



CDD NEWS



LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

January 25, 2008 VOL. III ISSUE 95



Watts Youth Center Works to Strengthen Families

Making A Difference In The Community Inspires Staff

The Community Development Department's Youth Opportunity (YO) Movement site in Watts is always a hub of activity. Watts YO provides a wide range of services that include education, life skills and employment assistance along with recreation and social development opportunities to help young people become productive adults. Examples of the training and skills development available on site include remedial classes, GED preparation, resume writing, computer literacy and more.



Watts YO staffers are enthusiastic about their jobs and the clients they serve. The second annual Watts YO "35 Chosen Families Initiative" event is a perfect example of that enthusiasm.

The center's counseling staff is committed to giving out food baskets and a family board game to the 35 neediest families served. The staff gets as much pleasure from organizing the 35 family event as the recipients of the food baskets and board games.

"This is the second year of the initiative and everyone on staff is steadfast in keeping it going even when we have to juggle our other duties," said Watts YO Center Director Scott Lee. "We hold fund-raising activities and seek donations from businesses and corporations."

More than 350 youth receive services at the Watts YO annually, but only a small number receive the holiday baskets. It was difficult to choose the final 35 because the need is so great.



During the holiday season Watts YO handed out 550 toys at its annual toy giveaway and more than 250 bags of food through the food bank. It was an effort to serve the community at large and not just limited to clients. Money to buy the pallets of food comes from staff members who don't mind digging deep into their pockets.

"It's a feeling that's hard to describe," said Lee, who spoke about helping people. "Words would not do the experience justice. Spend a day giving back and you will experience joy that money can't buy."