



# YCIDEAS

*A Compilation of Promising Practices from Youth Councils throughout California  
2001-2005*

**Youth Council Institute**

## Chapter Four

### *Innovative Programs*



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## Summer Hire-A-Youth Program Engages Youth and Employers

**Youth Council:** Anaheim Youth Council

**Element:** Career Preparation

**Functions:** Coordinating Youth Services, Measuring Quality and Impact of Local Efforts

**Subjects:** Innovative Programs, Youth One-Stops

**The Challenge:** Over the years, the Anaheim Youth Council has consistently provided funding for subsidized youth summer employment programs. However, the Youth Council's funding sources have dwindled consistently over the past few years, which has meant that resources have not been available to support summer youth employment programs.

**The Practice and Evidence:** As summer youth employment funding for subsidized work has dwindled steadily, Anaheim Youth Council responded by creating a program to connect youth to unsubsidized summer work. The program connects youth to local businesses seeking employees for the summer months by leveraging the existing outreach of Anaheim's One-Stops and partner agencies.

Hire-A-Youth is coordinated by Anaheim's One-Stop (Anaheim Workforce Center) and is a cooperative effort between the Anaheim Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council, Anaheim Workforce Development Division, Youth Employment Services (YES), City of Anaheim Community Services, Anaheim Chamber of Commerce, Employment Development Department, Anaheim Union High School District, and North Orange County Regional Occupational Program (ROP). These partners work together to solicit unsubsidized jobs from the business community and outreach to youth participants.

Created in 2002, Anaheim's Hire-A-Youth Program has resulted in 3000 referrals and 1100 youth hires over the last three years. Hire-A-Youth has no eligibility or residency requirements, as the jobs are 100 percent unsubsidized. Jobs are developed for 14-17 year olds as well as for young adults 18-21 and generally are in sectors that youth have voiced interest in. Each June the Hire-A-Youth partnership hosts a job fair to match employers with prospective youth workers.

**The Details:** Anaheim's business team works collaboratively with EDD and the Chamber to outreach to targeted businesses; businesses then mail or e-mail back potential jobs, and the business service team follows up with them for specific job orders. Concurrent with the business outreach, the ROP, YES, and City of Anaheim do outreach to youth to invite participation in the Hire-A-Youth program and in other services of partners.

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Youth look through a book of Hire-A-Youth listings at partner offices, receive up to three referral cards at each visit, and contact the employer directly. Youth are then either hired or directed back to Hire-A-Youth for additional assistance, training, or referrals.

All job orders and youth referral cards are collected at the central hub at the Anaheim Workforce Center. The center's staff also complete follow-up with employers and collect all related program data and evaluative information.

Over the past three years, the Hire-A-Youth program has become increasingly strategic in their business outreach, mailing out targeted letters to businesses by using the Chamber of Commerce mailing list as well as a proprietary mailing list. "In previous years, we mailed Hire-A-Youth information to all companies with ten or more employees, which resulted in 6000-8000 mailings; the result of this "shotgun" approach did not meet our needs," said Rita Slayton, Manager of Anaheim Workforce Center who oversees the Hire-A-Youth program. Now the team has evaluated the types of jobs that are of interest to youth from previous years and targeted 2500 companies with an employee base of 10 to 250 in the service, retail, hospitality, entertainment, and manufacturing industries. This targeted approach has resulted in a steady source of job listings that serves the larger population of 16-17 year olds, something they had not be able to generate in previous years.

Youth outreach has grown to be increasingly more coordinated and comprehensive, mirroring the program's business recruitment success. Outreach is done at malls, fast food restaurants, community-based organizations, and local youth hang outs, coordinated through multiple youth-serving partners. Additionally, youth are offered basic job skills workshops, including interviewing, applications and resumes, and job retention.

All of the partners have reaped benefits as a result of participating. By leveraging the work of the Anaheim Workforce Center's business service team, the program does not require extra funding or sponsorship, as it is an extension of the work done under WIA. The benefit to the business service team, beyond the youth employment, is the development of new business resources for WIA-eligible participants.

**Breakthrough Moment:** "In our third year, 2004, we broke through many of the barriers of previous years," comments Slayton. "We had repeat businesses, good jobs, more youth, and an improved process." Part of the success is that most operations were centralized two years ago to the Anaheim Workforce Center – One-Stop, which has reduced duplication and gaps in the program."

**What's Next for this YCidea?** Serve more youth in need—foster, emancipated, probation, welfare, homeless, and disabled youth through building more partnerships with local youth-serving agencies that serve these populations; in turn, target more businesses that are willing to hire youth that are most at risk, and most in need.

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## **Where to Go for More Information**

Anaheim Youth Council

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## Youth Involvement and Leadership through Public Art

**Youth Council:** Monterey County Youth Council

**Sponsoring Agency:** Monterey County Workforce Investment Board Office for Employment Training

**Element:** Career Preparation and Youth Leadership

**Function:** Coordinating Youth Services

**Subjects:** Innovative Programs, Youth Involvement

**The Opportunity:** When the Monterey County Youth Council began its work, the Monterey County One Voice Murals project was already in place and very successful. Since the program was being funded by workforce dollars and included at least four of the ten WIA-mandated elements, the Youth Council decided to partner with the program and provide funds.

**The Practice and Evidence:** The One Voice Murals Project, a program run through the One Voice Arts and Leadership Program, engages youth from throughout Monterey County in eight-week summer youth employment projects during which they create murals. Up to one hundred youth participate in these annual projects, which not only beautify the community for years to come but also provide the youth with team-building skills, bonding, and a pride for their community, which will translate into their being productive members and good citizens of the community where they live.

Through the One Voice Murals Project, youth muralists learn many valuable job-related, transferable skills, including working well on a team, enhancing group dynamics, developing leadership, thinking creatively, and solving problems. The project also provides a positive and motivating role-model leadership activity for youth.

During the six most active years, over 720 youth participated with a greater than 90 percent success rate in relationship to participation. An alumni survey indicated that, at the program's peak, 96 percent thought it was excellent, and many went on to participate in leadership programs, visiting different cities to give presentations. Thirty-six percent of the youth gave money they earned to their parents to help at home. Approximately fifty murals have been completed throughout Monterey County.

The Murals Project is not only the largest and most successful youth program of its kind in the Monterey tri-county area, but also the most influential public arts program in the county's recent history. As a result of the work of youth in Monterey County, this art program is being replicated across the nation. The One Voice Arts and Leadership Program that sponsors the Murals project

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has been honored by the National Endowment for the Arts, and has had information on display in the California Capitol and in the Monterey County Courthouse.

Another successful One Voice public art project was the Healing Pole, created during the summer of 2002. One Voice had been given a 23-foot log that was a remnant of the Port Chicago disaster, with the stipulation that they create a sculpture out of it and give it to a community in need of healing.

A master carver, Shane Eagleton, was hired to work with the youth and direct the project. With no training as artists, youth sculpted the log using chisels and mallets. Eagleton carved a DNA helix into the log and the youth added 16 endangered species, to show the “connectivity of all animals and plants,” noted Eagleton. Youth participant Jaymes Lambert said, “People were kind of timid with each other at first, but we all worked together great, and the project turned out to be something wonderful.”

The City of New York accepted the healing pole as its first commemorative gift in recognition of the September 11 tragedy. On September 5, 2002, the pole was installed at the front gate of Bronx Zoo. A documentary on the pole, sponsored by the California State Youth Council and California Workforce Association, was seen by over 20 million people on 20 public television stations.

**The Details:** The One Voice Murals Project started in 1995, five years before the Youth Council was established. It was developed as a response to information that the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) received regarding the importance of art, leadership, cultural issues, and youth involvement in the community. They were looking for an arts program they could establish to complement the Summer Youth Employment Training Program and the eleven different academic enrichment programs that ranged from Graduation Equivalency Diploma (GED) through Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) to community college and computer literacy offerings. They also had programs that integrated drama in which students created their own plays where youth from all different parts of the county worked together.

Monterey County is very diverse culturally with at least 12 major ethnic groups that are somewhat compartmentalized, so WIB members looked to establish a county-wide program because it would be a great opportunity to learn about cultural diversity. In 1996, they went to Chicago to visit a major community arts program. It was initially run through the city’s jobs program, but eventually they formed their own 501c (3) non profit. They took a part of downtown and created spaces where 20 different arts programs were located, and the aldermen had other centers throughout the city. They hired professional artists from around the country.

The Monterey County WIB members asked how they could create a comparable program in a miniature form at home. They decided to start a county-wide cultural murals program. They invited local cities and businesses to co-create the program, to match dollars, and to identify youth who would participate. Together with the youth and city officials, the WIB members

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developed concepts for the murals. The concepts were relatively non-controversial: jazz, fairness, peace, citizenship, honor, subjects that everyone can believe in, so as to ensure the project would be successful.

Each community decided how the concepts would be represented. A paid professional artist worked with members of each community to create the image, and then the renderings were taken to their city council to approve and to contribute funds. At the mural project's highest point, it was receiving \$120,000 per year in matched funds. In 1996, two or three murals were created. At the project's zenith, 20 murals were created in eight weeks. Thirty-six professional artists were hired, and they worked with over a hundred youth. They also did sculpture, drama, and martial arts.

Basic funding for the youth mural and arts project has been supplied by the Workforce Investment Act and sponsored by Monterey County Workforce Investment Board, the Office for Employment Training, and the Monterey County One-Stop Career Center System.

**Breakthrough Moment:** "I knew it would work the day that we started," said WIB Executive Director Joseph Werner. However, one of the most dramatic moments for the project came during the first summer. "The first year we had a community paint day," Werner reported. "We publicized the mural project and invited people to come out and paint. When our congressman, state senator, supervisor, and over 200 people from the community joined in, I knew it was working. People were supporting youth."

**What's Next for this YCidea?** During the summer of 2005, a mural will be created at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

## Where to Go for More Information

Monterey County Youth Council

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Monterey County Workforce Investment Board  
Office for Employment Training  
Executive Director  
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## Tool

[One-voice Murals Project](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/workforce/murals/index.htm)

(<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/workforce/murals/index.htm>)



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## Youth Development Program to Support Career Preparation

**Youth Council:** San Bernardino City Youth Council

**Elements:** Youth Leadership, Career Preparation, and Youth Development and Support

**Functions:** Coordinating Youth Services, Engaging Local Leadership to Take Action

**Subjects:** Innovative Programs, Youth Involvement, and Serving Special Populations

**The Challenge:** According to Cynthia Cervantes, Division Chief of the City of San Bernardino Employment and Training Agency (SBETA), the city is on the rebound. They have gone through hard times with very high unemployment and poverty, especially among young people. Because so many of the city's youth face multiple challenges, the Youth Council wanted to support career programs that serve youth who are at risk not only because of low family income but who also have barriers to employment such as having skill deficiencies, being teenage parents, or being high school dropouts.

**The Practice and Evidence:** The Youth Council decided to support San Bernardino's long standing Youth Development Program (YDP) in order to provide at-risk youth with a multifaceted youth leadership development and career preparation opportunity. The YDP is an eleven-day summer residential program that the city has operated since 1981. The focus of YDP is to provide the participants with practical work experience that enhances positive attitudes about work and to share information on career opportunities. Other goals include building self confidence and responsibility.

The program is held each summer on the University of Redlands campus or at another college in the area. Participants live in dormitories and create a miniature town called Micro City. Every person is responsible for filling a government or business role in the city. Goal setting and team work are featured while at the same time each person sees how his or her actions affect everyone. Participants establish rules of conduct that everyone must abide by, such as no profanity; if a youth breaks a rule, he or she may be called before the court, tried, and, if found guilty, issued a penalty such as having to bus tables for two meals.

Elections are held for five of the community roles: police chief, mayor, judge, public prosecutor, and environmental services chief. Everyone who is interested in one of these positions has to run a campaign that includes pulling together a campaign staff and giving a speech. An election is held on the morning of the third day of camp.

Adult community leaders are an important component of the program, and many participate by joining the camp for a day and partnering with a youth who has taken on a comparable role in Micro City. These leaders also run seminars for youth.

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In previous years, when more funding was available, 100 youth between the ages of 14 and 17 participated. In 2005, 50-60 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 will take part.

Throughout the life of the program, alumni, parents, and community leaders have commented on the positive effects on the youth who participate. For example, Cervantes noted in a 2002 *Redlands Daily Facts* article that “for a lot of [the youth], it’s the first time someone believed in them. Afterwards they come out much more positive people. They’re encouraged to do goal planning, and they realize that staying in school produces results and gives them more confidence knowing they’re leaders themselves. They also realize they’re responsible for the kind of community they live in.” Dr. Mims, the founding director of YDP, told the *Redlands Daily Facts* in 2002, “I would . . . guess that at least 85 percent of [the youth] go back to finish high school, or if they don’t, they at least become more [accomplished] in their life skills.”

Participation by adults also benefits the youth. Over the years, some alumni have come back as business owners and leaders, and they talk to the current participants and serve as role models. The other business people and elected officials talk to youth as well, and the San Bernardino mayor spends time with the camp mayor. The police and fire chief come year after year. “You should see the [youths’] faces when they’re talking to the mayor or police chief,” says Cervantes. “Afterwards, the young people go ‘I’m talking to this person!’”

According to Cervantes, the adult leaders always find the participants to be outstanding. “Without fail adults say ‘I’m so impressed with these youth,’” she notes. A 2004 article in the *San Bernardino Sun* reports that the Sheriff Department’s Captain Sheree Stewart told the participants, “I want to hire you. I want to put everyone we hire through this program.”

Youth participants also report benefits. For example, Brian Offiah, a 21-year old who took part in the 2004 Micro City, told the *Press-Enterprise* that he liked the program because he felt that people really cared. “Everybody in the environment wanted us to figure out what was best for us, to figure out a goal. They really helped us.” Jamal Moreno, who was 17 when he was elected Micro City 2002’s mayor, told the *Press-Enterprise*, “Sometimes you aren’t sure if you are capable of what is expected of you, but now that I’ve been here, I know I am. You learn job skills here, and the seminars inform us how to maximize [them].”

**The Details:** YDP began in the late 1970’s as a country-wide program sponsored by the National Football League Players Association. In 1981, the Association stopped providing funding, so the founding director, Dr. Dennis Mims, approached communities and counties where there were many high risk youth about continuing the program. The City of San Bernardino was sold on the idea from the beginning, and has sponsored the camp every year since then. They have had some private funding from individual donors as well as from the San Bernardino Arrowhead Credit Union. In recent years, the Youth Council funding has made it possible to continue the program.

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For many years, the City of San Bernardino has been the only city to continue the YDP. Dr. Mims and his staff run the camp, and they supply the curriculum. In 1997, the Youth Development Program was honored as one of the best programs in the nation for youth, and Dr. Mims won the National Association of Counties (NACO) individual award for youth program leadership.

All the YDP staff have other jobs. One is a licensed psychologist; another works for Los Angeles City College District; a third is a business owner, and a fourth an insurance agent. All of these staff members use their personal vacation time in order to participate.

Initially the San Bernardino YDP was geared towards first-year high school students to help them set goals early, and to encourage them to believe in themselves. These youth were high risk but in school. “Now,” says Cervantes, “we gear it towards older youth and out-of-school youth because that’s the focus of our funding. We have reformatted the curriculum so that, for example, teenage mothers can leave their children with other family members while they participate.” She goes on to say, “With the out-of-school youth, we ask them, ‘What are you going to do now? Here are some options.’ Our intent is to get them back into school or higher career-level educations.”

**Breakthrough Moment:** According to Cervantes, each summer has at least one breakthrough moment, but they all are similar. She tells it this way: “Some of the youth are very resistant about going to this program. They’re cool and independent; no one tells them what to do. They are pretty used to calling the shots for themselves. [Having a schedule] is not exactly what they want to hear. Or some of them have never left their neighborhood, and they don’t want to leave their family setting. They are very fearful about that. So they come here to our office, and they are clinging to their mom or their children. They are kind of having a hard time; some of them are crying because they just don’t want to leave. Yet you see them a couple of days later at the camp and you see them [doing great] in their roles, or at the parent night performance. Then when you see them at the end, you see tears again because they don’t want to leave.” Cervantes continues: “The other [breakthrough moments] are the reactions of the business and community leaders. We try to bring new people in each year. The first-time reaction of a community leader is really significant to see.”

**What’s Next for this YCidea?** Funding has been dwindling, but they have been continuing the program on a reduced scale, and hope to extend the program into the future. Dr. Mims has stated that he would like to secure national support for the program so that it can be delivered on a larger scale to benefit many more young people.

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## **Where to Go for More Information**

San Bernardino City Youth Council

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## **Tools**

The following tools are available through the City of San Bernardino Employment and Training Agency:  
Excerpts from Student Handbook  
Typical daily schedule



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## Job Search Workshops Available to All Youth

**Youth Council:** San Joaquin County WorkNet

**Element:** Career Preparation

**Function:** Coordinating Youth Services, Engaging Local Leadership to Take Action

**Subject:** Innovative Programs

**The Challenge:** The number one challenge facing the San Joaquin Youth Council has been how to serve youth in the summer under WIA. According to Elena Mangahas of San Joaquin County Worknet, “Even though the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) is no longer in place, we still have to respond to [a high] unemployment rate” that persists in the San Joaquin Valley towns. Entry-level jobs are primarily retail with some manufacturing and warehouse. Youth are competing with adult welfare recipients who are also seeking entry-level jobs. Council members wanted to secure commitments from local employers to hire youth for the summer. They knew that employers would only be willing to do so if the youth were well prepared, so they looked for a way to provide youth with the knowledge and skills they needed to be work-ready.

**The Practice and Evidence:** The Youth Council engages in efforts to link employers and youth. Since the area’s chambers of commerce are part of the WIB infrastructure, the Youth Council members have long-established relationships with the local business community. They are able to ask for—and receive—commitments from employers to hire youth for the summer. However, says Mangahas, “To make this agreement really [worthwhile], we don’t just send youth who are not prepared. We prepare them via the Job Search Workshop.”

The workshop “focuses on the critical job search techniques that will help young first-time job seekers find the job that is right for them,” explains Mangahas. “It is available to every San Joaquin County youth between the ages of 16 and 21. What we’re doing really is prepping the youth and giving quality referrals to the local employers.” The workshop is also portable and can be replicated.

The WorkNet also links youth with volunteer opportunities particularly in local library volunteer programs, the Tutor Resource Collaborative of non-profit learning centers, and the Stockton Parks and Recreation Department’s theater arts programs and events. Youth interested in volunteering contact WorkNet via e-mail at the Worknet web page called “Volunteer Interest.” Mangahas reports, “We’re continually connecting youth to the community even if it’s not an employment position.”

The program has been successful. Mangahas notes that businesses have continued to offer summer jobs for youth, signaling that they are pleased with the youth they have hired. Youth who have taken the workshop are happy to have job search skills and to find jobs. The Youth

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Council members and staff find that the approach makes it possible for them to serve more youth through the summer. Mangahas says, “When the youth unemployment rate is higher than our adult unemployment rate, it calls for assistance for our young job seekers. [The workshop tailored for youth gives] them a better understanding of the labor market, the expectations of employers, and what they have to do to be successful in their job search.”

**The Details:** The model is an updated version of all the outreach efforts the WIB conducted under JTPA. “We had many of the practices that we carried over, the same community connections and partners involved. We [made a point of working with] the ones we had good experiences with.”

The workshop is offered throughout the year at all the County One-Stops as well as at high schools during career days. Once a youth has completed the workshop, she or he is invited to visit a One-Stop (called WorkNet). Each WorkNet center is equipped to assist in resume writing and internet-based job searching. The centers also offer listings of CalJOBS, employment postings, and intranet postings that are targeted for youth who are looking for summer, part-time, or temporary work. WorkNet also holds an annual job fair as well as employer-specific mini job fairs throughout the year, and youth customers are notified about them.

**Breakthrough Moment:** The breakthrough moment came when the Youth Council members and staff realized that they were still able to serve youth during the summers even though WIA does not fund summer jobs programs.

**What’s Next for this YCidea?** The Youth Council and Worknet system will continue to connect with chamber of commerce members and to offer the Job Search Workshops for youth. They anticipate that the demand for the workshops—and the youth who complete them—will increase.

## Where to Go for More Information

San Joaquin County WorkNet

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## Tools

[San Joaquin County WorkNet website](http://www.sjworknet.org)  
(<http://www.sjworknet.org>)



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## Partnering with a Housing and Redevelopment Agency

**Youth Council:** Solano Youth Advisory Council

**Elements:** Career Preparation, Academic Excellence, Youth Development and Support, and Youth Leadership

**Function:** Coordinating Youth Services

**Subjects:** Innovative Programs, Serving Special Populations

**The Challenge:** The Workforce Investment Act requires local areas to contract with community-based and other agencies to provide youth in WIA programs with ten required program service elements. In May 2000, the Workforce Investment Board of Solano County, Inc. issued an RFP to every known youth-serving community-based organization, city manager, and recreation department in and near the county, looking for proposals that sought to address the ten WIA youth program elements, which were new to them.

**The Practice and the Evidence:** One response came from the City of Vacaville Housing and Redevelopment Office, which saw an opportunity to create a new kind of partnership between the WIB and their very successful Youthbuild Program, then in its second year and funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Vacaville wanted to leverage and expand their Youthbuild program by linking it to WIA-funded GED tutoring, leadership training, mentoring services, and paid work experience through the WIB. “It’s kind of unusual for a workforce program to work with a housing program,” observes Lynette Gray, Planning and Youth Development Manager for the WIB of Solano County and staff to the Youth Advisory Council. “But this was truly what Congress intended: for communities to connect and leverage programs and funds with each other.”

Vacaville’s Youthbuild program serves approximately 100 high school dropouts annually. Each year of the partnership about 25 percent of the youth served were WIA enrolled, increasing the number of youth enrolled in the Vacaville Youthbuild program by better than 30 percent. All Vacaville Youthbuild/WIA enrolled youth received GED preparation tutoring and HAZMAT (Office of Hazardous Materials Safety) training, and most transitioned into apprenticeship programs and/or direct job placements. “At least 75 percent completed their GED, and we consider that hugely successful,” Gray reports. Some youth have gone into more advanced training programs, and others went to work for local contractors. One young graduate worked on the Youthbuild program as an employee of the City of Vacaville.

**The Details:** HUD funds Youthbuild in communities around the country. Their program focuses entirely on dropouts from ages 16-24 (the WIA population is for ages 14-21), and teaches them the building trades; they build low-income, retirement housing, and perform graffiti abatement

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community-wide. The City of Vacaville did tremendous direct outreach, first city-wide and then county-wide, to high school dropouts. All participants went through GED preparation and took the GED. All also went through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and HAZMAT training, learning how to deal with graffiti abatement and hazardous-waste clean-up, and they received a HAZMAT certificate that made them employable. Youth worked on different aspects of building projects, depending on their age and their ability to use power tools.

The Solano Youth Advisory Council added in WIA program service elements to make the Youthbuild program more comprehensive: alternative education, mentoring, tutoring, and leadership training. Gray notes that this population, older youth who have already dropped out of school, “is very, very, very difficult to engage and keep engaged. Getting them drug-free is the first barrier.” The program employed both carrots and sticks: cash payments for passing each installment of the GED (the money comes from Youthbuild, which has more incentives built in than the WIA), deadlines, and penalties. When one of the “good kids” was caught selling drugs during a break, he was kicked out. “You have to have zero tolerance,” Gray counsels. “You have to obey your own rules. If a youth is more than ten minutes late, she’s locked out and doesn’t get paid. It’s the real world. You give them all the tools they need to succeed, but they have to show effort and consistent progress.” Mentoring was a key element. The impact of a caring adult in a young person's life was seen firsthand. They came in clean and on time because their good behavior was noted and rewarded by the mentor.

From an administrative point of view, Gray emphasizes the importance of being very clear with program elements. All the program contractors had to understand all of the WIA requirements, which entailed a constant, ongoing communication and training process. “But that’s the way you succeed,” Gray points out. “You all have to understand each other’s programs.” She also had representative contractors and youth present their successes to the Youth Advisory Council and the Health and Social Services Agency. “They come in with their gang tattoos and their scary faces and say what the program has done for them, and get applauded. It’s about recognizing the successes, and also about putting a face on those who receive the services. Otherwise it’s just a number.”

Another factor behind the success of the program was that it had a comprehensive wraparound element. Family resources in the City of Vacaville provided additional counseling and support. The WIB and indirectly the Youth Advisory Council in turn covered expenses like childcare and transportation. “We fixed the brakes on one young man’s car, so he could get to work,” says Gray. “We did those extra things to let the young people know that they mattered, and that their success is our success.”

**Breakthrough Moment:** The Solano Youth Advisory Council got to hear first hand from a young man who went through the program, and whose story exemplified the outcomes they intended. He was very unsure of his future plans and his ability to attain a GED when he entered the Youthbuild program. He completed his GED with the support of WIA-funded tutoring,

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completed OSHA certificates, and worked with a Youthbuild mentor to acquire the necessary skills to apply for and secure employment with the City of Vacaville's Office of Housing and Redevelopment. Initially he was so shy that he had a difficult time speaking to adults, but as he participated, the young man blossomed. He concluded his training with a heartfelt presentation to the Council, thanking them for their support of the Youthbuild program.

**What's Next for this YCidea?** On September 30, 2004, after six years, the City of Vacaville reached the end of its HUD funding. WIA monies alone were not sufficient to run the Vacaville Youthbuild comprehensive program that included GED training and mentoring. However, the Solano County Youth Advisory Council continued to serve as a cross-referral agency. The WIB and the Youth Advisory Council will work with any city in the county that wants to implement a similar program. While more of the funding and program management for the current program was borne by the City of Vacaville than by the WIA, the county benefits, as Gray points out: "These young people earn money, put it back into their community for the most part, and learn the satisfaction of a good day's work."

## **Where to Go for More Information**

Solano Youth Advisory Council

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## **SNIPPET**

### **Year-Round Life Skills Workshops to Support At-Risk Youth**

**The Youth Council:** Kings County Youth Council

**Element:** Youth Development and Support

**Function:** Coordinating Services

**Subjects:** Innovative Programs, Serving Special Populations

**The Challenge:** Kings County has a high number of homeless and poverty-stricken youth who need help and guidance. The Youth Council was sponsoring Life Skills workshops through summer school programs, but the Council members felt that the at-risk youth they served needed assistance throughout the year.

**The Practice and Evidence:** Kings County Youth Council developed year-round Life Skills Workshops modeled after those in their summer school program.

Because the topics are particularly relevant to youth facing difficult life situations, the workshops are always filled to capacity. One Workshop speaker was a County Mental Health representative whose presentation educated youth on managing their own mental health and identifying issues. Another popular class, taught by college dietician interns, teaches youth how to make six meals out of just 12 food staples. The youth were given recipes, a food budget, and the 12 staples, encouraging them to cook their own nutritious meals. Other workshops, such as those that teach parenting skills, give students the informational foundation they need to help them overcome current difficulties.

The workshops are now also conducted in locations other than the One-Stop. Career Advisors go to the court school and teach on topics such as job preparedness and dress for success.

**The Details:** The workshops were created by WIA-funded Career Advisors based in five mini-One-Stop career centers located in high schools throughout the county. Each month up to 20 at-risk youth attend these evening workshops at their local One-Stop and obtain help with specific issues. The career advisors coordinate transportation, providing a way for each student to attend. In all the workshops, youth evaluate and rate the speakers to ensure their value and impact. According to Becky Hudson, Staff to Youth Council, “Finding the right speaker is the key. There are many knowledgeable people who are willing to help, but only a few can connect with the youth. Be flexible – if you want young parents to attend, provide child care. Gimmicks attract; use food, drawings, or require a minimum number to be attended per year. If it’s a good workshop but not well attended, have a repeat performance; the youth will sell it. Let the youth know far enough in advance, then remind them.”

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**Breakthrough Moment:** When the workshop in sexually transmitted diseases was scheduled, a low youth turnout was predicted by the adults. However, much to the adults' surprise, a large group attended. The speaker was humorous but tasteful and put the students at ease. The youth asked lots of questions, many of which shocked the Career Advisors. "It became very apparent that the youth want answers," said Hudson. Another eye-opening workshop was sponsored by Family Support. The youth present were very surprised to realize that if you parent a child, the father and mother are responsible for that child and that Family Support Services will go to great lengths to make sure that responsibility is maintained.

**What's Next for this YCidea?** Once the lines of communication are opened, youth typically begin to work with the One-Stop Career Centers and are then linked with additional supportive services. The Youth Council anticipates continued growth of the number workshops offered as well as the number of youth attending the classes.

### **Where to Go for More Information**

Kings County Youth Council

Becky Hudson

Staff to Youth Council

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### **Tool**

Please contact the Kings County Youth Council:

Programs Descriptions Brochure



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## **SNIPPET**

### **Youth Programs Created by the Council to Support Service Gaps**

**Youth Council:** City of Richmond Youth Council

**Elements:** Youth Development and Support, Academic Excellence, Youth Leadership

**Function:** Coordinating Youth Services

**Subjects:** Innovative Programs, Youth Involvement

**The Challenge:** Immediately after its formation, the City of Richmond Youth Council saw that the youth of Richmond were not being adequately served. Their vision for the City of Richmond was “a community where all youth are a success in school, work, and life. We envision a community that provides youth with positive adult relationships and role models. We envision a community where all youth are healthy and have equal opportunities to learn and where all youth are supported on their way to becoming self-sufficient adults. We envision all youth as leaders and contributors in our community.” The Council members saw their role as follows: “To serve as a catalyst to build a comprehensive, community-wide youth preparation and development service delivery system.” They saw that there were not sufficient opportunities for the youth of Richmond to get the support they needed.

**The Practice and Evidence:** Youth Council members set to work promptly to improve and expand programs available to their youth.

One program paid for driver’s education for youth preparing to take driver’s license exams. Another program prepared a group of 23 junior and senior high school young women to go to college. Council staff took the young women on a tour of northern California’s colleges (traditional black colleges were highlighted), allowing the students to fully explore their educational opportunities. All seniors in the program took the ACT and applied to college.

Each of the 70 WIA-enrolled youth regularly attended after-school tutoring classes four days per week to help them with daily homework, and math and writing skills. During the first program year, 2002, 40 youth went through a program where they were required to take two classes per week for six weeks. Classes included quick and healthy cooking, sex education, and money management.

The Council also formed the Youth Leadership Team, a team of outgoing, determined WIA-enrolled youth. This close-knit group accomplished much in a short time and impressed the Council with their “can do” attitudes. The youth developed their own mission statement: “We are the youth of the City of Pride and Purpose committed to becoming dedicated and confident leaders for youth.” The multiple roles of the Youth Leadership Team are to 1) make youth programs youth focused, 2) advise the Youth Council on youth issues and needs, 3) build

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relationships and collaborations, 4) increase program visibility, and, 5) represent the youth of the City of Richmond.

The Youth Leadership Team has been involved in many activities that both support them as leaders and promote the work of the Council. For example, staff of the Council took the Youth Leadership Team to Merced for a youth conference. The Youth Leadership Team also developed a presentation and arranged with area high school teachers to bring it to students in the classroom so as to educate students about the Council and its programs. Furthermore, the team writes monthly articles that describe the programs and youth activities of the Youth Council for publication in a local newspaper.

**The Details:** The Council determined what additional programs to offer by conducting surveys that asked youth what programs the schools and community formerly offered at no charge, but were no longer available. The Council members then wrote proposals to obtain funds to support them. They received three grants and began to implement programs that gave in-school and out-of-school youth much needed assistance.

Youth Leadership Team members attended a two-day camping retreat to learn about the Council and how to talk with adults about issues they had at home or with friends so that the Council would be better able to support them. Close bonds were formed between the adults and youth who attended. Youth also met for a few Saturdays to prepare for their work with the Council.

## **Where to Go for More Information** City of Richmond Youth Council

Sal Vaca  
Program Director  
(510) 307-8006

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## **SNIPPET**

### **Youth Programs to Support Career Preparation, Youth Development, and Crime Prevention**

**Youth Council:** Sacramento Youth Council

**Elements:** Career Preparation, Comprehensive Approach, Youth Development and Support

**Function:** Coordinating Youth Services

**Subjects:** Innovative Programs, Serving Special Populations

**The Challenge:** The Sacramento Youth Council has been working with reduced funding during the past several years, so the Council has been facing the challenge of using its current resources effectively.

**The Practices:** The Youth Council supported two successful programs: pre-employment workshops (JOBS) and the Youth Development and Crime Prevention Program (YDCP).

The Youth Council offers a series of one-week pre-employment workshops known as Job Opportunities Bring Success (JOBS) workshops. They were held during the summer of 2004 and 2005 at a variety of Sacramento Works Career Centers. These Sacramento Works Youth Workshops have seen great participation in the 2004-2005 program year.

The Youth Development and Crime Prevention Program (YDCP) is serving 50 probation and foster youth at the Hillsdale and Franklin SWCC. The youth are being provided with work experience, community projects, and tutoring as well as advocacy/coordination with juvenile justice, education, and counseling providers. In addition, the Sacramento Youth Council continues the tradition of placing Universal Youth Specialists at the Sacramento Works Career Centers (SWCC).

**Details:** The JOBS workshops are facilitated by teams from Sacramento Employment Training Agency (SETA), Sacramento Works Career Centers, and youth-service providers. The one week curriculum is patterned after the popular industry-specific “Boot camp” model and youth receive incentives for perfect and on-time attendance. Upon graduation from the Youth JOBS workshops, youth are provided ongoing job placement assistance.

In one of the YDCP projects, youth painted a mural for the Franklin SWCC. The YDCP program was recently awarded continuation funding from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Along with supporting Universal Youth Specialists at the SWCC, the Youth Council has actively engaged the SWCC site supervisors to create more “youth friendly” career centers. Two

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locations, the Franklin and Hillsdale Career Centers, created a Youth Connection section of the centers that were re-designed, painted, decorated, and are being completed with updated resource information to better serve youth customers.

### **Where to Go for More Information**

Sacramento Youth Council

Christine Welsch

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