

Youth Spotlight

Rosalinda Pantoja: A YO! Watts Star



Rosalinda Pantoja is a four-year YO! Watts veteran and a beacon of light to her community. With diligence, dedication and determination she recently earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from California State University, Long Beach. At CSULB Rosie received the Deans Honor Award for maintaining an impressive G.P.A. of 3.8 and garnered the President's Honor Award for both the Fall and Spring 2008 semesters for academic excellence. Rosie began her road to higher education as a full-time student at Los Angeles Trade Technical College where she earned an Associate of Arts degree in June of 2007. Rosie didn't stop her forward progress once she had a BA, now she's an entrepreneur. She designs, produces, and markets her own "one of a kind" jewelry. To view or purchase one of these rare gems please contact Sharifa Austin at (323) 971-7681. The future is bright for this young lady who has defied the odds and proved, "It's not about where you come from, but where you choose to go."



Shout out to the Donald T. Sterling Charitable Foundation and Executive Director, Diana Miller for providing an opportunity for over 350 participants to attend an exciting evening at the Staples Center to watch our Los Angeles Clippers take on the Chicago Bulls!! "This was my first time at the Staples Center it was so exciting. I never knew how big it was inside!" exclaimed Jessica Bermudez, YO! Participant

Meet the YO! Watts News Team



One would never know that the driving force behind YO! Watts News is a talented group of youth. Every aspect of the newsletter is written, photographed and designed by our very own participants. The YO! News Team consists of talented students who have expressed an interest in Photography, Journalism, Videography or Graphic/Web Design. Along with two staff advisors, the team meets twice a month to finalize topics for newsletter editions, arrange the calendar for photo shoots, interviews and train one another so everyone on the team will have a solid knowledge of the various areas required to "go to press."

Team members share a passion for their community and see YO! News as an opportunity to highlight an underexposed part of Los Angeles that has amazing things and people in it.

At YO! Watts students make things happen. If they can dream it, we help them realize their potential and that's how YO! Watts News was born. Enjoy!

News Room Staff

Lead Graphic Designer:
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News Room Director:
Sharifa Austin

Videography Coordinator:
Adrian Veliz

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Want to share your talent with YO! Watts News? Want to learn photography or video design? Call (323) 971-7681 for more information or to sign-up today!



Spotlight on



In a time when companies are laying off employees in large numbers, one company is making a difference. Famous for its "\$5 Footlongs", Subway is making strides in the community by recycling its \$\$\$ to put young people to work. This quarter, Subway hired over 20 youth from the YO! Watts program. Job seekers completed an application and math test before interviewing with the Manager, Maria Molina. "I was thoroughly impressed with the professionalism and outgoing nature of the YO! Watts candidates. It made it easy for me to find employment opportunities for them within the company." In addition to employment opportunities, Subway continues to support the YO! Watts program through event donations as well. Subway...not just great sandwiches but great people too!!



MAR'09

Yo!WattsNEWS
LOS ANGELES YOUTH OPPORTUNITY MOVEMENT

Beautiful and Confident Inside and Out



During the month of February YO! Watts hosted a Young Women's Professional Make-over event. Sponsored by Hudson Jeans, Subway and Sephora, the goal was to increase participants' knowledge of healthy hair/skin care and makeup.

More than 30 young women learned tips, tricks, and secrets to feel beautiful and confident inside and out. Feeling good on the inside projects outward confidence.

"Sometimes I look in the mirror and I don't feel attractive or beautiful at all," commented one attendee. "How can I go into a job interview and feel confident when I don't like the way I look?"

By the end of the workshop this young lady felt much better about herself. She learned professional makeup tips that can add to a woman's look with very little effort.

Each attendee received a "celebrity worthy" gift bag filled with designer makeup, brushes, body scrub, hair treatments, loofah sponges, makeup bags, facial masks and much more.

This was a fun and exciting event, but the most important item, not in the gift bag, is that one should never forget to continually develop inner beauty; there is no mask, scrub or foundation for that.



YO! Watts Performers Shine at the African American Heritage Celebration



What makes a great Black History Celebration...great food and great talent!!! On Wednesday February 25th, as the City of Los Angeles's Community Development Department hosted its African American Heritage Celebration, YO! Watts proved that talent is one thing it can always deliver. The youth center's very own Nicole Graves of the YO! Watts News Team and the talented YO! Voice Ensemble established themselves as the shining stars of the afternoon. YO! Voice gave the performance of a lifetime singing acapella, "Oh Mary, Oh Martha and the words delivered in Nicole's original spoken word piece, "Imagine A Time" blew everyone away. It was definitely an amazing event that will be remembered for years to come.





Staff Martin and Danny get to know the students at Camp Gonzalez



Participant Kennard is fitted for his first business suit



Students complete hours in Automotive Repair for Certification



David gets a lesson on the proper way to tie a tie

Students For Higher Education A Support System for Success



The goal of the Students For Higher Education (SFHE) program is to work with motivated young men from the South Los Angeles area who are serving their last 3-6 months in Los Angeles County Camps and give them the support, education and skills they need to move from juvenile delinquents to high school graduates and college/vocational students. This minimizes the chances of being incarcerated again.

Students begin taking online classes at Los Angeles Trade Technical College while serving their last months behind bars. Upon release they take traditional classes on campus and proudly earn their first college credits. Students' schedules consist of basic skills courses and focus on a specific area of interest such as culinary arts, solar panel installation, construction, automotive training and more.

Along with second chance at success, students have dedicated mentors in the program to help them through obstacles. Youth Offender Director Martin Flores says, "When you build a bond with a kid they begin to gravitate to you." Students For Higher Education takes a more hands-on approach with its students from appearing at court and probation appointments to teaching them how to wear a suit and properly tie a tie.

"When I first met Martin and Danny I thought they were just two guys coming in to talk about a lot of nothing. To my surprise they actually did call me. They got me a paid internship as soon as I got out and purchased all the things I needed to be successful in my classes," exclaimed Aaron Herrera a recent SFHE participant.

To keep programs like SFHE going, funding is always a major concern. So far only 50 young men have participated in the program each year; far more than that number should receive help with services that range from assistance with tuition, training, course materials, transportation, educational supplies and professional business attire.

Get involved with SFHE contact Martin Flores at (323) 971-7641 today!



Culinary Arts students pose with Mentors



Equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and devices available upon request.

A Moment for Reflection



"I learned about YO! Watts through my time in Camp David Gonzales. At first I thought it was just another group of people just trying to look good for the cameras, when in all actuality they really cared. I could tell they were not making empty promises because they fulfilled them and they helped me to stay out of trouble! They gave me something to do, something positive to be involved in. It was because of the mentors that I enrolled in the SFHE program and have since made a life changing decision and enrolled in school, something I never thought I'd do. I chose to major in journalism because I feel that it's time for the world to hear my side of the story and realize that yes, sometimes we make mistakes, but we can learn and grow and be successful. I am a Student for Higher Education and a proud Journalist for the YO! Watts News Team"- Desean