-violent, medium- to high-risk youths ages 11 to 17, with the goal of setting them on a crime-free path toward responsible adulthood. Many come from broken homes or lack parental involvement, and are often referred via courts and other government agencies.

"We have about an 80 percent success rate," says Sgt. Mark Cripe, who heads up the VIDA program. "A year out, eight out of 10 don't get in trouble with law enforcement again."

Further, many VIDA graduates provide inspirational success stories. "We have kids coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq, and they're war heroes," Cripe said.

VIDA includes individual and family counseling, career education, physical activities, a career fair called Dreams Day, and esteem-building events including the VIDA Games. Through an arrangement with the Chicago School of Psychology in Los Angeles, the youths receive professional-level counseling from doctoral students. VIDA programs are operated at eight locations countywide: Lancaster, Palmdale, Altadena, East L.A., Lakewood, Century Station, South L.A., and Santa Clarita.

The first half of the program is spent "breaking down" the kids, figuring out what makes them tick and bluntly illustrating the stark realities about a life of crime — including a visit to a county jail. The second half is spent "building up" the kids, guiding them toward positive life choices, leading to a graduation celebration.

"The opportunity to impact people's lives — I think every deputy comes into this department with the hope, that's what you do," says Deputy Stephen Rust. "As grand as that sounds, I think most of us want to create societal change. Criminals typically have a long rap sheet, so if we take a kid who is just starting out with crime, and we can prevent that from continuing, how many crimes have we prevented?"

Rust says VIDA deputies often form special bonds with the youths who complete the program.

"Most of the time we are the first people who have come along and said what we mean and do what we say," Rust says. "I would say 98 percent of the kids come here hating us, and the ones who make it to the end love us."

One of his former VIDA students called him this past year and invited him to attend her graduation. "She's graduating from high school and going into the Marine Corps," Rust says. "She called and said, 'Look, I made it! I'm doing good.'"



VIDA deputies have learned to figure out what makes the youths tick, and help them resolve the issues affecting them.

"We're like bootleg psychologists here," Rust says. "Everything we do is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and cognitive behavior intervention. It basically boils down to one thing: You have to find out where that kid is hurting and address that hurt, whether it's parents who are uninvolved, parents who have died or are incarcerated, or kids who were physically or sexually abused. Once we figure out what is hurting, we'll implement a program to help them get past that."

"The counseling is a very important component of our program," says Deputy Thomas Spiegle. "A kid hooked on meth is not the core issue. The core issue is, 'What got the kid to start using meth?'"

Spiegle, who likens most law enforcement activity to "stringing beads without any knot at the end of the rope," says the key is communication.

"We always tell our parents, 'Listen to what your kids say,'" Spiegle says. "That's where I think VIDA really shines — we will listen to the kids, and we will always do what we say we will do."

The kids come from all socioeconomic groups, too — everything from inner-city kids to those whose parents are financially well off. VIDA deputies specialize in recognizing the unique needs of each of them.

"We see a lot of post-traumatic stress disorder in our kids," Spiegle says. "We have kids who have slept on the floor because they are worried about stray bullets."

Others are known to carry several different shirts in their backpacks, because they go through different neighborhoods on their way home from school, and the color of one's shirt can mean the difference between being a target and not being one.

At the other end of the spectrum, Spiegle tells the story of a youth who, upon enrolling in VIDA, was convinced his affluent parents didn't care what happened to him. "On the outside looking in, you think, 'You have everything,'" Spiegle said. "The kid said, 'My mom and dad love our horse more than they love me.'"

Whatever the situation — whether it's a kid from a gang-infested neighborhood or one from the suburbs who has turned to drugs or found trouble to seek attention — Spiegle says the reward of being a VIDA deputy is in seeing the positive results.

"I enjoy 'fixing' families. I have parents who still send me cookies, and kids who have grown up and they call me to reminisce," Spiegle said. "With our kids, I see how the story ends. I have a direct impact on how a child's future ends up playing out."

VIDA - The Vital Evidence:

Steering Youths Back Toward the Right Path

Kyle Goldman had always succeeded academically, but the charismatic 17-year-old was on a downward spiral. He was getting into trouble at school and when he got home, he'd take out his anger on his family. When his parents, Carl and Jeri Seratti Goldman, ran out of ideas about how to guide Kyle back to the right path, they turned to VIDA.

VIDA Deputy Tim Ferrone says many parents, unlike the Goldmans, may be in denial or may not even notice the signs that show that their child is in trouble. Often, VIDA is difficult for parents.

"We get some moms with tears in their eyes. I tell them to go back to last week when their child cussed at them or stole their credit card or came home late or was under the influence," says Ferrone. "It's time to make the hard decisions."

Kyle's father, Carl, describes the VIDA experience as "an incredible and hard 16 weeks" but strongly recommends that parents take it into consideration if their child is in serious need of redirection.

Carl says his son underwent a significant transformation thanks to VIDA, and is back on a path toward responsible adulthood. During his time in VIDA, Kyle even took on a leadership role. Like many of the teens there, he was experiencing leadership for the first time. As the Guide, he was in charge of three squad leaders, who were then in charge of a team of 10.

"I made sure everyone stayed on the right path throughout the program and gave 100 percent," says Kyle. "I also learned to make decisions that would benefit the team as a whole."

START Sheriffs Teaching At-Risk Teens

Thinking About Prison Life? START Makes Kids Think Again



Some of the nation's most hardened criminals call it home: It's the L.A. County Men's Central Jail, the largest jail in the free world. It houses some 5,000 inmates, and it's no place for kids.

That's exactly why START takes them there. The Sheriff's Teaching At-Risk Teens program gives at-risk youths a blunt, firsthand illustration of the consequences that can come from their choices.

And, START pulls no punches — figuratively speaking, of course.

"It's a very straightforward look at prison life — and all of the reasons why you'd want to **avoid** prison life," says Deputy Paul Vargas, a 15-year deputy who has been in charge of START for the past five years.

The youths' visits are conducted on Saturdays, and teens are referred to START through sheriff's stations and other Sheriff's Youth Foundation programs, like the Youth Activities League and the Vital Intervention Directional Initiative (VIDA).

"The kids come in the morning on a Saturday, and we treat the kids similarly to a paramilitary academy," says Vargas. "We try to teach the kids structure, because they don't have that."

Before the youths are led into the jail, they are given some clues as to what to expect.

"We talk about the type of image that we have, what goes on in the jail, what inmates wear, what things these kids take for granted, like Mom's cooking and sleeping in a bed with a comfortable pillow, privacy going to the re-



stroom, privacy taking a shower. These kids don't think about that," Vargas said. "And then we start walking through the halls of the largest jail in the free world."

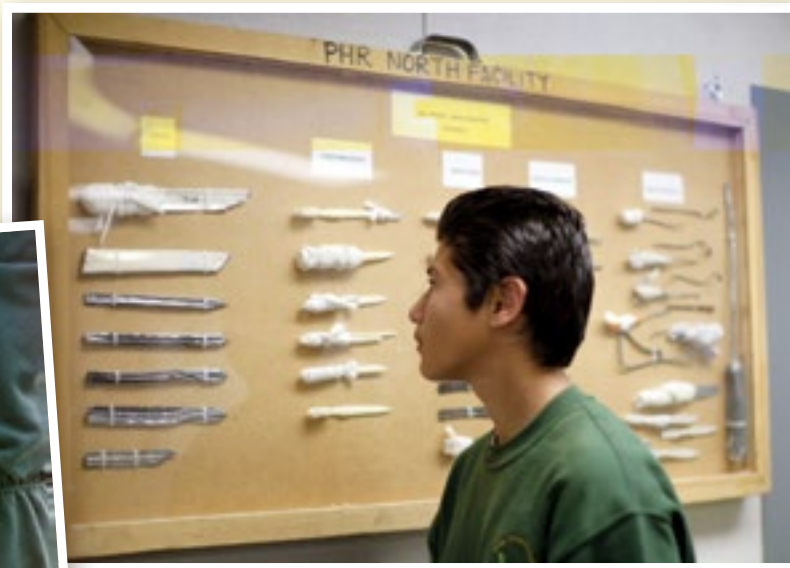
When they get to the rooftop exercise yard, they meet inmates who tell the youths about life in jail. "The inmates give a brief introduction to what jail life would be like, and they show them: This isn't a place for kids. It's not a place for anybody."

After the rooftop visit, the youths are — briefly and temporarily — locked in an empty cell, to get a taste of incarceration.

Vargas said START is an effective wake-up call for many of the 300 to 350 youths who participate each year. "I'd say 98 percent of the kids who come through end up crying at the end. They say, 'I don't want to come back here.' They are very remorseful."

For some, it's a remarkable turning point.

"About a year ago I had a group of kids who came through, there were two boys and a girl," Vargas said. "They didn't care about anything. Nothing fazed them at the beginning, and toward the end you could tell that their demeanor had changed. And, a year later they became mentors of that same program that they went through, and they came through as mentors for that group. And they graduated from high school, too."



At a Glance:

This program is specifically designed to educate at-risk youth regarding the consequences of their choices. The program encourages positive decision making while making the participants aware of the potential consequences of their choices by promoting individual responsibility and leadership. The Men's Central Jail Unit facilitates this program. It offers young people in the youth programs of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department an opportunity to tour the jail system, where they will interact with deputies and inmates. They will hear the testimony of inmates, and experience what it is like for them to be an inmate. These young people will be encouraged to use the experience as a viable alternative to drug and gang involvement.

WHO: 300 to 350 youths per year.

WHAT: Firsthand experience in the largest jail in the free world.

WHEN: Selected Saturdays throughout the year.

WHERE: Los Angeles County Men's Central Jail.

WHY: To educate at-risk youths about the harsh realities of jail life.

HOW: Via a guided and interactive tour that includes:

- Paramilitary-style instruction from Sheriff's Deputies
- Tour of the jail facilities
- A visit to the rooftop exercise yard, where inmates speak directly to them about life behind bars

BEAR Bicycle Education And Registration

BEAR Teaches Kids Bike Safety — and Ownership



This isn't your typical bicycle rodeo.

When youths complete the Bicycle Education And Registration program, they are equipped with bicycle safety lessons, teaching them how to ride safely in a variety of environments. The participants are also taught repair skills, working on bicycles that have been donated or confiscated by the Sheriff's Department.

And when the program is done, they get more than just a diploma: They get to keep the bike they've been working on.

BEAR is a groundbreaking curriculum that has been taught to various deputies at Youth Activities League centers around the County, so they can, in turn, present the program to the youths who participate in their YAL programs. As a result, the BEAR program has been taught to children at a variety of locations throughout Los Angeles County.

And, here's a little secret: There's more to it than just riding and fixing bicycles.

"It's not just about the bike. The bike is the avenue that we use to take the kids where we want them to go. We basically use the format of a bicycle education class to build a mentorship with kids," says Deputy Ken Yanecko.

BEAR includes safety tips and fun, hands-on work as the youths are taught not only how to properly ride a bike, but also keep it in operating condition. Simultaneously, they are taught about making good life choices, and they get to know the sheriff's deputies in a new context.



Many of the approximately 450 youths age 7 to 17 who complete the program each year otherwise might not afford a bicycle, and without BEAR, they'd be more susceptible to the dangers of unsafe riding in urban environments.

Something as simple as a bicycle can also form very strong connections for the kids. Who doesn't remember having a bike as a kid? For many children, BEAR provides them that gift, which they otherwise may not have.

"We are opening up a portal in life that these kids will remember forever," Yanecko says. "The benefits that come out of this program happen daily, the kids that you see blossom right before your eyes. It changes lives. It's awesome."



BEAR- The Vital Evidence:

Fulfilling a Little Girl's Dream in the Wake of Loss

She wanted the things every other 8-year-old girl wants: A safe home. Friends. Toys. A bicycle.

Living with her grandmother, the girl had lost much of what makes an idyllic life for an 8-year-old. Her mother had been killed and her father wasn't in the picture, so her grandmother stepped up to the plate as her guardian. Then, tragedy struck yet again: The girl's uncle was killed while riding his bicycle through a crosswalk, without a helmet, at night.

"The grandma, she lost her son, which is the little girl's uncle, to a hit-and-run driver, and he was on a bike," says Deputy Karen Velasquez. "She's lost her daughter, too, so she has this fear of losing her granddaughter, because she's had so much loss in her life."

Fearful, the girl's grandmother wouldn't let her ride a bicycle. That is, until she heard about the BEAR program. The grandmother decided BEAR might give her the peace of mind to allow her granddaughter to ride a bicycle, so she signed her up. The little girl completed BEAR last year, and graduated with a safe bicycle to call her own — and permission from her grandmother to ride it.

"Grandma was there every day," Velasquez says. "And, Grandma was there while we did graduation, and she was very thankful. She was in tears."

999 For Kids

If Children Need Assistance, 999 for Kids Steps Up



Its name is a reference to a law enforcement radio code: 999. It means, "Officer needs emergency help." But, in this case, it's not a reference to an officer in need. It's a reference to children in need.

"999 for Kids" was created in 1985 through a joint effort of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the County's Department of Children and Family Services. The two county agencies began working together after they recognized a need to help physically and mentally challenged children who are medically vulnerable or are victims of the most severe cases of child abuse, neglect and family violence.

The program raises money to purchase special items and services for these children, including sport wheelchairs, computers, special education classes, medically oriented toys and games. The funds send children to summer camps for the deaf, blind, and those with other medical issues who would not otherwise have such positive experiences.

Many deputies and their colleagues in other law enforcement agencies support 999 for Kids on their own time, holding fundraising events including an annual team relay swim from Catalina Island to Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro. (See related story, opposite page.)

"This swim is a huge physical and psychological challenge," says Assistant Sheriff Cecil Rhambo. "It causes you to confront man's most common terrors: the open ocean, darkness, the unknown, cold and exhaustion. Despite these tremendous challenges, I know that the kids we help have confronted these and other horrors, sometimes at the hands of people who, by nature, should love, care, and nurture them. I consider it a privilege and blessing to help them."

The children they help include people like Tyler, a 16-year-old boy who was suffering from asthma, hypertension and diabetes. He weighed 769 pounds when his needs came to the attention of the DCFS. Tyler's weight and medical conditions rendered him non-ambulatory — and, unable to sleep on a regular bed.

When DCFS visited Tyler's home, where his father also cares for his mother, who suffers from Lupus, they found he was sleeping on a mattress on the floor, as typical bed frames were breaking under his weight.

Esperanza Gonzalez, a Supervising Case Social Worker for the DCFS, started researching special beds that might improve Tyler's social, physical and emotional well-being. After two months of trying to find a source willing to purchase the bed, Gonzalez contacted 999 For Kids. Two weeks later, 999 For Kids arranged for the \$4,000 bed to be delivered to his home. His condition has since begun to improve and he has lost significant weight.



This is just one example of how 999 For Kids profoundly changes children's lives. Others abound. For example, Miller Children's Hospital in Long Beach received 54 DVD players from 999 for Kids, providing the hospital a valuable tool to help hospitalized children cope.

"We're so grateful that 999 for Kids chose Miller Children's for such a generous donation," Rita Goshert, clinical operations manager of the hospital's Child Life Department, says in a statement released by the hospital. "Watching videos serves as a wonderful distraction for hospitalized children, so this donation will help patients and their families cope with hospitalization."

Identifying children's needs and meeting them — that's the goal of 999 for Kids, whether the need is for a group of children, like those at Miller Children's Hospital, or for an individual, like Samira, who's 17 and legally blind. She loves to write short stories, and she came to DCFS attention due to her mother's refusal to provide necessary medical care, causing Samira to suffer from depression. The withdrawn Samira was placed in foster care, and has improved with counseling.

Upon being made aware of Samira's need, 999 For Kids purchased a \$9,000 specialized Braille machine that allows Samira to communicate and read in comfort — enhancing her experiences in home and at school.

Sheriff's Commander Warren R. Asmus says 999 for Kids couldn't do any of these things without contributions from the supporters of the Sheriff's Youth Foundation.

"The children that are brought to the attention of 999 For Kids are the victims of the worst cases of physical and emotional abuse," Asmus says. "Without the generous support of our donors, we'd be unable to provide the crucial assistance these children so desperately need, and we sincerely appreciate the support."



Catalina Relay Brings Deputies Together to Help Kids

It's not your typical weekend swim.

Yes, the swimmers in the 999 For Kids Swim beat the summer heat, but this is no swimming pool: Braving darkness and the elements, the relay swim team traverses the cold waters of the Catalina Channel — about 26 miles — in a 13-hour relay that begins at 9 p.m. on an August Saturday night, departing from Catalina Island and finishing approximately 13 hours later at Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro.

The swimmers' efforts raised funds to help 999 For Kids provide assistance to children who face physical and mental challenges throughout Los Angeles County.

"I've had a great experience donating my time and efforts to the '999 for Kids' event over the last four years," Deputy Dean La Chasse said. "I am looking forward to next year's swim event and what I am able to contribute to the disadvantaged children of L.A. County."

The team for 2012 consisted of 10 swimmers from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and one from the Los Angeles Police Department: Assistant Sheriff Cecil Rhambo, Chief Dave Betkey, Capt. Phil Hansen (Retired), Lt. Joe Badali, Deputy Luca Gaetani, Deputy Dean La Chasse, Deputy Ryan Kearns, Deputy Welby Cham, Public Information Officer Nicole Nishida, Legal Advisor Rick Brouwer, and LAPD Detective Kara Clifford.

Sgt. Sonia Parra, who coordinates the event, said the swim depends not only on the swimmers, but also on the support team, including the crew of "Tradition," a vessel operated by the Sheriff's Department's Marina del Rey Station.

LAPD Detective Kara Clifford said the swim is challenging, but rewarding. "The last three legs, starting with mine, were 90 minutes covering 3 miles. But we stepped up and met the challenge, and it was the fastest 90 minutes of my life!"

SHARE Tolerance

Teaching Kids to Stop Hate and Respect Everyone

SHARE Uses Mobile Theater to Bring Documentary, Tolerance Talks to Youths



Hate. It's the root of many crimes. If you could stop hate — and bring people together in mutual respect of one another — the world would be a more peaceful place.

That's why a group of Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputies created the Stop Hate and Respect Everyone (SHARE-Tolerance) program, which promotes tolerance and harmony regardless of factors like race, sexual orientation and religion.

"This program was conceived and designed by deputy sheriffs who saw the importance of law enforcement taking a leadership role in decrying hate and intolerance, and in the prevention of hate crimes," says Sheriff Leroy D. Baca. "The program was devised to travel into our communities and schools, bringing a dynamic and vital message about tolerance and combating hatred."

SHARE Tolerance was created with cooperation and support from the Museum of Tolerance, Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission and other organizations. Established in 2008, SHARE Tolerance utilizes a colorful, custom-built 24-seat mobile theater to deliver presentations to schools throughout Los Angeles County.

Each presentation starts with a showing of a 35-minute documentary about hate crimes. After the film, deputies facilitate a 60- to 90-minute discussion about the film and the challenges of combating hate and tolerance.



SHARE- The Vital Evidence:

As a leader in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, I commit myself to honorably perform my duties with respect for the dignity of all people, integrity to do right and fight wrongs, wisdom to apply common sense and fairness in all I do, and courage to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and bigotry in all its forms.

SHARE Deputy's Experiences Add Personal Perspective

Today, Chris Keeling is a detective with more than two decades of law enforcement experience. He's conducted numerous intervention classes with youth groups and Sheriff's Youth Foundation programs, and, like the other deputies who facilitate SHARE Tolerance programs, he's a volunteer.

But in the 1970s, Keeling was a middle school student from South-Central Los Angeles — and when voluntary busing was introduced in an attempt to integrate the Los Angeles Unified School District, his mother enrolled him.

"Needless to say, that was one of those times my mother was *telling* me what I was going to do," Keeling says. "After very little protest — 'cause I knew better — there I was standing on a street corner at 5 o'clock in the morning waiting for a school bus to take me for what seemed like a trip around the country."

At his new school in Northridge, he wasn't exactly welcomed with open arms.

"Unfortunately, some of the homegrown students and their parents at my new school weren't too fond of the idea of their children mingling with children from the 'Ghetto,'" Keeling says. The school had been vandalized and racial epithets were spray painted on the walls.

When he went home, he felt sure his mother would let him off the hook and allow him to return to his old school. But that's not what happened.

"She assured me that if I showed myself friendly that all would be well for me," Keeling says. "She also expounded on the many lessons she had taught me over the years, like love, charity, character, integrity, honor and tolerance."

Those lessons from his mother served him well, from middle school to adulthood, and now he shares them with younger generations.

"When I was asked to take part in the SHARE Tolerance program, I was humbled and honored," Keeling says. "I have been afforded the opportunity to meet countless adults and kids who, like myself, want to make a change. All they need is someone to point them in the right direction."



"Considering the diversity of the communities we serve, this is an especially valuable program," says Sgt. A.J. Rotella, Executive Director of the Foundation. "Accepting our neighbors, and the differences we all have as human beings, is an important part of creating a harmonious society."

Chief Anthony LaBerge says law enforcement officers, unfortunately, often have a front-row seat to see the negative ramifications of hate. "As a deputy, I have seen the terrible things people do to others, for no other reason than the color of their skin, their religious faith, nationality of sexual orientation."

That is, no doubt, a motivating factor for the approximately 100 deputies who serve as SHARE facilitators. They are all volunteers, and, like the youths they serve, they come from diverse backgrounds.

Deeley adds that he was initially skeptical of the SHARE program, because he has seen tolerance programs backfire elsewhere — but the approach of this particular program works. "It is intended to generate dialogue from the young people," Deeley says. "Our facilitators are not there to lecture. Rather, they are trained to enable discussion of the issues and encourage a leadership role for the students in their schools and communities."

Sheriff Baca considers SHARE Tolerance an important vehicle to deliver powerful messages about core American values.

"Tolerance is a key element of democracy," says Baca. "Hate crimes are assaults on American democracy and the Constitution that this country cherishes. We cannot stand by idly and allow purveyors of hate to gain any ground, especially with our youth."

A Safe Haven for Youths: Youth Activities Leagues Change Lives Every Day



There are 18 YAL centers throughout Los Angeles County — and every one represents a safe haven.

For some kids, the local Youth Activities League is a place to get some much-needed help with homework. For others, it's a place to shoot some hoops or learn a new sport without fear of physical violence or becoming tangled up in many of the other negative distractions the streets have to offer.

For others, it's literally a place to call home.

Take, for example, the 15-year-old girl who says that, after her mother walked out on her family, the Compton YAL has become the one place where she feels like she has a mom.

Or, consider the 16-year-old boy whose uncle and cousin were both killed by gang violence, within days of each other. For him, the mentors at the YAL in Temple City provided crucial emotional support in his time of need — and helped him navigate the pain.

These are just some of the ways in which the 18 YAL facilities countywide are making a difference in the lives of youths every day. The YAL centers operate during the most crucial hours of the day, from 3 to 7 p.m., a time when many parents are not yet home from work and there's much trouble to be found on the streets.

The YAL centers are available to youths ages 7 to 17, and there is no fee to participate. The facilities are staffed by a blend of deputies, civilian staff and untold dozens of volunteers who just want to help.

It's a formula that works.



"The Sheriff's YAL is special in so many ways and truly bridges the gap between law enforcement and the communities we serve," says Deputy Arthur Valenzuela, who supervises the Temple YAL. "We take the time to know our youth and their families to assist in building the best possible community from the base of the family."

In the coming pages, you'll find a profile of each of the 18 YALs throughout the county. They are each unique in their own way, and they serve a diverse array of communities. And they serve youths whose needs and experiences are equally diverse.

Yet, there are common threads among them all: The YAL is a place that provides fun and healthy things to do, it provides academic help, it provides guidance during times of need, and it provides direction, motivation and hope for a positive future in situations that may otherwise seem bleak.

And, it provides acceptance.

"The YAL is a place where kids can come together and just be kids," says Jaime Briano, site manager for the Santa Clarita Valley YAL in Val Verde. "You can be any shape, size or color and be accepted."

The YAL centers help our county's youths in so many ways, changing their lives for the better, enabling them to beat the odds that circumstance has stacked against them. The results show up in the form of teenagers who have found direction in their lives, and are setting goals to help them realize their dreams and become happy, healthy adults.

"I used to get in a lot of trouble," says Jorge Machuca, age 15, who participates in activities at the Lakewood YAL. "I didn't have any discipline at all. I just used to stay home and do nothing productive at all, and my mom was mad at me.

"And then," he says, smiling, "I found the YAL."



At a Glance:

At a Glance: The Youth Activity League program provides educational tutoring, computer training, cultural field trips, sports activities, and character-building activities for at-risk children ages 8-17 throughout Los Angeles County. These children, some for the very first time, enjoy a positive relationship with law enforcement. This after-school and summertime program offers a safe environment for young people during the hours of the day when most juvenile crime is committed (3 p.m. to 7 p.m.).

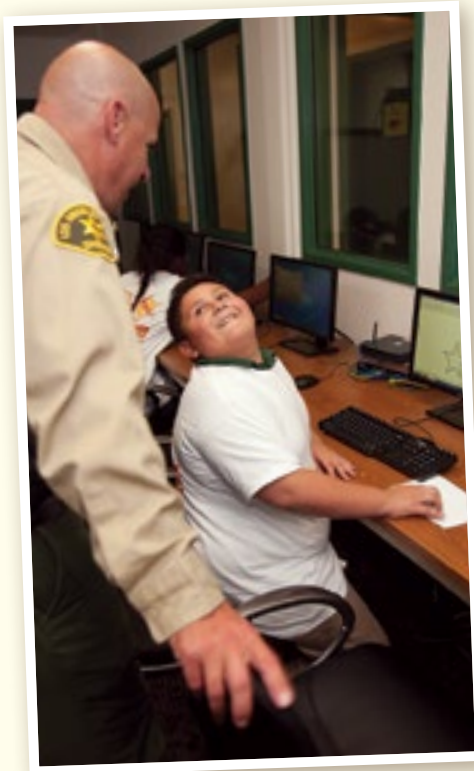
- Activities and programs offered include: Baseball, basketball, boxing, soccer, flag football, overnight camping, libraries, academic tutoring, track, boxing, martial arts, volleyball, soap box derby, dancing, computer labs, cultural trips, tennis and fencing. (Programs vary by location.)
- 18 busy Youth Activity League Centers are located throughout Los Angeles County, enabling the programs to reach many diverse populations and communities.
- The LA 84 Foundation has contributed \$341,000 to fund sports facilities and equipment at the South L.A., Norwalk, and Compton Youth Activity League Centers.

On the following pages are profiles of each of the 18 YALs throughout L.A. County:

- Altadena
- Avalon
- Century
- Century Boxing
- Compton
- East Los Angeles
- Industry
- Lakewood
- Marina Del Rey
- Mona Park
- Norwalk
- Palmdale
- Pico Rivera
- Santa Clarita
- South Los Angeles
- Temple
- Walnut
- West Hollywood

AT A GLANCE

- Address: Eliot Middle School
2184 N. Lake Ave.
Altadena, CA 91001
- Phone: (626) 798-1131
- Programs: Tutoring, arts and crafts, free play, trips to various amusement parks, life skills, leadership curriculum
- AltadenaYAL@lasd.org
www.AltadenaYAL.org



Escaping the Chaos

Brian Diaz says life before the YAL was beyond challenging — and at times, dangerous.

“It’s a bit chaotic sometimes,” says Diaz. “I’ve been bullied quite a few times.”

He says he lacked direction before he started going to the Altadena YAL — he didn’t have a plan for the future, and the present wasn’t looking so great, either. He realized he needed to develop a plan to make sure his future was brighter.

Altadena YAL

Going from F’s to Fantastic

Many children’s grades have already hit rock bottom before they join the Altadena Youth Activity League center. And those F’s don’t stand for “fabulous.”

But, says Deputy Jeannette Fajardo, the YAL helps them turn those grades around, through tutoring, help from volunteers like “Ms. Rosie E.,” arts and crafts, and leadership programs that bring out the best in all of the kids.

“There are a few children who recently raised those grades from an F to a C,” Fajardo says.



About 12 to 15 youths participate at the Altadena YAL each day, and Fajardo says the programs being provided to them will have a major payoff in the future, and not just for those children. The benefits will trickle into the surrounding community for many years to come.

“The greatest value is to have the children become successful so that when they become young adults, they can give back to the community,” Fajardo says. “The program is free and teaches children life skills, and most importantly, respect.”

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 215 Summer Ave.
Avalon, CA 90704
- Phone: (310) 510-2015
- Programs: Martial arts, safe boating, Teen CERT
- AvalonYAL@lasd.org
www.AvalonYAL.org



Martial Arts Program Shines, Thanks to Volunteer Instructor

The Avalon YAL succeeds in helping youths adapt to life on Catalina Island thanks in large part to the work of the deputies who mentor the youths, and also thanks to the volunteers who donate their time. Among the volunteers who shine at Avalon is martial arts instructor Richard Conant.

Avalon YAL

Avalon YAL Helps Youths Adapt to Island Life

Every Youth Activities League center has its own unique environment, which presents its own unique set of challenges. But the Avalon YAL is the only one that is, literally, on an island.

Serving the island-bound youth population of Catalina Island, the Avalon YAL faces some very unique challenges — primarily due to its location, which creates a sense of geographic and social isolation from the rest of Los Angeles County.

“The Avalon YAL directs its activities toward our unique environment on Catalina Island,” says Deputy Burt Lyon. “In a place where not much is offered to all types of youth in the community, the Avalon YAL is trying to teach those youths not involved in the typical types of sports how to enjoy and take advantage of our natural surroundings. We also believe that our local youth should learn how to responsibly enjoy our natural resources.”

Hence, the Avalon YAL is unique among the YALs countywide — in addition to sports programs, like martial arts, that you might find at other YALs, the Avalon YAL offers programs like safe boating, which teaches youths skills that will serve them well in the island environment.

But, the Avalon center also has one key thing in common with the other centers: Each month it serves more than two dozen individuals who otherwise might be at risk of engaging in less-than-productive activities.



“Our YAL brings in youth who do not participate in the usual athletic programs offered in the city of Avalon. We serve youths who don’t run in the ‘islander’ social circle and would most likely take part in destructive behavior,” Lyon says. “The Avalon YAL program believes that mentoring, and demonstrating responsible behavior to our students helps build discipline, team spirit and self-esteem.”

And, the mentoring provided by the Avalon YAL pays off, especially for students like fourth-grader Lillie Davis. Prior to joining the YAL, she did not participate in group activities and she suffered from low self-esteem. “When she joined the YAL program, her self-esteem rose,” says Lyon. “She is the only student with perfect attendance.”

“He put off working a full-time job so he could teach our martial arts program,” says Deputy Burt Lyon. “His devotion to the students and the program drive him to be the best instructor and mentor he can be.”

The martial arts program has paid big dividends for many youths, including ninth-grade student Vicente Osergura, who had a history of being tough to handle and getting in trouble in school.

The martial arts program taught him self-discipline.

“After joining the martial arts program, he began thinking first before acting and his record of disruptions at school decreased,” Lyon says. “He would normally get so angry he could not be controlled.”

Thanks to the martial arts lessons he’s learned at the Avalon YAL, he no longer needs to be. ★

AT A GLANCE

- Youth Center Address:
7901 S. Compton Ave.
Los Angeles, 90001
- Boxing Center Address:
7116 Makee Ave.,
Los Angeles, 90001
- Phone: (323) 586-7250
- Programs: Homework program, arts and crafts, leadership, bicycle education, nutrition and hygiene, Strictly Girls, karate, boxing, dancing and sewing.
- CenturyYAL@lasd.org
www.CenturyYAL.org



Century YAL



Century YAL Maximizes Its Resources

The Century YAL may not be much to look at, but what happens inside is the real story.

"This YAL is special because, although the building is unattractive, the grass is brown, it is on a very busy intersection with run-down apartments across the street, the kids sometimes tell me that when they don't come here, for whatever reason, they cry," says Sgt. Tina Jones.

The lure of free programs, and participation from deputies and volunteers who care, makes the Century YAL like a home for the approximately 65 youths who attend.

"They enjoy being here for the activities, and because they do not have the money to pay for a program outside the community," Jones says. "The youths are able to escape the dangers that are just outside their doors. The neighborhood is gang-infested."

At the Century YAL, it's a lot less about the building than it is about the people.

"The most important thing is the personnel that really care and mentor the kids. This is going to have a lasting impact on their lives," Jones says.

One example is Jacqueline Ventors, a volunteer who goes above and beyond.

"She not only volunteers, she actually teaches the sewing class, and donates items from her nonprofit organization to this program," Jones says. "We love and appreciate her."

It all pays off for the kids.

"I see myself doing big things in my future," says 13-year-old Robin Sanford, whose optimistic outlook has been influenced by the YAL. "We're all one big happy family. And so when one person has a problem then they will all work together to try to make them happy."



A Home, a Haven with No Judgment

To say Rosanna's childhood has been difficult is putting it lightly. Her mother was deported after assaulting her father, and Rosanna and her three siblings were put into foster care at four separate homes.

"All of them are separated and she rarely gets to see her siblings," says Sgt. Veronica De La Rosa says. "At school, it has been tough for her because the kids want to know about her parents, they want to know where she lives."

As a result, Rosanna, 14, became withdrawn at school, keeping to herself to avoid the questions. But, she has found a new home where she is accepted: the Century YAL.

"She catches the bus here from high school because she likes it so much. Every day, Monday through Friday," De La Rosa says. "We don't ask her about her personal life, and she can be who she is, just a kid. Everybody just accepts her for who she is."

Rosanna has gone on field trips with the YAL, and otherwise would never see or experience much

outside her neighborhood, because her foster mom doesn't have a car.

The YAL has helped Rosanna with school, too. "Her grades are good," De La Rosa says. "She uses our art supplies and our stuff that we have here to help with her projects at school. She uses our computers because they don't have computers at home."

"She's a good kid, and she opens up to me a lot," De La Rosa says. "She is learning to sew, taking cooking and dance classes, and she gets tutoring. We don't question her. We don't judge her. She feels at home here." ★

AT A GLANCE

- Boxing Center Address:
7116 Makee Ave.
Los Angeles, 90001
- Phone: (323) 586-6691
- Programs: Boxing classes and tutoring.
- CenturyBoxingYAL@lasd.org
www.CenturyBoxingYAL.org



Century Boxing YAL



Century Boxing Program Teaches Youths the Sweet Science

The Century YAL, in addition to the programs offered at its main youth center, since 1997 has offered a thriving boxing program at its own dedicated boxing facility — a decommissioned fire station that has that old-school boxing gym feeling.

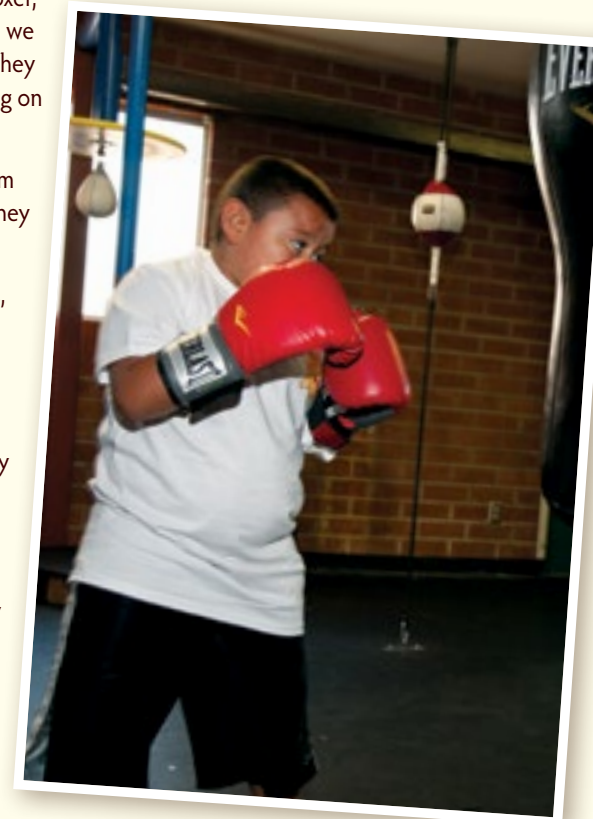
"What this program is trying to build is self-confidence for these kids, and discipline," says Deputy H. Eddie Contreras. "They'll come here for pretty much basic training on boxing. We start with the basics — how to walk like a boxer, how to throw punches, and we get them into a routine so they can start doing conditioning on their own."

Contreras says the program transforms the youths as they progress.

"A lot of them are pretty quiet kids, some just have too much energy," Contreras says. "So with the boxing program, as they get better in their boxing techniques, their self-confidence comes out and they take more of a leadership position where they help out the new kids coming in."

The program serves approximately 45 youths every day, says Deputy Jose Marin, and they couldn't do it without the volunteer coaches.

"The volunteer coaches are our greatest assets," says Marin. "They donate their time on a daily basis."



Century Boxers Build Pro Records

For a few talented boxers, the Century Boxing YAL has been an integral part of their journey toward careers as professional athletes.

"We've had a few fighters who have started here and gone on to become pros," says Deputy H. Eddie Contreras. "There are a lot of good boxers who started here, and we have a lot up and coming. We take them to amateur tournaments."

Volunteer coach Eddie Gonzalez says those who have trained at the Century Boxing YAL and

gone pro have included a world champion: Rico Ramos, who won the WBA World Super Bantam-weight title in 2011 at age 24. His pro record for his first 21 fights was 20-1. The only loss was a title defense in January 2012 at The Palms in Las Vegas.

"I worked with him as an amateur until the age of 17, then he left to pursue his career," Gonzalez says. "He's the first kid who came out of our gym and became a world champion."

Gonzalez, who has volunteered at the YAL for 12 years, says others who have grown up in the pro-

gram and turned pro include Daniel Roman, who compiled a 5-1-1 record in his first seven pro bouts, and Isaac Zarate, who was undefeated in his first five fights as a professional. "They're both Christian kids with a very good background," Gonzalez says. "We're not only teaching boxing, we teach character. We teach you to be a good citizen."

That, he says, is what's most rewarding about volunteering: "Just the satisfaction to see these kids go on the right path. That's what gives us the most satisfaction." ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 700 N. Alameda St.
Compton, CA 90221
- Phone: (323) 668-4203
- Programs: Computer training, dancing, tutoring, boxing, mentoring, BEAR, basketball, soccer
- ComptonYAL@lasd.org
www.ComptonYAL.org

Compton YAL



Compton YAL Aims High Athletically and Academically

The Compton Youth Activities League has one pretty simple — but ambitious — goal for the youths it serves:

Excellence.

“The Compton YAL stands as a place youths can come on a daily basis not just to ‘get off the streets,’ but to excel in their education, play sports, and build self-confidence,” Deputy Rosa Munoz says of the YAL that serves approximately 70 youths daily.

The Compton YAL has five sporting or physical activity programs running on a daily basis. But the goal of the center is not only teaching and playing sports. The center is also heavily focused on education, as all children attend a daily tutoring class or reading club. The philosophy is to support families and the community’s youth — and there are no fees for children to participate.

The program gets results. For example, 13-year-old Diondre Hester, the youngest of five children, was introduced to the YAL at age 8 by his cousin. At the time, his grades were low and he was not physically active. He had lost a brother to gang violence, and his mother, concerned about his future, was grateful to have a resource like the YAL.

Diondre enrolled in the YAL’s boxing program and took advantage of the YAL’s tutoring, which helped improve his reading and turn his grades

around. In the ensuing years he has grown into a disciplined young man who remains active in boxing, goes to the YAL daily and has become more self-confident.

In 2011, when he received the Compton YAL’s Youth of the Year Award, he was even profiled in a local newspaper, the Compton Bulletin.

“I want to be a professional boxer when I grow up,” Diondre told the newspaper. “I watch boxing on TV with my family and I know that’s what I want to do.”

The Compton YAL takes a well-rounded approach in helping youths like Diondre not just to get by, but to achieve at high levels, both physically and academically.

“The greatest value the Compton YAL brings to the community is a good clean environment that youths can come to, and excel in,” Munoz says. “Some after-school programs are limited, and others only target sports. But the Compton YAL targets sports, education, and mentorship. I believe this combination is what makes the center great.”



Success Story: YAL Fills a Void, Helps Garcia Excel

Maria Garcia says the Compton Youth Activities League has been like a second home to her, and it’s a good thing it has — because she’s needed one.

“When I was 4, my mom walked out on us because of some conflict my mom and my dad had,” says Garcia, 15. “And ever since then I have had difficulty at school.”

Her grades were low, and she struggled emotionally with her mother’s departure. But, she says, the Compton YAL helped her turn things around. She’s now developed into a leader of her peers at the YAL, says Deputy Rosa Munoz, and she was honored as the Compton YAL’s 2012 Youth of the Year.

“She suffered some hardships while growing up, but she overcame and excelled,” Munoz says. “Maria is at the Compton YAL every day, and she enjoys all the programs offered there.”

Garcia says the YAL has meant even more to her than a place to go after school for activities and homework help — it’s become a valuable support system.

The YAL has helped me through this difficulty because of the loss of my mom,” Garcia says. “It’s been hard. And the teachers and staff there, they have supported me — and it feels like I have a mom there.” ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 4100 City Terrace Dr.
Los Angeles, 90022
- Phone: (323) 981-5009
- Programs: Homework assistance, Youth Leadership, overnight camping, life enriching field trips, community service, dance, and computer classes.
- EastLosAngelesYAL@lasd.org
www.EastLosAngelesYAL.org

East Los Angeles YAL



Making It Personal at the East L.A. YAL

At the East Los Angeles Youth Activity League center, they take one-to-one to an entirely different level.

“We are not simply a place that when we open our doors to the kids we hand him or her a ball and tell them to go play,” says Deputy Art Lozano. “We take personal interest in each and every one of our kids.”

For the approximately 45 kids who visit the East L.A. center on a given day, that means there’s a personal emphasis on — and adult awareness of — each one’s educational situation and other factors affecting their lives. It’s a tall order for one tutor, one volunteer and one program coordinator to handle, but

they manage to really get to know each one of the kids.

“We place emphasis on education first, but we also take notice of their family dynamics,” Lozano says. “We actively seek out any turbulence in our kids’ lives and immediately deal with it.”

In addition to the homework assistance, computer classes and activities offered at the center, the East L.A. YAL also focuses on life-enriching events like overnight campouts — things the youths attending the YAL might not otherwise experience.

Adds Lozano: “In taking this active and aggressive role in our kids’ lives, it also changes their opinion of law enforcement, and they begin to see all law enforcement as allies and protectors.”



Turing Around His Grades, and Aiming High

Ezequiel Meneses was bored. He wasn’t engaged in school, and after school he collected recyclables and worked as a baby sitter to help his single mother make ends meet. His grades were in a slump.

“I wouldn’t do much,” says Meneses, 17. “I would just go home and do nothing. I would get, like, suspended from school. Sometimes I would get caught with markers on me.”

That was two years ago. Then, he joined the East L.A. YAL, and what a turnaround it has been.

“When he first arrived he was very shy and timid and his grades were below par,” says Deputy Art Lozano. “Well, in a very short time as a result of his involvement with the YAL, he has realized the importance of doing well in school. Not only has he brought up his grades but he also is now taking advanced placement classes in preparation for college.”

Lozano says Meneses now aspires to be a deputy sheriff, and he was elected president of the East L.A. YAL’s Leadership Council. “He is very active in the group and is always eager to help,” Lozano says.

Now, Meneses says, his goals are clear: “Graduate from high school, go to college for four years, go to Cal State L.A., then from Cal State L.A., I want to go to UCLA for two years and get my master’s.” ★

AT A GLANCE

- Locations: Community Service Center, 205 N. Hudson Ave.; Sunshine Park, San Angelo Park, Martin Park, Bassett Park, Ringrove Park
- Phone: (626) 934-3070
- Programs: Camp Courage, flag football, basketball, baseball, Kendo, Kempo, judo, SHARK, tennis and golf.
- IndustryYAL@lasd.org
www.IndustryYAL.org



Industry YAL



Industry YAL a Picture of Diversity and Excellence

What's happening at the Industry YAL?

A more appropriate question might be, "What's not?"

Operating at several different park locations, with approximately 1,500 youths participating annually and some 70 volunteers to help make it all happen, the Industry YAL offers a diverse array of programs to serve the needs of a diverse population.

"The volunteers devote countless hours to coach and mentor the kids," says Deputy Rico Rivera. "They promote hard work, discipline and sportsmanship. Our volunteers understand our mission to keep kids away from gangs, and do well to reaffirm it at every turn."

They help the cause by offering an assortment of fun and educational programs.

"Our camping and scuba diving programs are unique to YAL/PALs' programs throughout the country," Rivera says. "Our greatest value would be the variety of programs we offer, which include educational, athletic, and those that provide job opportunities."

Rivera says the Industry YAL has built a strong track record of success for the youths who have participated in the program, then gone on to undertake careers of service to community and country.

"We are very proud that many of our YAL alumni have served in the U.S. military with distinction and bravery," Rivera says, adding that some Industry YAL alumni have also undertaken careers in law enforcement.

"Deputy Megan Kelsey is an Industry YAL alum," Rivera says. "She is currently assigned to Norwalk Station, where she will soon complete patrol training."



Others have achieved athletic and academic success as well. For example, Rivera says, Industry YAL alum Donte Smith graduated from the University of Southern California in 2011 after attending the nationally prominent university on a basketball scholarship. "He played a variety of sports with us until he entered high school," Rivera says.

The Industry YAL benefits from a supportive community board of directors, and has built solid relationships within the diverse community it serves.

"The diversity of this community allows us to deal with families from all races, religions and ethnic backgrounds," Rivera says. "The kids relate well to the deputy mentors and are willing to trust law enforcement to provide a safe environment for them."

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 21815 Pioneer Blvd. Hawaiian Gardens, 90716
- Phone: 562-822-1229
- Programs: Mixed martial arts (MMA), circuit training, Jiu Jitsu/wrestling, leadership class, life skills, anger management, conflict resolution, pickleball, hiking, deep sea fishing, sailing, camping, river rafting and community service projects.
- LakewoodYAL@lasd.org
www.LakewoodYAL.org



Lakewood/Hawaiian Gardens YAL



Lakewood/Hawaiian Gardens Youths Soak Up Lessons in Community Spirit

The youths who attend the Lakewood/Hawaiian Gardens Youth Activities League center, also known as the C. Robert Lee Activity Center, get a lot more than the many sports and self-improvement programs the center offers.

They learn about what it means to be part of a community.

"We encourage community involvement by having the youth interact with seniors, feeding them once a week," says Deputy Malcolm Harcrow. "We also empower youths by having them prepare and present PowerPoint presentations at City Council meetings."

The community connections are paying off.

For example, Adrian Resendiz is a recent high school graduate who had been on the path of skipping school, fighting, tagging and gang activity.

"He joined the YAL and saw another side of law enforcement," Harcrow says. "He was challenged and encouraged to implement the things taught in the program, and began making positive choices."

Resendiz was accepted back into a regular high school — from which he had previously been expelled — and earned his diploma.

"He took responsibility for his past tagging crime and is in the process of paying restitution to the city," Harcrow says. "He has a job and hopes to work in law enforcement sometime in the future."



More examples abound at the Lakewood YAL, which serves about 20 to 25 youths each week and is known for building a bridge of trust between youths and law enforcement.

In fact, Resendiz isn't the only one who is considering a law enforcement career as a result of the YAL connection. Arleen Hidalgo is another recent graduate, and she grew up with no father in her life.

"She joined the YAL to get out of the house and keep busy," Harcrow says. "She graduated high school and now takes criminal justice classes at college for a future in law enforcement."

On top of that, he says, Harcrow is giving back, in the true community spirit of the Lakewood YAL: She's volunteering as a peer mentor, to help younger youths make the same positive choices she has found through the YAL.

Youths Inspired to Choose Paths of Service

Xiomara Peraza says the Industry YAL has helped her get through some of the tough times in her life, including her parents' divorce — and the YAL has helped her make some of life's biggest decisions, too.

"When I first heard that they were getting divorced, I felt alone," says Peraza. "I felt like nobody else has gone through what I was going through."

Peraza turned to the Industry YAL for support, and the YAL delivered.

The YAL has helped her a great deal as she has dealt with her family difficulties, and Peraza found that many others had gone through the same things she had endured, too. She was not alone.

Peraza soon developed as a leader at the Industry YAL, and was its 2012 honoree at the Salute to Youth Gala.

And, while attending the YAL, she discovered a career path she wishes to pursue.

"All I knew was that I wanted to go to college, but I didn't know what I wanted to study in," Peraza says. "After I went into the YAL, I learned that I actually want to become a police officer." ★

Dreams Take Hold at the Lakewood YAL

Jorge Machuca, by his own admission, used to be a bit of a problem child.

"I used to get in a lot of trouble," says Machuca, a 15-year-old who was Lakewood's honoree at the Sheriff's Youth Foundation's 2012 Salute to Youth Gala.

"I didn't have any discipline at all," he says. "I just used to stay home and do nothing productive

at all, and my mom was mad at me. And then I found the YAL."

He notes the discovery with a gleam in his eye that tells you he "discovered" not just a place that provides him direction and discipline, but also a place that enabled him to learn a few things about himself, and the path that he was on before he started participating in YAL programs.

"The YAL has taught me a lot of discipline, like how to behave, don't disrespect my parents, don't

talk back, how to act around in people in public — a lot of stuff," Machuca says. "It helped me mature — a lot."

That maturity has helped him start to look ahead to his future, and to begin aspiring for great things, and dedicating himself to accomplishing them.

"Because of my experience in the YAL, I want to make it into the NBA because they keep me active, and let me play sports over there," Machuca says. "I like playing basketball a lot, so I practice every day now." ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 5354 W. 64th St. Inglewood, 90302
- Phone: (310) 680-5430
- Programs: Homework assistance, Girl and Boy Circle, BEAR Program, Colorful Flags, basketball camp, life skills class.
- MarinaDelReyYAL@lasd.org
www.MarinaDelReyYAL.org

Marina del Rey YAL



School Partnership a Key for Marina del Rey YAL

The Marina del Rey YAL is proof positive of the results that can be achieved when a top-notch after-school program forms a solid connection with a school in the community it serves.

"What makes our YAL special is that we are located on a school campus and most of the students in our program attend that school," says Deputy Michael Deltoro. "This gives us the opportunity to work with our students, their parents, and school officials to ensure their success in school."

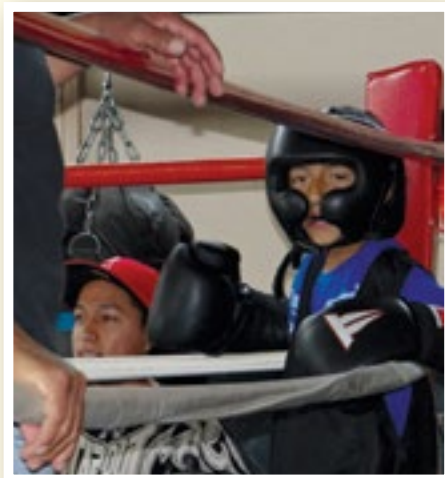
If there's anything lacking at the Marina del Rey YAL, he says, it's a means of transporting kids from one place to another. "We are in desperate need of a van," says Deltoro. "Currently we do not have transportation to take students to and from education events or activities. The acquisition of a van would make our program that much better."

The YAL at Frank D. Parent Middle School serves a core group of about 70 youths, and that close relationship with the school has paid major dividends.

Says Deltoro: "We have had several students enter our program behaving poorly and



receiving poor grades. Our ability to work closely with the school has aided us in improving several of our students' behavior in addition to their grades."



The Marina del Rey YAL provides her a safe haven, a place where she can leave behind the drama and just focus on being a kid, and growing up happy and healthy.

"(The YAL) helped me be a better person and think about what I wanted to do with my life," says Kennedy. "Since going to the YAL my plans are, I want to look into being a sheriff." ★

men and women. Our staff does the best it can to expose our students to new and exciting things."

Harrison says the environment promotes strong bonds between the deputies and the youths. As a result, it's not uncommon for the youths to develop aspirations of careers in law enforcement.

For some students, like 13-year-old Evelyn Kennedy, that family environment can help offset those times when kids may be enduring, as she puts it, "a lot of drama at home."

Marina del Rey YAL: It's Like Family

Talk to the deputies, youths and volunteers at many YAL centers and you will find that they come to view the YAL as being like a family. The Marina del Rey YAL is one good example.

"We have a wonderful relationship with our community," says Deputy Keith Harrison. "Our YAL is like a family. It provides a safe and enriching environment for our students to grow as young

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 2291 E. 121st. Compton, 90222
- Phone: (323) 972-6512
- Programs: Nutrition, book club, BEAR.
- MonaParkYAL@lasd.org
www.MonaParkYAL.org

Mona Park YAL



Taking Back Mona Park, and Claiming it for the Kids

Some YAL centers are well-established, with programs that have been built over a period of years, demonstrating a track record of success in helping youths choose positive paths for their lives.

But you'll have to put the Parks Bureau's Mona Park YAL in another category: Just getting started. And in a short amount of time, it's amazing what's already been accomplished.

"We are just starting out at Mona Park," says Deputy Karen Velasquez, who launched the new YAL in May 2012 and has watched it quickly grow to serve approximately 30 children each week. "We have a very small space but we do what we can to make it work."

The unique challenge at Mona Park is the park's history and reputation as a haven for gangs.

"Most people when they hear the words 'Mona Park' they say, 'Oh, I don't want to go to that

park. That's a bad park,'" says Velasquez. "Even the parks employees don't want to be 'placed' there to work."

But, the addition of the YAL has brought about a significant change at Mona Park.

"Since I have been there the kids and family have been able to take back the park," says Velasquez. "Most parents still don't want their kids to play outside in the park. They feel more comfortable with them inside with me. However, they can now feel a little more comfortable walking their kids to the park and leaving them with me."



Mona Park YAL Sorts Out Needs as a New Center

The biggest need for the new Mona Park YAL isn't a piece of equipment — although those needs will soon come to the forefront, too. But as it gets started, the biggest need is for a mentor to help the children with their homework.

"The majority of parents want their kids to be educated," Deputy Karen Velasquez says. "They are Spanish speaking and have difficulties

helping their children with their homework. The nearby schools have a waiting list for their tutoring programs. Being able to offer this assistance would benefit the kids in the community."

She says there are a few mothers who, wary of the surroundings, walk their children to the park so they can participate in the YAL programs, and then wait for them to be finished.

"We have little to offer. However, they believe in the program," Velasquez says. "Their dedica-

tion to wanting a better life for their children is inspiring."

With a much-needed impending remodel planned for the park, the continued support of the Parks and Sheriff's Departments and the continued progress by the Parks Bureau YAL, Mona Park is well on its way to shaking its negative reputation. ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: Annenberg Youth Center, 14289 Telegraph Road Whittier, 90604
- Phone: (562) 941-6901
- Programs: Tutoring, boxing, dance, arts/crafts, life skills, leadership council, Fun Fit, basketball.
- NorwalkYAL@lasd.org
www.NorwalkYAL.org



Norwalk YAL



Norwalk YAL Delivers Lessons, from Life Skills to Taking Care of Our Planet

They teach the kids many things at the Norwalk YAL, with programs ranging from arts and crafts to boxing, and many things in between.

They're teaching them environmental stewardship, too.

"The Norwalk YAL has been recycling plastic bottles for the past six months and we are very happy with the results," says Deputy Tammy Schlunegger. "The center collected \$110 for all the recycled bottles."

If you've ever recycled bottles, you know it takes a LOT of them to get to \$110.

Schlunegger says that, in the recycling drive as in other areas of success for the Norwalk YAL, the approximately 80 youths who attend the YAL each day deserve a great deal of the credit, all year-round, as the YAL offers after-school and summer programs alike.



"It's our kids who make the Norwalk YAL so special," Schlunegger says. "The Norwalk YAL offers a safe and friendly environment for kids ages 8 to 17 to engage in both academic and athletic activities. It gives kids the opportunity to improve their GPA with a full-time tutor available to meet their needs."

Zach Alvidrez, 16, says the Norwalk YAL also has taught him important lessons in self-discipline, and in dealing with the challenges one may face in life.

"What I learned that helped me through my difficult times was discipline, really," Alvidrez says. "Boxing (at the YAL) really helped me with that because you always have to be there at practice, you have to be disciplined, you have to do your running. It really helped me with my academics."

Yes, the YAL Can Be a Trip to the Beach

It may sound like a recipe for disaster — or, at the very least, a supervision nightmare: a large group of kids, at the beach, out of their parents' sight.

But when the Norwalk YAL threw a beach party for its youthful participants, everything went off without a hitch.

"In June of this year, we took over 80 kids to Huntington Beach, for a beach party," Deputy Tammy

Schlunegger says, adding that the group went for the full beach party experience.

"The kids went swimming, played football, and volleyball, along with other games," she says. "We roasted hot dogs and smores over an open fire pit."

She says it was a nice reward for the youths, and a chance for the deputies and youths to bond in a different environment outside the YAL.

"It was great to see everyone just relaxing, smiling and enjoying a beautiful day at the beach together," Schlunegger says of the barrier-breaking excursion.

Schlunegger says a good time was had by all — even the adults who were responsible for supervising nearly seven dozen youths.

She adds: "The trip was an absolute success without fault. All the kids were respectful, and well-behaved." ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 8773 E. Avenue R Palmdale, CA 93543
- Phone: (661) 944-2880
- Programs: Leadership class, colorful flags (languages), cooking, life skills, computers, girls teen club, basketball, cheerleading, boxing, STAR, RADkids, community service projects, field trips, and tutoring.
- PalmdaleYAL@lasd.org
www.PalmdaleYAL.org



Palmdale YAL



Preparing for Life After High School

At first it may look like the youths who participate in the programs of the Palmdale YAL have the odds stacked against them — but the YAL has turned the odds in their favor.

"Some of the kids we deal with only have the hot meal we provide them at the site," says Deputy Janice Banks. "We keep the kids in the surrounding neighborhoods off the street, in a safe environment."

In fact, the Palmdale YAL's two staffers and 10 volunteers do that and much more. The Palmdale YAL takes great pride in not only getting the kids successfully through high school, but also preparing them for a brighter future, through programs like Life After High School, which helps them prepare for what happens in the first crucial years of adulthood.

The program works.

"All of our kids who have attended the Life After High School program have went on to further their education," Banks says with pride.

Some of them even come back to help other youths embark on the same journey.

While participating at the YAL, Brooklyn Mayes received a full academic scholarship to UCLA, and received many awards and certificates for maintaining at least a 4.0 grade point average or better throughout her high school years. After she graduated from Eastside High School, Mayes continued going to the YAL to serve as a peer mentor for younger participants.

"She is very giving of her time for other children who need help with their schoolwork," Banks said.



The approximately 60 youths participating in Palmdale YAL programs know they can turn to the center's staff and mentors when they need someone to talk to. The YAL is a safe haven for the children, where they learn the importance of school and believing in themselves.

Banks added: "We are here for the children, and in any way that we can motivate them to be more productive leaders within their communities."

YAL Helps Deon-Ja Lewis Set Goals for the Future

Before Deon-Ja Lewis started participating at the Palmdale YAL, you could say he was living adrift. He wasn't performing well in school and hadn't really given the future a second thought.

"Before the YAL, my life was..." Deon-Ja says, then stops, almost illustrating his point as he trails off in mid-sentence. But then the 15-year-old illustrates the clarity that the YAL has helped

him achieve: "My grades were kind of down. I was just going to go wherever my life took me."

Then, things turned around — starting when he began going to the Palmdale YAL, where he benefited from mentoring, both academically and physically.

"I went to the YAL and people actually took time to help me with my schoolwork," he says, "and then they taught me how to play basketball."

Deputy Janice Banks says Deon-Ja has grown into a leader of his peers, and he earned the Palmdale

YAL's Youth of the Year Award for 2012. "Deon-Ja is always willing to do what is asked of him, and he is the president of our council."

The YAL not only helped Deon-Ja become a leader, but also helped him find his passion. He loves basketball and has set a goal to continue playing past high school while he pursues his education. "Hopefully I'll try and get a scholarship," he says. "And if I don't, I'll go to a community college and then transfer to a university to play basketball."

Deon-Ja Lewis is adrift no more. ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: Mary Meller Elementary
9115 Balfour Street
Pico Rivera, 90660
- Phone: (562) 949-8862
- Programs: Tutoring, crafts, healthy eating, fitness.
- PicoRiveraYAL@lasd.org
www.PicoRiveraYAL.org

Pico Rivera YAL



Pico Rivera YAL Focuses on Education and Leadership

"Our goal is to establish a bond, a good relationship between teens in our community and law enforcement," says Deputy Saira Maradiaga. "Many of our students have graduated from the PRIDE program for teens at risk and now participate in our YAL program."

The PRIDE program, Personal Responsibility In Development and Ethics, is a 10-week intervention program founded at the Pico Rivera Station in 2008. And, there's been continuity established between the PRIDE and YAL programs.

"Both programs strongly focus on education and leadership," says Maradiaga. "I currently have two teens who participated in both pro-

grams (PRIDE and YAL) and now are committed in our Explorer pre-academy program."

The programs have worked well for many of the approximately 250 teens who participate in Pico Rivera YAL activities each month.

For example, says Maradiaga, Amber Fraire was nominated for the "Salute to the Youth" award and "PAL Youth Leadership Academy" for her leadership skills and academic grades.

And, Maradiaga says, Starlette Covarrubias was also nominated for the "PAL Youth Leadership Academy" for her academic grades and Pricilia Dominguez received a scholarship for improving her grades.

Says Maradiaga: "All three young ladies continue to strive and become good leaders."



Filling the Education Gap: Pico Rivera YAL Builds Leaders

Ambar Fraire says the Pico Rivera YAL has made a big difference in her schoolwork.

"My grades before this, it was actually not very bad — but they weren't that good," says Fraire, 14, who turned to the YAL for homework help because her mother was unable to help her.

"My mom didn't really... she didn't know much about school, because she wasn't able to graduate from high school, so I needed more help," Fraire says. "The mentors and the tutors and the deputies, they all help me."

She says the YAL's leadership programs have helped her develop confidence and aim for ambitious academic goals that otherwise would not have been possible. She received the Pico Rivera YAL's "Salute to Youth" award in 2012

and was selected to the PAL Youth Leadership Academy.

And, it all started with a request for help with her homework.

Now, Fraire says, her grades are up and she's making college plans: "I'm thinking about going to a private university, and after that I want, for my career, I want to be in forensics." ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 30300 Arlington St.
Val Verde, 91384
- Phone: (661) 257-4021
- Programs: Homework club, mentoring, arts & crafts, pottery class, cooking class, bingo, girls group. Youth Leadership Council (leadership program), coed soccer, basketball, softball, football, half-hour hustle, field trips (fun/educational).
- SantaClaritaYAL@lasd.org
www.SantaClaritaYAL.org

Santa Clarita YAL



Santa Clarita YAL Shares Strong Bond with Community

The Santa Clarita YAL doesn't even have its own facility — but produces results just the same.

The center operates out of borrowed space at Val Verde Park, nestled in the hills west of Santa Clarita. The community of Val Verde is sometimes an afterthought within the greater Santa Clarita Valley community, and the staff and volunteers of the YAL make sure that the youths there are treated like anything but afterthoughts.

"The YAL plays a very significant role in our community," says Program Coordinator Jaime Briano. "The YAL strives to make kids aware of the many choices that life offers. We have programs that prepare our youths for their futures and get them thinking about college."

The Santa Clarita YAL benefits from a strong connection with the community, which provides significant resources to the YAL and helps it make the most of its status as a long-term guest at Val Verde Park. Community donations help fund trips and activities, and a partnership with a local elementary school provides the assistance of professional teachers who visit the YAL several times a week to help the youths with their homework. Approximately 60 youths attend the YAL each day, and it has more than 150 registered members.

"One of the greatest values our YAL provides to the community is consistency," Briano says. "Over the years there have been numerous programs that make a great deal of promises and don't last. We provide a safe, fun place for

youths to attend. The YAL is a place where our kids can come together and just be kids. You can be any shape, size, color and be accepted. The YAL brings together kids who normally would not engage with each other anywhere outside the program."

It also develops positive relationships between Sheriff's Deputies and youths who get to know each other in friendly settings.

"In our community, when you see a deputy arrive at your home, it doesn't always mean it's a bad thing," says Briano. "Most of the deputy visits in our community are to drop off kids from ball games or amusement parks."

The center places a great deal of emphasis on education and leadership, which has helped many youths excel. For example, Santa Clarita YAL participant Raul Domrique became one of 10 youths statewide who were named to the Board of Directors of the California Police Activities League, and represented CalPal at a conference in Washington, D.C.

"I think the kids are the No. 1 star of the program," says Briano. "This is why we're here. This is our future."



Santa Clarita YAL Provides Hope in Troubled Times

Rudy Guerrero never gave a second thought to the future. As it was, the present seemed bleak enough. While his family faced economic challenges that forced them to make difficult lifestyle changes, his grades suffered and he didn't look toward the future with optimism.

But the Santa Clarita YAL changed his outlook.

"My grades before starting the YAL were, like, low," says Guerrero, 13. "I didn't have any

thoughts about the future before I joined the YAL."

Guerrero and his family faced some pretty significant challenges just making ends meet — but, he says, the Santa Clarita YAL's programs have helped him get through that difficult period, and even given him a new sense of optimism and hope for his future.

"The most difficult time I've had in my life was the past couple of years, because we've had to move from a house into a small trailer and

money has been really slow, and we've been having problems," says Guerrero, who was the Santa Clarita YAL's honoree at the Sheriff's Youth Foundation's 2012 Salute to Youth Gala.

Not only has the YAL helped him navigate troubled times, but also, he says, it has sparked his interest in a possible career: "My thoughts for my future is becoming a law enforcement (officer). I want to become a detective." ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 11911 S. Vermont Los Angeles, 90304
- Phone: (323) 242-8784
- Programs: Zumba, Sheriff's Explorers, Youth Leadership Council, karate, computer lab, tutorial classes, skate park, Lennox Gents Social Club, Girls Social Club, dance, boxing, weight training, Freezone and VIDA.
- SouthLosAngelesYAL@lasd.org
www.SouthLosAngelesYAL.org

South Los Angeles YAL



South Los Angeles YAL: A Haven Amid Chaos

If you had to identify the parts of Los Angeles County that face the greatest challenges, South Los Angeles would no doubt be near the top of the list. Simply put, the South Los Angeles YAL is in one of the toughest parts of town.

"The kids see more than some of us will see in a lifetime," says Sgt. Cynthia Moore. "All of the Sheriff's YAL's are special. They all have different needs. Our center is in the hub of gang activity and crime. To have a place that is a safe haven for them to enter and just be kids is what all the centers strive to provide."

The South Los Angeles YAL serves about 300 youths, and it's made possible by approximately two dozen volunteers and Explorers who assist the staff of six. The volunteers include people like Dorothy Anderson, who has volunteered at the YAL for approximately 20 years. She's at the YAL five days a week and enjoys working for the center. She and the other volunteers all help the South Los Angeles YAL rise to the unique challenges of its environment.

To help the South Los Angeles YAL meet those challenges, its staff would like to update and upgrade some facilities. The center needs an outdoor exercise area and play equipment to help youths exercise and release tension.

Among the highlights for this particular YAL are its summer programs, which keep more than 140 youths busy when school isn't in session.

"Our community parents come in droves to register their kids because there is no outlet for their kids during the summer months," Moore says. "We have the kids read and learn their home addresses. You would be surprised at how many kids — all ages — don't know."

The center also offers "Back to School Bingo," in which youths play bingo for school supplies. The blackout game allows kids to win a donated backpack, overstuffed with school supplies.

Moore says many of the parents whose children attend the YAL are just like any parents: They want their kids to be safe.

"Speaking from experience, I always looked for a place for my kids to go after school where I did not have to worry about their safety," she says. "Our South Los Angeles parents feel the same way. They know their kids will get their homework done, have a nutritional snack and have a minute to interact with other students as they release all their energy."

It also helps the kids see law enforcement officers differently.

"A child who has the opportunity to interact with members of law enforcement in a positive encounter is more productive in life," Moore says. "They see a career they may want to pursue once they are older. In general we provide positive, meaningful interaction with area kids. They see law enforcement officers in a different light, the kinder, gentler force that we really are."

The results speak for themselves. For example, Alfonso Hernandez overcame adverse circumstances while growing up at the YAL, says Moore.

"He's currently a sergeant in the Explorer Post. His father passed and Alfonso has become the man of his family. What a wonderful young man," Moore says, then adds: "All of our kids are special and they all have a story. Our kids are moving forward."

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 2236 Goodall Ave Duarte, CA 91010
- Phone: (626) 357-1619
- Programs: After-school enrichment, mentoring, homework assistance, book club, softball, basketball, art programs, hiking club, FamCamp, community service programs, fitness program
- TempleYAL@lasd.org
www.TempleYAL.org

Temple YAL



Making Turnarounds at Temple

It just might be the ultimate story of law enforcement officers and young people turning their relationship 180 degrees, from negative to positive: Two youths who now attend the Temple YAL were once connected to a gang that was involved in a shooting with Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies.

"The youths were raised in a gang environment with no regard toward law enforcement," says Deputy Arthur Valenzuela. "After working with the youths and their family, one of them wants to become an officer when he graduates and the other wants to go to college."

It's just one of many illustrations of the pivotal role the Temple YAL plays in the lives of youths.

"The YAL is special in so many ways, and truly bridges the gap between law enforcement and the communities we serve," Valenzuela says. "We take time to know our youth and their families to assist in building the best possible community, from the base of the family."

At the Temple YAL, the goal is to not only help individual kids — some 490 per month — but also to build better communities from the ground up. It all starts with the youths, their families and volunteers like Rebecca Diaz.

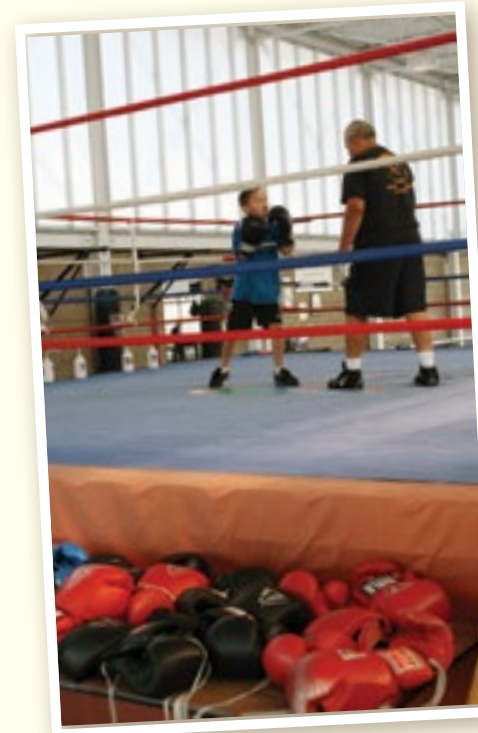
"She was raised in the community and understands that working with youth takes more than words, it takes a commitment," Valenzuela says. "Rebecca has volunteered for numerous camping and community service projects."

Thanks to the commitment of the staff and volunteers, the Temple YAL can proudly boast of excellent students like 16-year-old Prietika Williams.

"She is such a positive role model to her fellow youth in the community," Valenzuela says. "She works hard in school and has been the Temple Station Youth Leadership President for the past three years. She plans on becoming a lawyer and attending college in Florida."

The Temple YAL is a place where special things happen, from showing youths there are better options than the gang lifestyle to mentoring the community's future leaders.

"Our goal is to strive to make the best community for the youths we serve," Valenzuela says. "We want the youth to take ownership and pride in their community, and develop leaders who will make a difference."



YAL Was the Catalyst for a Turnaround

When 10-year-old Charles Jones first joined the South Los Angeles YAL about three years ago, he came with some rough edges to his personality.

"When Charlie first joined our center, he would fight at the drop of a hat," says Sgt.

Cynthia Moore. "He has indeed come a long way. He is now more forgiving and works well with other kids. He is a joy to be around and an 'A' student.

Jones says the YAL has offered him stability, and has given him a fresh perspective not only on his life today, but also on the kind of life he can build for himself. To hear him talk, it's

clear that the YAL has given him a very important gift: Hope.

"When I'm at the YAL, I'm somewhere safe and I don't have to worry about being on the streets," Charles says. "I plan to be a great person — and live in a big house with a big, happy family." ★

YAL Helps Boy Overcome Grief, Set Course for the Future

Ramond Campbell knows firsthand the devastation that can be caused by gang violence: He's 16 years old and he has already lost two family members to gang warfare.

"The (biggest) difficulties that I've had in my life was having my uncle and my cousin killed by gang violence within a few days of each other," Ramond says.

"Ramond has overcome so many obstacles in his life, from family shootings to family financial struggles," says Deputy Arthur Valenzuela. "Ramond currently lives in a household of 15, and has never lost sight of the goal of succeeding."

Ramond says the YAL has been a vital support system that helped him through his life's most challenging times, enabling him to look ahead to the future with optimism despite the tragedy that has occurred around him.

"I really had no plans for the future," Ramond says. "The YAL helped me through my difficulties, by staying there with me, and telling me good things, and just sheltering me, basically — so I wouldn't have to feel the pain."

And now, Ramond is planning for the happy ending to his own story: His goal is to either become a professional athlete, or to serve children in the future — as a pediatrician. ★

AT A GLANCE

- Address: 18500 Farjardo St. Rowland Heights, 91748
- Phone: (626) 839-6631
- Programs: Tutoring, homework assistance, wrestling, field trips, recreational sports, arts and crafts, youth council, video games.
- WalnutYAL@lasd.org
www.WalnutYAL.org

Walnut YAL



Making a Little Space Go a Long Way at Walnut YAL

The Walnut YAL operates within a space of about 20 feet by 20 feet. But they make every square inch count, especially when it comes to making sure the kids succeed academically.

"All our children are stars!" says Deputy Gary Vargas. "Due to the community's academic needs, our focus on education makes this YAL special!"

That focus on education has paid off for the 80 youths who participate at the Walnut YAL, including 17-year-old Galilea Martinez, who was the Walnut YAL's Salute to Youth honoree in 2012. Martinez says that, thanks to the help she's received at the YAL, she is setting career goals.

"My future plan is to go to a college and pursue a career in nursing," she says.

Vargas says the Walnut YAL, which operates from noon to 6 p.m. year-round, is an important asset for the youths of the community it serves.

"We provide a safe haven for the children to

obtain tutoring and homework assistance at no cost," Vargas says. "We are a very successful program averaging 25 kids a day. This may not sound like a big number, but when you're working in 20- by 20-foot space, well you can do the math."



AT A GLANCE

- Address: 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood, 90069
- Phone: (323) 845-0172
- Programs: Tutoring, hiking, drama, video production, fitness, Teen Chef, model car building, leadership training.
- WestHollywoodYAL@lasd.org
www.WestHollywoodYAL.org

West Hollywood YAL



West Hollywood YAL Brings Youths to Center Stage

The West Hollywood YAL has an artistic side to it: Drop by on a given afternoon and, just as likely as you are to find youths participating in leadership training or getting their homework done, you might find them honing their stage skills in the drama program, or perfecting their latest recipe in the Teen Chef program.

"Our kids are what makes us shine," says Deputy Sean Ruiz. "Whether singing, dancing, struggling through their homework, exploring new hiking trails, playing dodge ball or preparing a new and tasty dish. Our kids are dedicated and hard-working individuals."

The West Hollywood YAL, which serves an average of 15 youths per day, takes pride in providing a safe place where youths can gather, share, learn, experiment, play and grow.

"They are learning the power of teamwork," Ruiz says. "We are here, we are free, and we welcome you and your children."

That teamwork is applied and executed in various ways, including productions by the YAL's drama class. Says Ruiz: "One success story involved a young man from our drama class who was scouted at our performance and ended up getting a role on HBO's 'Eastbound & Down.'"

Other success stories abound. Among them is Henry Dorfman, the West Hollywood YAL's 2012 "Salute to Youth" honoree who, through



his involvement in the YAL, has gained a stronger perspective on his educational goals and will attend California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo.

"Now I have more direction," says Dorfman, 17. "At the moment I will be majoring in computer science."



It's helped with his confidence on the pitcher's mound, too: He loves baseball and practices and plays hard for his high school team.

He still finds time to go to the YAL that gave him such a boost, and now, the younger kids there look up to him. "They ask how's my acting career going, and they're like, 'Don't forget me when you're famous!'" ★

Back from the Brink

Chuck Fritz was headed down the wrong path. He'd gotten into trouble at school, his grades were in the cellar and his grandmother, who serves as his guardian, was looking for a solution.

"I was smoking and doing nothing really good," says Fritz, 13. "I was really down in my work and my grandma was looking for something to help bring me back up, and she found the YAL."

It's helped tremendously — in fact, after being expelled from his junior high school in June 2012,

the continuation school work he has done while attending the Walnut YAL has so impressed school officials that he was reinstated to resume attendance at his regular junior high six months later.

"It's so nice to see him succeed," says Deputy Gary Vargas. "He wanted to get back there, and we have been on him academically."

Fritz says he now knows he needed a push in the right direction, and he's grateful to the Walnut YAL for providing it.

"They helped me overcome my laziness," Fritz says. "They've helped me in many ways, but mostly by pushing. They've been pushing me to work harder to get everything done."

He adds, though, that going to the YAL isn't just hard work: When the homework is done, there's still time to play and participate in activities. "It's, like, really fun," he says, "And they help you a lot." ★

From the YAL to HBO

Eddie Vargas III didn't always want to perform. But once he was persuaded to go on stage, he started to shine. And, during a performance of a play put on by his group at the West Hollywood Youth Activity League center, a talent scout spotted him.

Shortly after that, he was signed on for a four-episode run on the HBO comedy series, "Eastbound and Down," and flying off to film for two weeks in Puerto Rico. It all started at the YAL.

"I made a whole bunch of friends during that whole experience," Vargas says. "They really gave me a lot of support and help whenever things got hard. Deputy Sean (Ruiz), he'd bring me up when I would be down, give me some advice when something was wrong."

Vargas, 15, says performing at the YAL was a valuable experience, and not just for a possible acting career. "It really opened up my self-esteem," he says. "It helped with my academic life, my schoolwork, when I would do presentations and write papers. It just really made me realize it's not about being isolated, it's about being put out there and just be yourself."

Supporting the Sheriff's Youth Foundation

SYF Fundraisers Provide Opportunities to Help



The Sheriff's Youth Foundation helps thousands of youths each year via programs that steer them away from crime, build self-esteem and encourage positive life choices on a path toward becoming responsible, healthy adults. These programs cannot exist without the support of the many volunteers and donors who contribute so much to help our communities' youth.

Throughout the year, community members have several opportunities to help our youth by supporting fundraisers benefiting the nonprofit Sheriff's Youth Foundation:

- **Salute to Youth Gala:** The gala enters its 28th year in 2013 and remains the Foundation's primary fundraiser, honoring outstanding youth who have participated in SYF programs, as well as supporters, volunteers and contributors who make the Foundation's programs possible. In June 2012 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, youth advocate Mark Wahlberg was honored with the Foundation's Community Champion Award for his service and commitment to at-risk children and families. Also honored was the LA84 Foundation, which has provided more than \$370,000 in support of SYF sports programs.
- **Sheriff's Shootout Golf Tournaments:** Sheriff Baca invites supporters to take to the golf course each year in support of Los Angeles County's at-risk youths. The Sheriff's Shootouts are held at some of the County's most prestigious golf courses. In 2012, Sheriff's Shootouts venues included the Riviera Country Club and the Wilshire Country Club.
- **SYF at the Bowl:** Each summer, the Foundation and its supporters enjoy the uniquely American experience of an evening at the Hollywood Bowl. The 2012 event, the 23rd annual, featured a private buffet dinner and VIP seating for a special performance by Barry Manilow and an evening-capping fireworks show.

Additional fundraisers are also offered, and contributions are accepted and welcomed throughout the year. We sincerely appreciate every contribution, whether it's financial or a gift of your time.

Tickets, reservations and more information on SYF fundraisers can always be obtained by calling (877) KIDS 411 or (323) 526-5120, or by emailing syf@lasd.org.



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