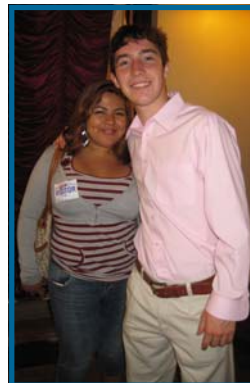


Los Angeles Youth Council 2007-2008 Annual Report



2007 - 2008
Annual Report

*See What **YOUth** Can Do!*





(L-R): Abby Zwick (Communications Officer), Joey Freeman (President), Noah Ickowitz (Historian), Anton Ksendz (District 10), Tiffany Lam (District 14), Andrea Galdamez (District 14), and Efrain Carcamo (District 9) take a group picture after a LAYC meeting.

Table of Contents

2	LAYC Vision and Mission Statement
3	Letter from the President
4	History of the LAYC & About LAYC
5	Executive Board 2007-2008
6	A New Direction
9	A Commitment to Protecting Youth Funding
10	A Commitment to Education
11	A Commitment to the Environment
13	A Commitment to Our Communities
16	LAYC Members In the News
17	Thanking Our Partners

VISION STATEMENT

We are youth who understand the importance of civic responsibility and participation in local government. Youth issues are community issues. As active participants in the Youth Council, we are empowered to be positive agents of change in the community by giving voice and representation to youth-related issues.

Through mentoring, educational workshops and hands-on experience, we are engaging in policy creation, solution driven leadership, and community interaction. Through mutual respect, youth and adults work in partnership to achieve shared goals.

We are strong, principled leaders who understand the power of cultural diversity through relationship building. By creating an environment of open and honest communication, we are fostering personal growth and increasing team building skills. We are “preparing leaders for today.”

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Los Angeles Youth Council is to represent and advocate on behalf of youth in the City of Los Angeles and to encourage youth involvement in community and city government.



A Letter from the President

Thank you for your interest in the Los Angeles Youth Council (LAYC). I encourage you to read our first Annual Report and learn about the work we have been engaged in over the past year. You will notice that the headline of each section begins with the phrase, "A Commitment to". Whether it be education reform, environmental activism, fighting for a youth friendly budget, or any given issue, LAYC conducts its work with a serious commitment. A commitment to city leaders to offer them the most accurate portrayal of what LA's youth believe. A commitment to the greater city family of agencies and departments of which we are a proud member. And most importantly, a commitment to the youth of Los Angeles who trust us to speak forcefully and collectively on their behalf.

This report would be blank were it not for the incredible LAYC team. My sincere thanks to the 2007-2008 Executive Board and Members not only for their consistent attendance and good work ethic, but more importantly for their passion and dedication to youth empowerment. I also extend thanks to Rafael Lopez, Jamiko Bell, and Elisa Lam and the rest of the Commission for Children, Youth, and Their Families staff for their friendship, guidance, long hours and commitment to preserving LAYC as an organization run by youth for youth.

It has been my honor to serve as the LAYC President over the past year and the Interim President the year prior. I ran for office with a clear mission of raising the bar and transforming LAYC into a model organization for cities around the world. There will always be more work to do but I believe we have come a long way in the last two years. I offer my full support and confidence in the newly elected Executive Board to further LAYC's mission of representing what is best about Los Angeles, its youth.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joey Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joey Freeman

History of the Los Angeles Youth Council



*Mayor Tom Bradley
initiated the Mayor's Youth
Advisory Board in 1973.*

In 1973, Mayor Tom Bradley initiated the Mayor's Youth Advisory Board. The board discussed the issues confronting the city's youth and enabled youth to provide feedback to the Mayor Bradley. This board was a launching point to instill sense of civic responsibility and community activism within its members.

"Alumni of this board include Los Angeles City Council Members Wendy Greuel and Tom LaBonge, L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, and former California State Assembly Member Paul Koretz."

Mayor Richard J. Riordan transferred the youth board to the newly created Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families (CCYF) in 1995. Renamed the Los Angeles Youth Council (LAYC), CCYF revived its operations in 1996. During this time, the LAYC consisted of members who were appointed by City Council Members and youth guests, all who were interested in participating in the city's governmental process. The LAYC was able to continue to be a resource to public officials and the city's youth. They attended city sponsored events; developed their own public access television program focused on youth issues; held forums to develop a youth master plan for the city and discussed improvements to their educational systems; and celebrated youth who have made positive changes in their lives and communities. Alumni of this board include Los Angeles City Council Members Wendy Greuel and Tom LaBonge, L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, and former California State Assembly Member Paul Koretz.

To stay relevant to the changing needs of the city's youth, the LAYC needed to reorganize itself. Today, the LAYC is building its membership by establishing local chapters in the community. The new LAYC organizational structure is illustrated on Page 7 of this report. This is a grassroots plan to engage youth at the local level and create a youth network.



Mayor Richard J. Riordan transferred the Youth Council to the newly created Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families in 1995.

About the Los Angeles Youth Council

The LAYC is a group of voluntary youth members between the ages of 13 and 19 years old. One LAYC member, who is at least eighteen years of age, is appointed to a seat on the Commission and serves as the Youth Commissioner, a voting representative of youth interest. A city-wide Executive Board and the Youth Commissioner provide leadership and support to LAYC chapter members.

All members of LAYC serve as advocates of the city's youth by promoting existing city sponsored programs, identifying the need for new programs and activities and by securing the involvement of young people in the city's governmental processes. As the representative of young people in the city and the link between them and city officials, LAYC members have the opportunity and responsibility to bring forth youth needs and the city's response to those needs.

LAYC serves as a leadership, youth development, and community empowerment opportunity for its members as well as other youth in the city. Members are engaged in a variety of activities from community development to developing policy recommendations about key issues that affect the youth of Los Angeles.

Each year, members of the LAYC join together at an annual summit to determine the issues most affecting youth in Los Angeles. One issue is selected to be the theme for the upcoming school year. LAYC chapters will organize events, projects and presentations around this theme. In addition, chapters continue to organize community building activities to engage youth in their districts.

2007– 2008 Executive Board



(L-R): Abigail Zwick, Joey Freeman, Noah Ickowitz,
Nia Zaferis, and Andrew Sealy.

Joey Freeman, President

Joey Freeman joined the Los Angeles Youth Council in the summer of 2005 as a representative of the Fifth Council District. He has served as Interim President from 2006-2007 and President from 2007-2008. Joey has devoted his service to making Youth Council the preeminent youth advocacy and empowerment organization in the city.

In addition to his Youth Council service, Joey is a three year intern for City Council President Pro Tem Wendy Greuel where he has gained experience in all facets of a City Council office. Currently, Joey is working in a senior leadership role for Robert Schwartz for City Council, Fifth District.

Along with his city related roles, Joey is a major Israel advocate and is the only high school student nationwide to serve on the National Speakers Bureau of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). He is heavily involved with AIPAC and co-founded and co-chairs the Israel on Campus Club at his high school. Joey is a senior at Milken Community High School and will be graduating with the class of 2009.

Nia Zaferis, Vice President

Nia is the Appointed Member of Councilmember Tom LaBonge, Fourth Council District and attended the Marlborough School. Nia was the captain and founder of her school's golf team, as well as the captain of her church's basketball team. She is currently a freshman at the University of Southern California.

Noah Ickowitz, Historian

Noah dedicates his time teaching Sunday school, is involved with Junior Blind of America and is a Counselor-in-Training at its camp for blind and visually impaired children. He is a senior at Milken Community High School, where he is a Student Ambassador for the admissions department and a member of the National Honor Society.

Andrew Sealy, Secretary

Andrew was a senior at Granada Hills Charter High School and enrolled in Santa Monica City College part time. He is the Appointed Member of Councilmember Greig Smith, Twelfth Council District. He has volunteered for the LAPD West Valley Division, served on his school's student council as Treasurer, and was a member of Building Outstanding Leaders Today (B.O.L.T). He was also involved in school sports such as soccer and track and field. Andrew graduated this year and is attending college.

Abigail Zwick, Communications Officer

Abby is very interested in the political process which motivated her to seek an internship for Congressman Brad Sherman. She is a senior at Milken Community High School. Abby has a strong passion for the state of Israel, where she studied abroad in spring 2007. She has been involved with both the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.



Michelle Segura
Youth Commissioner

Michelle graduated from Immaculate Heart High School in June 2007. Currently, she attends the University of Southern California. Michelle was appointed by Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa as the Youth Commissioner for the CCYF in June 2007. As Youth Commissioner, she represents LAYC at all meetings of the Commission and reports to the LAYC on all activities and discussions of the Commission. She has served as the Vice President of LAYC and was appointed by First District Councilmember Ed Reyes.

A New Direction

LAYC Restructures To Fit the Needs of the City

Over the last year, the Los Angeles Youth Council has embarked on a major restructuring process. Led by a Youth Council task force, a new set of rules and regulations were developed and later approved by the entire Youth Council membership. The goal of the restructuring process is to transform the Youth Council from a centralized and reactive body with an average membership of twenty youth to a decentralized and proactive citywide movement of youth chapters, engaging hundreds of young people.

The former structure invited youth to meet at City Hall on the second Saturday of every month. Its infrastructure called for a Youth Commissioner and Executive Board to lead a broader Youth Council membership of fifteen appointed members, one from each council district, fifteen alternate members, and an unlimited amount of members at large. While this system had its strengths, it did not adequately serve the needs of the youth of this great city. Years went by with some council districts lacking representation and leadership opportunities were limited. Further, whether youth did not have easy access to transportation or Saturday was simply an inconvenient meeting day, our minimal participation made it difficult to advance

many significant initiatives. The new structure calls for the establishment of local chapters of the Los Angeles Youth Council. All that is required to start a chapter is a minimum of five youth members, an adult sponsor, and an interest in making a difference. With this approach, the Youth Council is not only reaching hundreds more youth, but participation is uniquely designed to meet the needs of the community.

“This structure is sure to elevate youth engagement and activism to levels never before experienced.”

Fifteen appointed members and fifteen elected members, one of each for every council district, will provide leadership and support for their chapters. The Youth Council infrastructure is rounded out by the Youth Commissioner and the Executive Board, including a newly created Director of Chapter Affairs to guide the

chapters' development.

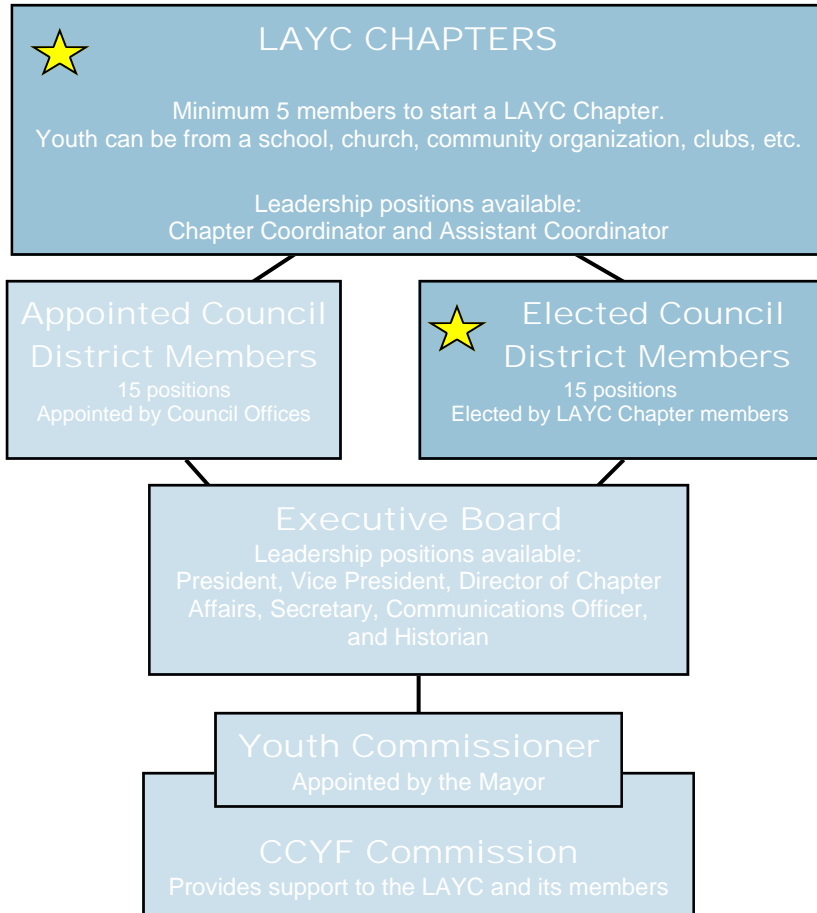
Every June, all Youth Council members will congregate in an Annual Conference to elect their new leaders and identify an issue around which to focus their efforts during the upcoming year. The remainder of the year will be programmed with leadership skills training and advocacy efforts. The Executive Board will continue to meet on the second Saturday of every month. Their meetings are open to the public and provide youth a chance to engage with their peers from across the city.

The purpose of this new structure is to provide for greater youth empowerment. Youth are key stakeholders of the City of Los Angeles and it is of the utmost importance that the youth voice is heard. This structure is sure to elevate youth engagement and activism to levels never before experienced. For that, we will all live in a better and stronger city.



“Developing Better Relationships Between Youth and Parents” forum at Jordan High School.

New LAYC Organizational Structure



-- Denotes a new component in the organizational structure.

Annual Calendar

The **Los Angeles Youth Council Executive Board** meets on the second Saturday of each month at City Hall. All meetings are open to the public.

Leadership Development Training - Provided quarterly

January - April

Gathering feedback of theme through chapter projects and outreach
Youth Partnerships Event

March - May

Community Impact Statement Development
Presentation to City Council

June - August

LAYC Annual Summit
Elections
Theme survey outreach for new school year

September - December

Theme Selection
Education and Training
Joint Meeting with Commission

'07-'08 Membership

Council District	Member * Appointed Member
1	*Michelle Segura
3	*Aleen Mayelian
4	*Nia Zaferis
5	Joey Freeman Abby Zwick Noah Ickowitz Aaron Feuer Tess Lerner-Byars
6	Jesus Lopez
7	Stephanie Morales
8	Heidi Holmes Khamira Pitts *Elyse Evans
9	*Efrain Carcamo *Brandon Tate
10	Rashad Rucker Anton Ksendz
11	*Daniel Sobajian *Monica Reason
12	*Andrew Sealy *Megan Tucker Traci Ishigo
13	Arasele Torres
14	*Andrea Galdamez *Ari Ruiz Tiffany Lam Angela Arunarsirakul John Arunarsirakul
15	*Jamal Benson
N/A	Amanda Ly Ricky Rodriguez

Logo Design Contest and LAYC's New Look



LAYC's new letterhead inspired by the winning logo design and logo entries received.

Since the Los Angeles Youth Council is a program of the City of Los Angeles Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families (CCYF), all of Youth Council's promotional materials and correspondence display the CCYF logo. The LAYC Executive Board recognized a need for a logo of its own and hoped to obtain a logo designed by a youth which would embody the spirit of youth activism and empowerment. In December 2007, Youth Council launched its first Logo Design Contest.



Winning logo design by Juan C., eighth grade.

With the theme, "See what YOUth can do!" and an 8 gigabyte iPod Nano as the first prize award, LAYC members were excited to

see what designs the city's youth would create.

Logo design entries were submitted by email, mail, and hand delivered. LAYC received over ninety entries. A computer graphics class at a local private school, after-school club projects from several recreation centers, and interested youth from all over the city, were among those who participated.

LAYC congratulates Juan C., an eighth grader, from the central area of Los Angeles for his winning logo design. Inspired by Juan's logo design and other entries, staff at the Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families created a new look to the LAYC letterhead and brochures. LAYC extends its sincere thanks to all youth who participated in the Logo Design Contest.



LAYC's new brochure design.

New Executive Board Officer Positions To Expand Outreach Efforts

As the current Executive Board took office at the beginning of the year, they did so with the addition of two new positions to their membership. For the first time, the LAYC Executive Board contained the positions of Historian and Communications Officer. Both positions were created in an effort to expand Youth

Council's outreach, community relations, and press efforts. Further, they serve as two new leadership opportunities for local youth to become involved in their communities. The Historian's duties include chronicling all Youth Council meetings and events through photos and videos, and maintaining media archives.

The Communications Officer has oversight of the Youth Council's press releases, newsletters, website, and other communications. Both positions have been essential this year in transitioning Youth Council to a chapters-based system and are sure to improve our operations in the years to come.

A Commitment to Protecting Youth Funding

LAYC Meets with Mayor to Discuss City Budget Crisis



(L-R): Michelle Segura, Mayor Villaraigosa, Joey Freeman, and Nia Zaferis.

The Los Angeles Youth Council was proud to participate in a meeting with Mayor Villaraigosa regarding the city's budget on March 8, 2008. Representing the Youth Council and the youth of Los Angeles, President Joey Freeman (District 5), Vice President Nia Zaferis (District 4), and Youth Commissioner Michelle Segura (District 1) discussed with the Mayor about youth priorities and having those reflected in the budget released by the Mayor in April.

The meeting was the pinnacle in what had been Youth Council's involvement in the budget process. Late last year, Youth Council members began a citywide campaign to encourage youth to log online and complete the Mayor's Budget Survey. Concurrently, Youth Council members participated in both Community Budget Day and Regional Budget Day, organized by the Office of the Mayor and the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment.

During the meeting with the Mayor, Youth Council members addressed three critical issues.

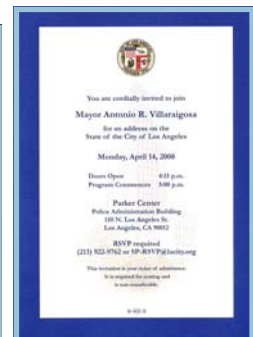
They spoke passionately about the recent upsurge in gang violence plaguing our communities, the need for more employment opportunities for youth, and the importance of protecting our neighborhoods' most treasured institutions, including parks, libraries, and youth centers in the midst of drastic budget cuts. Specifically, Youth Council asked the Mayor to issue an executive directive requiring all city departments to offer internships to youth and to hold youth-serving departments accountable for the programs they offer. All of the council's ideas and concerns were well received by the Mayor and his staff.

Simply put, youth issues are the

city's issues. This meeting was historic as youth literally had a seat at the table and sent the message loud and clear that they deeply care about their quality of life. The Youth Council is proud of its role in making the city a better place and will never cease in its advocacy of youth citywide.

A delegation of Youth Council members attended Mayor Villaraigosa's State of the City Address on April 15, 2008. Youth Council leaders were proud to hear the Mayor addressing many of the youth budget priorities they had discussed, in his speech and ultimately in the release of his budget for fiscal year 2008-2009.

*"Simply put
youth issues
are the city's
issues."*



(top) Group photo of Budget Representatives; (left) LAYC addressing the Mayor; (right) Invitation to Mayor's State of the City address.

A Commitment to Education

Youth Action Summit on Education



Youth from Los Angeles public and charter high schools gathered at the Youth Action Summit to discuss their concerns and recommendations for improving their educational system.

In partnership with the California Association of Student Councils and the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Youth Council was proud to sponsor a Youth Action Summit on Education. Over 35 youth representing a quarter of LA's public and charter high schools met for a three-day summit, July 17-20, at Webster Middle School to discuss the education system.

After extensive brainstorming,



Smaller groups were developed to facilitate a high level of participation.

general and breakout sessions, the youth ultimately agreed to tackle four essential issues: improving post secondary educational opportunities, high-level learning, awareness of career opportunities, and student health and nutrition. Led by trained student facilitators, the representatives used their knowledge and backgrounds to discuss and analyze the areas of focus within their given topics, the fiscal consequences of their recommendations, and their rationale, the outlet through which they, the students, were able to explain why their issue was deserving of such critical concern.

At the conclusion of the summit, the students presented their finalized proposals to an audience consisting of LA City representatives, principals, and

“We are sending the message that youth in this city really do have a voice and recognize the importance of sharing it with those who can affect great change.”

parents, who offered constructive criticism, guidance, and support. This is truly government at its best, an empowering and inspiring process. We are sending the message that youth in this city really do have a voice and recognize the importance of sharing it with those who can affect great change. It is our hope that this summit will serve as the beginning of a continued conversation, which will enhance the quality of life for youth citywide.

A Commitment to the Environment

LAYC Members Become Environmental Activists

As the result of discussions initiated by Los Angeles Youth Council President Joey Freeman, LAYC has developed an effective partnership with Million Trees Los Angeles (MTLA), an initiative based in the Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa.

On December 8, 2007, a delegation of LAYC members attended the first annual Million Trees LA Youth Environmental Conference, sponsored by the Office of the Mayor, the Department of Public Works, and MTLA. LAYC members were proud to have served on the planning committee for this successful event and sponsored an informational booth, reaching over 3000 youth who were in attendance that day. Additionally, LAYC President Joey Freeman and LAYC Member Aaron Feuer (Both District 5) joined other community stakeholders on a panel to discuss tackling climate change and good green practices. This panel was incredibly effective, with youth speaking directly to youth about the types of work that can be achieved in their schools and communities. LAYC members are currently serving on the planning committee for the second annual Youth Conference to be held on December 13, 2008.

On May 17, 2008, the LAYC continued its service with MTLA sponsoring a booth at the city's Arbor Day LA, a citywide celebration located at Griffith Park. LAYC members participated in the

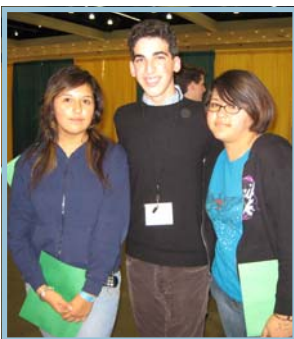


LAYC members at the Environmental Conference on December 8, 2007.

festivities and engaged the youth in attendance about joining LAYC.

Our partnership with MTLA has already continued in earnest for the coming year. LAYC looks forward to strengthening this relationship and developing a Youth Environmental Ambassadors bureau, consisting of trained LAYC members who can go out into the community and train other youth as to how to bring environmental activism into their neighborhoods.

LAYC is enthusiastic about playing an important role in increasing youth environmental awareness, fostering environmental activism, and helping to make Los Angeles one of the greenest urban cities in the world.



LAYC members meeting youth participants and staffing our table.

LAYC Supports Day of Service in Mar Vista Community



LAYC members and volunteers listening to opening remarks and receiving instructions.

On Saturday, March 15, 2008, members of the Los Angeles Youth Council and recruited youth volunteers participated in the Day of Service for the Mar Vista, Del Rey, and Venice communities. Hosted by Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa and Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, residents and volunteers from throughout the city joined to work together on more than 50 separate projects to benefit the local neighborhoods. Lucia Diaz, CCYF Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of the Mar Vista Family Center, invited the LAYC to become involved as project leaders of the Ballona Creek clean up project with their youth group, By Youth For Youth.

With gloves on, rakes in hand, and the environment in mind, we collected refuse from

the Ballona Creek pathway behind the Mar Vista Family Center. Not only did we greatly affect the cleanliness of the pathway, which was demonstrated by the mound of trash in bags collected, but we also touched on other areas of

"It is important that not only our thoughts and words support this cause, but also that our actions follow closely behind."

the Mar Vista neighborhood. Some members of our group planted trees along the previously barren sidewalks and islands. Others assisted in various projects at Stoner Elementary School.

In a cooperative spirit of service and giving back to the community, the lesson we learned from this experience transcends the actual fruit of labor that we produced. It is important that not only our thoughts and words support this cause, but also that our actions follow closely behind.



(top L-R): Students from Harvard Westlake School and Andrew Sealy, LAYC Secretary; By Youth For Youth members raking leaves along the pathway. (bottom L-R): Daniel Sobajian (District 11) with Councilmember Bill Rosendahl (CD 11); Volunteers collecting debris along the Ballona Creek pathway.

A Commitment to Our Communities

LAYC at the Department of Recreation and Parks' KTLA Kids Day L.A. Event



(L-R): Mark Mariscal (Superintendent of Rec. and Parks Metro region), Manny Bibian (Urban Hero Awardee), Joey Freeman (LAYC President), and Raniesha Newell (Urban Hero Awardee).

Youth Council President Joey Freeman (District 5) and YC Member Ari Ruiz (District 14) were proud to represent the Los Angeles Youth Council at the Department of Recreation and Parks KTLA Kids Day LA. Youth Council members have participated in this event for years, held annually at the Expo Center in South Los Angeles.

This year, Freeman and Ruiz presented youth from across the city with the Urban Hero Award. The award, offered by the Department of Recreation and Parks, was accompanied by a commendation from Councilmember Bernard Parks (District 8), also in attendance. This award honors youth who have been actively involved in the City's youth centers and make a positive impact in their communities.

The Youth Council commends these individuals who have positively affected the lives of other youth in their neighborhoods and looks forward to continuing our participation in this valuable event for the community.

Taking the Next Step with CORO

Los Angeles Youth Council President Joey Freeman (District 5), Youth Commissioner Michelle Segura (District 1), Historian Noah Ickowitz (District 5), and Appointed Member Daniel Sobajian (District 11) spoke at a session of the CORO One Teen LA program on June 29,



(L-R): Daniel Sobajian (District 11), Noah Ickowitz (Historian), Joey Freeman (President), and Michelle Segura (Youth Commissioner).

2008. CORO, one of the preeminent civic leadership organizations in the nation, launched the One Teen LA program this year. The objective is to cultivate a new generation of leaders in Los Angeles and demonstrate to youth that they have a significant voice and stake in their communities.

LAYC members congratulated CORO participants on their good work and offered Youth Council as the next step in their civic journeys. Using the skills learned from CORO, these students can establish or join LAYC chapters as an application of what they have learned. This presentation was significant for both LAYC and CORO members, and is just one more step in the process of creating a meaningful partnership between these two like-minded organizations.

“ LAYC members congratulated CORO participants on their good work and offered Youth Council as the next step in their civic journeys. ”

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment Partnership

Joey Freeman, President of the Los Angeles Youth Council and Jamiko Bell, Director of Community and Youth Partnerships for the Commission for Children, Youth, and Their Families were honored to speak on a panel at the Los Angeles Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's (DONE) annual Congress of Neighborhoods. Freeman and Bell served on a panel entitled, "Youth are LA's Future: But Neighborhood Councils Can Help Youth Now". Other panelists included Lisa Salazar with the Community Development Department and Mark Mariscal with the Department of Recreation and Parks. The panelists offered advice to neighborhood council leaders as to how they can best engage youth. Freeman and Bell encouraged every neighborhood council to establish a youth position on their respective boards. This year marked the second

consecutive year Youth Council members have participated in the Congress of Neighborhoods.

Previously, a delegation of Youth Council members addressed a Neighborhood Council Board Member Orientation about opportunities for Youth Council and the neighborhood councils to collaborate.

Currently, Youth Council members are also involved in planning a youth component of DONE's Carol Baker Tharp Neighborhood Leadership Institute training programs. The Youth Council looks forward to continuing its involvement with DONE and strengthening a youth presence throughout the neighborhood council system.



(top clockwise L-R): Jamiko Bell (Director of Community & Youth Partnerships), Elisa Lam (Youth Council Coordinator), and Joey Freeman (President) at the Congress of Neighborhoods on October 27, 2008; Jamiko Bell and Joey Freeman at the panelist table; and Joey Freeman and Lisa Salazar (Community Development Department).



Executive Board

September 13, 2008

JOEY FREEMAN
PRESIDENTNIA ZAFERIS
VICE PRESIDENTANDREW SEALY
SECRETARYABIGAIL ZWICK
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERNOAH ICKOWITZ
HISTORIAN

—

Youth Commissioner
MICHELLE SEGURA

—

200 North Spring Street
City Hall, 21st Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 978-1841Website:
www.ccyf.org/YouthCouncilMr. Bonghwan Kim
General Manager
Department of Neighborhood Empowerment
334 B East 2nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kim,

I write to voice the Los Angeles Youth Council's (LAYC) full support for the Carol Baker Tharp Neighborhood Leadership Institute (CBT/NLI).

Carol Baker Tharp was a civic leader who devoted her life's work to public service and making government more accessible for all. The Youth Council, a program of the Commission for Children, Youth, and their Families, works to enhance the quality of life for Los Angeles' young people. We seek to achieve this work with the example of Ms. Tharp in mind. It is thus fitting that the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) has dedicated its new leadership training institute to Ms. Tharp's memory.

Over the past few years, the Youth Council has developed an effective partnership with DONE. LAYC members have presented at Neighborhood Council Board Member Orientations as well as Congress of Neighborhoods panel discussions. Our members are in dialogue with their respective Neighborhood Councils, and some even hold Youth Board Member positions.

Even with these positive steps, there is much work to be done. The Youth Council encourages all Neighborhood Councils to establish a Youth Board Member position. Further, we urge DONE to incorporate a youth-focused curriculum within the CBT/NLI. Such programming could include training on effective collaboration between youth and adults, the role of a Youth Board Member, and how to target and in turn benefit the youth in a given area, among other topics.

J.K. Rowling wrote, "Age is foolish and forgetful when it underestimates youth". Youth are key stakeholders of the City of Los Angeles and it is of the utmost importance that the youth voice is heard. With a youth-focused element of its curriculum, the CBT/NLI will move Los Angeles one step closer to being the youth-friendliest city in the nation.

If you have any questions or would like to collaborate further on the development of a youth-focused curriculum, please contact LAYC at 213-978-1841.

In partnership,

Joey Freeman
President, Los Angeles Youth Council

LAYC Members In the News

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES



"There was a time when we didn't have anywhere to live. We lived in a motor home for three years. We had no electricity, no showers. When all that was happening, I became more involved in school."

San Fernando High School senior Stephanie Morales has overcome obstacles to earn a Gates Foundation scholarship and admission into Princeton University.

Stephanie Morales
San Fernando High School senior

Teens overcome personal hardships to excel at school

Inside

SMART KIDS: See a list of some of the brightest students at our schools. **Page 8**

HISTORIC: Four LAUSD charter schools are graduating a senior class for the first time. **Page 9**

BY SUSAN ABRAM
Staff Writer

SAN FERNANDO
Stephanie Morales' brain devoured high-school calculus like a hungry caterpillar digests springtime leaves.

It was the same when she took advanced and college-level calculus.

The 18-year-old's love of math, of numbers, integrals, derivatives and terms that can cause an average person to feel as if ants are crawling through the brain, opened doors she never expected — to Stanford and Columbia, Georgetown and UC Berkeley.

The soon-to-be graduate of San Fernando High School has accepted Princeton University's invitation to major in economics.

"My mom inspired me," Morales said. "She earned her GED. She has a passion for learning and doesn't let obstacles get in her way."

As thousands of high school seniors prepare to graduate this month, many will step into a future much different from their past.

For Morales, that means leaving her beloved San Fernando High, where as a magnet student, she conquered every subject well enough to earn more than a 4.0 grade-point average to become the school's salutatorian.

PLEASE SEE GRADUATE / PAGE 9

GRADUATE: FAST TIMES

Success of students helped by offering free college-level classes in high school

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It means leaving a mother and father who can't afford living, collecting recyclable cardboard to keep the family fed and safe. It means leaving brothers and sisters who look up to her as the first in the family not only to earn a high-school diploma, but also to win enough scholarship money to help her earn a doctorate.

And it means that anything is possible, even for a girl who has known homelessness. "There was a time when we didn't have anywhere to live," she said. "We lived in a motor home for three years. We had no electricity, no showers. When all that was happening, I became more involved in school."

In an area of the San Fernando Valley tarnished by an image of gangs, violence and the phrase "at-risk youth," she said, the ones who work hard and keep out of trouble, often do so in the shadows of those who garner all the hype. But at San Fernando High, success has become more prominent lately. Counselors say they have more valedictorians than in the past, and of 670 seniors poised to graduate later this month, 427 are going to college. Of those, more than 350 are turning to community colleges. Others have signed on to the military or applied to vocational schools.

"There are so many people working hard for these students, for their success," said Shannon Dreil, a college counselor at the school.

What has helped is offering concurrent college courses for free while the students are still in high school, Dreil said. The students become exposed to college classes earlier, which helps to ease fears or doubts about university-level work.

On a recent weekday, Dreil and counselor Nims Makhyoun were surrounded by students eager to pick up forms for scholarships, work-study appli-

chemotherapy for breast cancer at that time, and I took advantage of the situation, just going out."

She then experienced a kind of awakening. She saw how her elder brother and sister, neither of whom graduated from high school, struggled with jobs and children.

She wanted to change. "I started seeing how bad it all was," she said. "I started hanging out with people who stayed in school. And after a while, my work habits changed. I went from straight As."

De La Torre said she regrets the bad choices she made when she was younger, but it's glad she has a second chance. She will attend Los Angeles Valley College in the fall. Her goal is to major in business and work her way up the ranks within the bank where she is employed.

"I'm actually proud of myself," she said. "Out of the bad choices I made, I was able to recover. I see a lot of girls who try really hard to do well, but no one recognizes them, and that's when they fall."

"When I was in the ninth grade, I hung out with friends who stayed out of school," De La Torre said. "I was getting straight Ds. I was getting into fights. My mom was getting

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Joey Freeman '09 serves inaugural term as Los Angeles City Youth Council President



Joey Freeman '09 poses with Elisa Lam and Jamiko Bell, two staff members who oversee the LA Youth Council.

By ALI KRIEGSMAN
News Editor

Two years ago, Joey Freeman '09 took it upon himself to act as a voice for the youth of Los Angeles.

Having won reelection after functioning as an interim president for the Los Angeles City Youth Council in 2006, Freeman is currently serving his first official term in office. Through his work with the Youth Council, Freeman is committing to the city's political system and aims for the council to become a regarded influence in our community.

The Los Angeles City Youth Council is a collective group of individuals who aims to reflect the opinions of youth living in Los Angeles. The council meets once every month at City Hall to advocate on behalf of youth by developing youth oriented programming and securing the involvement of youth in the city's governmental process. Through the monthly meetings serve as the basic requirement of a Youth Council member, Freeman goes a step beyond.

"To me, it is crucial for the Youth Council to become the preeminent youth advocacy and empowerment organization in the city. I chose

to run for President because I was frustrated by the lack of attention the Youth Council was receiving," Freeman said.

Recently, Freeman has developed a three-pronged strategy to strengthen the role and efficacy of the Youth Council.

Freeman's first step is to have newly formed committees track relevant city legislation and gain use of the Community Impact Statement, a tool that will allow the Youth Council to make its standpoints on an issue visible on an actual City Council agenda.

"We want the City Council members to vote on legislation upon seeing what the youth of LA has to say beforehand," Freeman said. "Eventually, I'd like for the Youth Council to start passing resolutions so we can really make our voice heard."

Secondly, Freeman aims to advocate for a more youth oriented budget for the city of Los Angeles and has begun to work with neighborhood councils and the Mayor's office in order to reach this goal.

"This is the first year we are seriously involved in the budget process; we want to set the precedent for the Youth Council years into the future,"

Freeman said.

The third prong entails establishing special projects and community engagements throughout the city. This summer the Youth Council hosted the Youth Action Summit on Education from July 17 to 19. Thirty-five youth from numerous high schools developed recommendations as to how to improve the Los Angeles school district and will present their proposals to Ms. Monica Garcia, the president of the Board of Education.

"We are constantly attending community events to recruit more youth to become involved in the council's good work," Freeman said.

A prime example of the Council's "good work" is its current partnership with Mayor Villaraigosa's Million Trees LA Initiative. Along with a citywide youth conference on global warming, the council is also working on the Million Trees Ambassadors program, an attempt to train youth in generating environmental advocacy throughout their community and schools.

Freeman has initiated the reconstruction process of the Youth Council, working diligently to gain more members, preserve its purpose, and expand the group's influence.

"Through my conversations with youth across this city, I have heard too many stories of a failed education system, a lack of opportunity, and a bad quality of life. I am confident that the Youth Council can and will become the organization perfectly fit to handle these tough issues and better the lives of youth across our great city," Freeman said.

(top & bottom):
Daily News
June 18, 2007

The Roar
Milken Community High School
November 21, 2007

*Many thanks to the City Departments, organizations,
and individuals that have assisted us this year!*



Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Los Angeles City Council
By Youth, For Youth
California Association of Student Councils
Commission for Children, Youth and Their Families
CORO
Department of Cultural Affairs
Department of Neighborhood Empowerment
Department of Recreation and Parks
Los Angeles Unified School District
Million Trees Los Angeles
Mar Vista Family Center
Amber Meshack
Barry Stone
Haco Hoang
Lisa Sarno
Lucia Diaz
Susan Jack
Samantha Yu
Sarah Bell
Steven Cheung



*The LAYC 2007-2008
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was prepared by:*

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CCYF Staff

*Jamiko Bell
Elisa Lam*



Are you 13-19 years old?
Can you be the voice of youth in your community?
Want to learn more about your city government?
Do you want to make a difference?

Answered "YES" to any of the questions?
**JOIN the Los Angeles Youth Council and
start a chapter in your community!**

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*See What **YOUth** Can Do!*

