

Youth Spotlight



I fell in love with writing in the third grade when I wrote my first poem. It was then that I knew writing would have a lasting affect on me. I carry my community with my words; words that uplift, words that inform, and most importantly, words that make change. Now as a young adult, I want to share my love with my peers. Realizing that my words have power, I strive to change my community with the strength of my pen. I am Nicole Graves, YO! WATTS Youth Writer and Community Advocate.



YO! Watts Members participate in the 5th Annual Watts Holiday Parade. The parade, a local holiday tradition, marks the beginning of the holiday season for this community. It begins on Avalon and El Segundo and ends directly in front of the YO! Watts Center. YO! Watts is proud to participate in this festive event year after year.

Singing for a Greener Watts

Performing an original piece written by YO! LA staff and youth members, the YO! Voices Choir rocked the house at the Mayor's Environmental Go Green Conference. The conference, a part of the Million Trees LA project, took place at the Los Angeles Convention Center and was well attended by community youth, Disney Channel celebrities, elected officials and a host of others.

YO! Voices Choir kicked off the event with an energetic and original piece they called, "Go Green! Go Green!" which quickly brought the audience to its feet. The words and message of the song truly set the theme for the event. The conference puts a spotlight on environmental awareness in the community and is designed to spark a passion and urgency in the youth to get involved. From the crowd's response, we can tell that the choir motivated the attendees to do just that.

YO! Voices is one of the many performing arts opportunities the center offers allowing young people to showcase their talent with the gift and blessing of music. The choir led by powerhouse singer Nysa Shenay rehearses at the YO! Watts center every Tuesday and Thursday from 3-6pm. Her motto is "You don't have to be a star to be a part of our choir. If you have a passion for music and a desire to be a part of something great...you are welcomed."



YO! Voices Choir strikes a pose before their performance at the Go Green Conference



YO! Voices Choir and their Director Nysa pose with multi-platinum recording artist will.i.am



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LOS ANGELES YOUTH OPPORTUNITY MOVEMENT



A Holiday Tradition Like No Other

Each year hundreds of families line up and brave the weather elements to get a new toy for the children in their homes at the YO! Watts Annual Toy Drive & Food Giveaway. Over time the event has grown and this year marks the biggest turnout EVER! There was entertainment from the center's youth performance groups and even real live snow was brought in for the youth to play with. On the day of the event, more than 800 toys were given out but not enough to cover everyone in line. This news was unacceptable to YO! Watts staff. Two hundred and fifty youth who went home empty handed were called back when more toy donations were received. There was also a food bank provided for the adults and bicycle helmets for everyone in attendance. Keeping the tradition alive, the center also continued its "35 Chosen Families Initiative" which awards complete holiday dinner food baskets that include a turkey with all the trimmings to deserving families working hard to get ahead. The holiday spirit at YO! means something for everyone...no one leaves empty-handed!!



Join us in making a difference in 2009: Marcus Banks Foundation, Hudson Jeans, CDD, CD 15, LA Dodgers, Mega Toys, CHP, Denny's, Ericka Lake, Kim Garrett, Watts Coffee House, Ralphs, Hampton Family & Toys 4 Tots

