

BYOUTHFOR YOUTH

Newsletter

By Youth For Youth:

The By Youth For Youth (BYFY) program empowers youth to take leadership roles and advocate for significant and sustainable changes in their lives and the communities in which they reside, study, work and play. It consists of a variety of youth-led activities to support the participants in three areas: Personal Growth, Community Leadership and Advocacy, and Education. ♦

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"Unity Through Diversity" in Las Vegas

The 8th Annual National BYFY Conference, themed "Unity through Diversity", was held on June 27-28th at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Fifteen of our youth ages 13-18 prepared for this moment months in advance by meeting weekly to plan and lead all the activities of the conference. It began with a welcome dinner at Cambridge Recreation Center where youth met and learn a little bit about each other for the first time. The event was hosted by two BYFY members who gave a brief introduction about what BYFY is and what the conference would look like. On Saturday, all the youth came together at UNLV to participate in interactive activities and informative workshops led by different youth groups from across the country. It was a celebration of a diverse group of youth who united with the same goal of creating social change. Workshop leaders used improvisational theatre, music, games, video, and discussion to address issues like discrimination,



Theatre groups Imagine That & Skin Deep Perform.

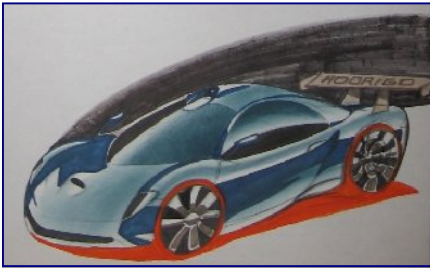
stereotypes, points of view, and life choices. Some groups shared advocacy strategies that they use in their own communities. The day ended with each group committing themselves to the BYFY network and taking part in the planning of next year's conference. Participants came with an open mind and left with a new perspective and enthusiasm to return next year. Special thanks to the presenters and participants: Imagine That (Spartanburg, SC), Skin Deep (Rock Hill, SC), Alianza Dominicana (New York, NY), Roots & Shoots (Los Angeles, CA) High School of Performing Arts (Los Angeles, CA), Carson City Youth (Carson, NV), Hispanic Youth Image (Reno, NV), Rancho High School (Las Vegas, NV), and Cambridge Recreation Center (Las Vegas, NV). ♦



Participants involved in an icebreaker activity.



Future Car Designers in the Making



2020 "Supercar" Designed by 14 yr. old Rodrigo Gonzalez.

In May 2008, youth in the community were exposed to two very talented car designers when they paid a visit in a custom car completely designed and built by them. As a result, ten youth had

the opportunity to participate in a car design class where they learned how to use their creativity and express their ideas through drawings. Unique and futuristic concept cars were developed with hopes that at least one would become a reality some day. Some youth walked into the class with an existing passion for art, while others for cars. In the end of the 8 week session, students were amazed by what they were able to come up with as one youth puts

it, "I didn't even know that I could draw." Throughout the course youth learned what car designers do and what it takes to become one. The young designers incorporated environmentally friendly ideas into their plans. Rodrigo Gonzalez's "Supercar" (picture on the left) runs on hydrogen rather than fossil fuel to prevent pollution. The link that was made between cars and real life issues was amazing. The instructors became mentors and role models for the youth. We look forward to the continuous exposure of different career paths to all of the children of the Mar Vista community. Thanks to John Misumi, Dang Jin Kang, and Art Reliford of Vision Industries, eyes were open to new possibilities and new young artists have evolved. ♦



Custom Car by John Misumi visits the Center.

BYFY Contributes to "Day of Service"

On March 15, 2008 the entire community took part in the beatification of Mar Vista Family Center (MVFC) and its surrounding community. Members of BYFY partnered with the Los Angeles Youth Council and Neighborhood Youth Association (NYA) to tackle the Ballona Creek and its bike path. All youth showed up bright and early with brooms and shovels in hand, ready to clean. Although the youth had never met before, they did not hesitate to start mingling and getting to know each other. Youth were excited to be part of something so positive in their community. One youth in particular stated that she did not want to attend at first because it was so early in the morning and that the street and



Youth sweeping the Ballona Creek.

bike path were just going to get dirty again anyway. After seeing so many people of all ages uniting gave her a sense of pride for her community and the early wake up was completely worth it. The highlight for many youth was having the opportunity to meet Mayor Villaraigosa and show the positive work that goes on at MVFC. The day ended with a friendly game of basketball between BYFY and NYA. The youth were so excited to have met other youth from different schools and communities, and soon began to outreach for their Annual BYFY Conference. The street looked great, the bike path was clear of trash for riding, and new friends were made. It was a great day! ♦



Mayor is interviewed with BYFY.

Seppy's Camp Promotes Health & Nutrition

Each year, children from the community anxiously wait for Seppy's Summer Day Camp to begin. This year was no different, but campers and their parents were surprised by one big change. Counselors worked together to promote health and nutrition through their daily activities. The four camp teams, Carrot Bunnies, Tomato Potatoes, Cherrie Bombs, and the Krunkberrries, all enjoyed skits created by the counselors that promoted healthy eating like reenacting the show "Cheaters" but calling it "Eaters". Teenagers being caught on tape sneaking around with the wrong crowd eating fast food. Other comedic skits demonstrated how certain



Campers and counselors exercising.

vegetables can help you think and feel better. Campers and counselors laughed and cheered while learning something new. Part of the curriculum included making delicious smoothies and snacks and then having a party to enjoy what they created. Exercise was not excluded from the day. Nature walks were taken each week allowing the campers to admire and appreciate their community a little better, while getting the heart pumping. Yoga was included into the mix teaching the kids to breath and stretch while having fun being trees and pretzels. In the campers, counselors, and even parents were a little more health conscious. Mission Accomplished! ♦



Campers toast with fresh smoothies.

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One Step Closer to a Dream Come True



Gerardo tutoring a student after school.

I first began my participation at MVFC at the age of eight, influenced by my friends and family members who were ongoing participants themselves. Through them I learned what the Center offered for kids and youth.

As a result, I started out as a member of the preteen boys group and the Mar Vista soccer team, where I began to find positive role models in a neighborhood that had so many negative influences. I noticed that there were so many events that helped improve my community like street clean-ups, and I wanted to be a part of it. Soon I was old enough to join the BYFY program and become one of the leaders that I looked up to as a child. This program helped me in so many areas. I learned to be a leader in my community, and the personal growth activities were essential in my social life and more importantly, my education. After

high school, I attended West Los Angeles College and always felt that giving back to my community was very important. I currently serve as the After School Tutoring Coordinator who provides academic assistance to elementary and middle school students. My experiences at MVFC have encouraged me to pursue a higher education, which is something I never thought would be possible. MVFC, together with the Sterling Foundation, have given me the opportunity of a life time. They have provided me with the financial support that I need to earn a college degree, making me the first in my family to do so. This fall I began the journey at Cal State Dominguez Hills with the goal of becoming a teacher. The opportunities that MVFC gives me year after year, whether it is as a tutor or a summer camp counselor, will make a great impact when I start my career. Thank you for supporting my childhood dream.

-Gerardo Rodriguez
BYFY Leader Since 1999

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We are on the Web!
www.byfy.org

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The Everychild Foundation Youth Center Opening in 2009!