

Sheriff's Youth Foundation

Investing in the future of our Los Angeles County youth is what the Sheriff's Youth Foundation (SYF) is all about. Based upon the belief that crime prevention programs, focused on youth, are the key to developing safer communities, the Foundation raises vital funds needed to assist the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department with the operation of ten Youth Activity Leagues (YALs), three Youth Activity Centers, and Substance Abuse Narcotics Education (SANE). Combined, these programs reach more than 120,000 young people throughout Los Angeles County, providing them with tools for life success and empowering them to utilize these tools - while also having some fun.

Excitement and growth earmarked 1998 for SYF. During this year, the youth programs operated by the Sheriff's Department have benefitted from a number of generous contributions to SYF. Most notably, one of our newest benefactors is the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, which awarded the Foundation a grant for more than \$295,000. This money is being used to renovate a large portion of the Audrey & Sydney Irmas Center, Lennox Station area, enabling SYF to double the size of the computer lab, build a new workout room, and make better use of interior space programs.

October, 1998 marked the dedication of the new Firestone Center. What once was jail cells and detective interview rooms are now brightly colored spaces, housing computers, libraries, reading rooms, and youth counseling desks. Public and private donations, including the labor and material provided by a variety of building and construction trades, are now providing the youth who live in the Florence/Firestone area with a resource vital to their health and welfare.

The programs exist to offer Los Angeles County youth a safe, supportive haven where they can interact with positive role models, including law enforcement officers, and receive guidance, factual information, and educational tutoring, as well as participate in after-school and esteem-building activities. Included among the many activities provided by the YALs are classes in boxing, karate, and folkloric; weight-training; computer training; mentoring; summer youth employment; and sports such as basketball, baseball, football, and soccer.



*Peggy Moore
Executive Director
Sheriff's Youth Foundation*

One of the most exciting Youth Activity League (YAL) programs is the annual Soap Box Derby, which provides inner-city youth with an opportunity to partner with mentors and Sheriff deputies to build their own soap box car and participate in races throughout Southern California. During 1998, we were delighted to send winners Danny Navarro and Anthony Zepeda to Akron, Ohio for the 1998 All-American Soap Box Derby Race. Due to the success of the Soap Box Derby program, we are planning Countywide expansion.



In addition to the Youth Activity Leagues, we continue to teach prevention to elementary, middle school and high school students. The drug awareness and education programs are committed to helping students improve their self-esteem, make good decisions and confidently deal with peer pressure. As students grow older, we continue to work with them during high school, to teach them to make positive choices through the Drugs, Pregnancy and You Program.

London Lee lives on a street that, until recently, was inundated with gang



*Student of the Year;
London W. Lee, Pamela Park YAL*

and drug activity. Not only does he participate in nearly all of the YAL activities, but often offers unsolicited assistance to the staff, setting a positive example for his peers. London excels in sports while maintaining a solid "B" average.

Lestor Jones was a gang member with a 1.5 grade point average when YAL deputies offered him the



*YAL Student of the Year;
Lester Jones, Lennox Station YAL*

opportunity to help rehabilitate the youth center. After six months, he took an interest in schoolwork again, and became a volunteer at the center assisting the deputies. Lester graduated from high school with a 3.2 grade point average and is now attending college.

A mature and polite 10-year-old, Lakieana Hunter, has overcome both personal and medical adversity while



*SANE Student of the Year;
Lakieana Hunter,
Albert Baxter Elementary School*

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striving to succeed in academic and extracurricular activities. She has maintained a high "B" average, attends ballet class, sings in her church choir and, in spite of severe asthma, Lakieana was a finalist for her school's 440 meter relay team.

Jairo Alvarado is a natural leader, a team player and a straight "A" student. Jairo spends several hours daily



Jairo Alvarado,
Northam Elementary School

after school and on weekends sharing his multimedia and computer talents. Jairo's kindness towards others, work ethic and academic standards clearly show that one can make positive life choices free of drugs and gangs.

Today's youth are our greatest investment and the best hope for creating a society in which all citizens will coexist peacefully - without gangs and on drug-free streets. This is our dream for a better Los Angeles. This is our commitment to the youth of Los Angeles. This is the Sheriff's Youth Foundation.



Working in association with the Sheriff's Youth Foundation to educate youngsters and teens, **RADD DRAG** (Racing Against Dangerous Drugs and Deputies Racing Against Gangs) Deputies Tony Taylor (left) and Scott Graham (right) are shown with a student from the Lennox School District, a participant in the independent non-profit program.

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