

## Summer Jobs Create Career Paths to Success

Each June, YO! Watts provides summer jobs and training opportunities for its participants. Internships, which may be the first jobs for many students, lay the foundation for future of workplace success. Young people learn accountability, dependability and the importance of getting along with others from diverse backgrounds. Students must complete an intensive course that makes them “job ready” before they can apply for openings. The course focuses on how to get and keep a job. Finally, the students must interview and compete for positions just like in the “real world”. These internships cover career fields from HealthCare to Community Improvement Projects(See below).



*The Los Angeles Youth Opportunity is always seeking additional companies that would like to host as internship sites during the summer as well as year round. For more information on how you or your company can get involved please contact Ryan Tyiska, Director of Business Development at (323) 971-7676.*

## Intern Reflections

“I now know that a career in the medical field is for me. I got to interact with patients and staff and even saw the inside of a brain. Kaiser made me feel welcome and treated me like I was really a part of the staff, not just some kid in a summer program- I had responsibilities and expectations and I took that very seriously.”

-Britani Bell, YO! Watts participant and 2008 Kaiser Intern

“I really never knew how much trash we have in our landfills and what really happens after the trash man comes and collects the trash from our house,” -Alicia Ramirez, YO participant and Department of Public Works Intern(pictured above front row right corner)

## Hooping up Hope

The First Annual End of Summer 3 on 3-basketball tournament was a big success!

It consisted of 6 teams of 14-16 year olds from various areas of the community. There was also a 3-point shooting contest for participants to individually compete in.

At the end of the tournament YO! Watts held a celebratory pizza party for the players and top performers were awarded trophies. The tournament was a great activity and an excellent recruiting tool that brought in several new YO! Watts program participants. Events such as this give young people a way to safely participate in a sport they love, showcase their talents on the court, and provide YO! Watts staff an opportunity to teach leadership and team building skills while youth learn to build bridges to friendship and forgo gang rivalry.

Now that's a Slam Dunk! 🏀



## Local Teens Strive To Be Legal Eagles

Helping young people get experience as defense attorneys, jurors and prosecutors is what Teen Court is all about. At the 4th Annual National Youth Court Month, dedicated young adults commit to four weeks of intensive legal training with sessions in government, court procedures and jury deliberation.

The highlight of this unusual "civics lesson" is the mock trial, a real life court case where students act as jurors, and legal experts with "courtroom" spectators in attendance. The event was officiated by the Honorable Judge Ronald Skyers and held at the Watts YO! site.

"Lots of kids ditch school sometimes or make little mistakes that they think will be fun for the moment, but don't realize how these things can really follow them into their adult lives," said participant and mock juror Alixis Hoare.

Though it was a mock trial participants showed a high level of enthusiasm for their assignments. Youth Leader Ya'Chica Jones saw the program as fun and a way to improve the community "I learned about legal rights and how they can be applied to community and peers."

Understanding the law is what Teen Court teaches young people. Their next step should be what famed defense attorney Johnnie Cochran once said, "I'm a big believer in the fact that life is about preparation, preparation, preparation."



*"Basketball for me is a great outlet. It was a prideful moment to bring home a trophy to share with my family."*  
-Derrick Johnson, 3 Point Contest Winner

## 4-Year Universities Not Just A Dream...A REALITY

It was a trip of a lifetime-- 20 young people from the LA YOM Watts got a chance to visit California universities. The journey began as the students boarded a 5 a.m. flight headed for San Jose, California. This was the first plane ride for many of the students. The four-day trip included guided tours of UC Berkley, San Jose State, UC Santa Cruz and UC Santa Barbara.

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The group included students who were college bound to others who never considered college. "I really thought I would go on this trip to get away from my family, party and get at some girls," Jorge Aramburo wrote in his journal. "Instead this trip changed my whole perspective, it changed my life. I really see myself getting my diploma and actually going to college. I loved San Jose State University!"

San Jose was the universal favorite among the students. "San Jose's campus is diverse, it is a smaller more personal community, and the students seemed very comfortable and more at ease on that tour," said Natasha Domiguez, UCLA Ameri-corps Vista and chaperone. "Some students who barely spoke the whole tour seemed to be filled with a million questions for the San Jose tour guide."

"We got to eat at places we had never heard of," said Trenton Samuel, YO! Watts participant.

There were visits to arcades, a boat ride in San Francisco under the Golden Gate Bridge, and even scary fun on the roller coasters at the Santa Cruz boardwalk. It's once in a lifetime experiences like these that impact the future of many of our youth.

"Our goal is to show our students that attending a four Year university doesn't have to be a dream," said Mirna Palacios, Americorps Coordinator and chaperone. "It can be real and they can make it happen!"

