

The Long Beach YMCA YOUTH INSTITUTE

Winter 2006



WE BUILD STRONG KIDS, STRONG FAMILIES, STRONG COMMUNITIES

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT YMCA

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Inside the Issue:

Annual Family Picnic

Horrid Haunted House

Youth Sports

Leadership Through
Representation

Teens on a Budget

Last Year of
High School



Annual Family Picnic



By: Abelardo Gutierrez, Class of 2006

Among the many events hosted by the YMCA Youth Institute, one of the biggest, and most well known is the Annual Family Picnic. This picnic not only brings families together for a day at the park, but it reunites classes that graduated the YMCA program. The Stephens YMCA Youth Institute kids in conjunction with the high school YMCA Youth Institute teens put this picnic together, while the YMCA families enjoyed it. A variety of booths made fun for all ages, ranging from a face painting booth, to a photobooth where families took pictures and later had them photo-shopped by the Youth Institute kids

who enjoyed applying their skills that they learned over the summer. It took a surprising amount of patience and teamwork by the Youth Institute kids, but it was well worth it to see the smiles on the faces of the families. The families enjoyed free hamburgers and hotdogs, and the Youth Institute kids enjoyed grilling them.

This picnic took a lot of teamwork, but was great fun. We enjoyed making cheers, interacting with elementary school children as well as the parents. This picnic brought together friends and families from community YMCA's and school sites all over Long Beach.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

- 11/30-12/1: Marguerite Casey Convening - Seattle, WA
- 12/11-12/12: Marguerite Casey Convening - Scottsdale, AZ
- 12/21: Youth Institute Holiday Party @ 5pm
- 1/10-1/12: Expo Y Arts 2007-Frost Valley, NY
- 1/12-1/14: YMCA Youth & Government-Camp Roberts National Guard Camp
- 2/1: Summer 2007 Youth Institute applications out
- 2/15-2/19: YMCA Youth & Government Model Legislature - Sacramento, CA
- 3/1: Summer 2007 Youth Institute Applications Due

LEADERSHIP THROUGH REPRESENTATION

I would like to take this time to personally thank and recognize some great Youth Institute Leaders who have recently represented our program to a number of very important adult professionals. They are Steven Chan and Leslie Barnes who spoke at the National YMCA Diversity Conference to over 300 adult YMCA professionals. They spoke about their experiences with diversity in the Youth Institute. Steven and Leslie had the adults mesmerized with their intellect and knowledge in the areas of diversity among our youth.

Two other Youth Institute Alumni, Maria Gandarilla and Katherine Marraquin also spoke to about 50 professional foundation representatives on the Youth Institute as part of a panel at the National Grant Makers Conference in Los Angeles. They gave their opinions on Youth and Teen programs and what teens need to succeed in the real world. The professionals there were very impressed with their knowledge and maturity.

Once again, our teens are showing their leadership and public speaking skills to adults. This winter we will have several youth training at conferences in Seattle, Phoenix and New York. This program instills leadership skills and showcases our program nationally. Congratulations to our teens for representing us so well.



PEACE!
Bob Cabeza,
Executive Director Downtown
Community Development Branch

**“YOUTH INSTITUTE ALUMNI AT THE
YMCA HERITAGE CLUB DINNER!”**

Teens on a Budget

By: Abelardo Gutierrez, Class of 2006

Every summer, thousands of kids look to get a summer job, this thrills fast food chains, pizza places, and retail stores, after all, they're getting teens desperate for a job, and they would be more than thrilled to work for minimum wage. But why would these kids want this money so bad? What do they spend all their summer earnings on? Some kids spend their money on clothes, which today cost a small fortune. Some designer jeans, such as “True Religions” and “7 for all Mankind” cost anywhere from \$150.00 to \$300.00. Is this the price some kids would pay to keep up on trends? Some kids go to the movies and after adding up the cost for tickets, popcorn, soda, and even dinner afterwards, it gets expensive.

School doesn't help either. Winter formal tickets cost about sixty dollars a pop. Once you add the tux or your dress, the limo, and photographers, it's a miracle if anyone goes.

Materialistic things can get rather pricey too. “iPods” can go from the basic \$79 ones to the deluxe \$350 ones. But instead of buying these extravagant luxuries, what can you spend your money on something that would be more fulfilling?

The holiday season is magical for some, but extremely depressing for others. Some people can't afford to buy their kids presents, so why don't teens make an adult decision and help them out? You can go to the “99 cents” store and make a few kids happy by spending under

10 dollars. Just think about it, you can make one kid's Christmas or Chanukah for a dollar. You can go to big lots, and buy brand name toys, for closeout prices. You can go to Marshall's or Ross, and buy discount clothes for under \$15. You can also give to the thousands of charities, such as “Toys for Tots”, “The Make a Wish Foundation” and “Habitat for Humanity”, which would get you the ultimate sense of satisfaction. So think about this for a second, would you rather buy a pair of jeans, which you would only wear about twice a month, or would you give a child the gift of happiness?

HORRID HAUNTED HOUSE

By: Alexis Walker, Class of 2006

I would have to say that the Haunted House was a very special experience for me. I was able to help decorate the haunted house and perform as a monster. I learned a lot about lights, playing tricks on the eyes, and teamwork. It was extremely fun working with everyone. We all had one thing in common: we wanted a successful haunted house.

Personally, I think we got exactly what we wanted! Our haunted house went exceptionally well and I



hope to be a part of it for the coming years. I also enjoyed seeing the little kid's faces when we scared them. It was so sweet seeing Phyras and the guides encourage the kids when they were too terrified to go on.



YOUTH SPORTS



By: Pete Moye, Class of 2006

My experience as a youth sports coach was that if you want to get involved in your community and help the little kids out then Youth Sports is the right thing to do. Being a part of Youth Sports was a nice experience and was fun and challenging at times. I got to help the young ones out and teach them how to play basketball. They not only learn basketball, but they learn about patience, cooperation, communication, sportsmanship, and teamwork. They learned

how to cooperate with one another better and work together. Although some of them weren't all that good we taught them to still have fun with the game and keep their heads up. To these little kids we are like their big role models that they look up to. Just being there for them and seeing the smiles on their face makes me feel good inside to know that I helped out our future generation and taught them as much as I know.

Y.I. Class of 2003 Back in the Office!

By: John Sanders, Youth Institute Staff

Reunited and it feels so good. Students of the Youth Institute, class of 2003 is back for a visit at the office on November 17th. There was a lot of catching up and stories to share among Jamie Skalky, Veronica Vega, Troy Hertzog, Phyras Men, John Sanders, and Ben Candee. "It's amazing how much they've all grown up!" say Executive Director, Bob Cabeza with excitement.



Last Year of High School

By: **Carlos Gerrero, Class of 2006**

At last! After three years of school, the last one, senior year is on its way. With so many things like deadlines for college, financial aid, formal, prom, grad night, etc, senior year is going to be a fun but also a very stressful year.

As a senior at Wilson High School, I am certainly looking forward to everything that senior year holds. This means struggling through college applications, writing scholarship essays, and on top of all that juggling schoolwork. But best of all, I am looking forward to the ending of my high school years. Because this is the last part of the ride, I have started to cherish everything that I know I will miss like hanging out with my friends, going to school clubs, competing for gymnastics, and most of all, seeing the school. So far, I have been enjoying school! I am in five clubs, have meet new friends as well as kept old ones, and learned many things. Senior year to me is going to be the beginning of the initiation to college life.

By: **Maria Gandarilla, Class of 2005**

As a senior in high school, I'm starting to realize that there are many things I am leaving behind, but I also know that there are many more things to come.

When graduation comes seniors are going to look back and remember all those things that high school has taught them. Looking into high school, there is winter formal, homecoming, prom, and many activities that just leave a mark. There is also stress: college applications, financial aid, and all the deadlines to follow. With all the problems, drama, and stress high school can cause, is a definite thing that is all an unforgettable experience. Senior year without a doubt is the most challenging. Not only do you have to keep your grades up, but you also have to file applications, and follow deadlines. Also you have to deal with yourself....make up your mind and decide what it is that you want to do with your life.

The road to follow during senior year is long and tough but it sure pays off so compromise and give it your best. With so many things to do, I encourage every high school student to get involved and enjoy every little thing that high school has to offer.



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