

The Summer Xpress



L.A. County WIB SYEP
 Goal: 5,000
 Our Success...
 Goal Reached!!!
 Currently over 5,670 youth are enrolled

- Over 468 probation/felony youth
- Over 417 foster youth

2009 Summer Youth Awards Ceremony



AGENDA

SASSFA 2009 Summer Youth Awards
 Ceremony
 September 30, 2009

WELCOME
 Arthur Monreal—SASSFA Outreach/Business Services Coordinator

INTRODUCTIONS
 Kirk Kain—SASSFA Executive Director

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
 Otto Solorzano—LA County Community and Senior Services, Chief Deputy

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
 Andrea Avila—Field Deputy Supervisor Don Knabe

GUEST SPEAKERS
Supervisors:
 Belen Torres-Gil – Rio Hondo College
 Coco F. Lujan – Boys & Girls Club of Whittier
 Anna Rabina – Radisson Hotel Whittier

Parent:
 Lisa Wikle

Participants:
 Yela Rodriguez – SASSFA Summer Youth Office
 Mario Morales – SASSFA Main Office
 Andrea Veas – Santa Fe Springs Fire Dept
 Cynthia Cazares – Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse

GUEST PRESENTATIONS
RAFFLE/CLOSING COMMENTS

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| YELA RODRIGUEZ | AMANDO TINADO |
| ANA ARMENDARIZ | NATHAN PITONES |
| FRANCISCO CARAVEO | DANNY ZAZUETA |
| ANTHONY DIAZ | HECTOR TORO |
| SONIA VILLAGOMEZ | MELISSA CASSIDY |
| CLAUDIA AGUILAR | JAUSRAEL FLORES |
| ERIKAH MILLER | JOSE RIVERA |
| ERIC BIBLE | CARLOS RIVERA |
| JAVIER GARCIA | ROSEWITZ, ERIC G |
| SARAH SANDOVAL | RAFAEL ESCAMILLA |
| ANDREW CASTANEDA | VANESSA VILLESAS |
| MARIO MORALES | JOHN VALDEZ |
| STEVEN SALAZAR | VANESSA WILSON |
| CHRISTOPHER ESQUIVEL | CARLOS R. MARTINEZ |
| ANTHONY SORENSEN | TRAVIS SANER |
| JESSICA RAMIREZ | CARISSA CONTRERAS |
| KAYLIE LOPEZ | JOHNNY MERCADO |
| MONIQUE BARRAZA | ALEXIS ARAGON |
| MARIBEL DUARTE | CYNTHIA CAZARES |
| JONMICHAEL LOPEZ | KRYSTAL URIBE |
| EDUARDO VIRAMONTES | STEPHANIE GARCIA |
| LOUIS GARCIA | TIANNAH SHAFER |

EMPLOYER AWARDS:

- PARTY CITY**
 TODD DRAFTON
- CITY OF PICO RIVERA**
 EFRAIN LEE
- CITY OF SANTA FE SPRINGS**
 NIKKIE NGUYEN
 EDDIE RAMIREZ
- RIO HONDO COLLEGE**
 BELEN TORREZ- GIL
 LIZ CHAVEZ
- WHITTIER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, CAREER CONNECTIONS**
 JULIE JOHNSON
 CHRISTINA ZAVALA
 RICHARD ROSENBERG
 ROSE CASTRO
 ARMIDA MAGALLANES
 RENEE MAGALLANES
 NAOMI MC COOL
- DOLLAR TREE**
 HOMER GONONG
 MIGUEL RAMIREZ
- BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**
 COCO F. LUJAN
- THE RADISSON HOTEL**
 ANNA RABINA
- LACADA**
 CONNIE REYNOSA
- OFFICE OF GRACE NAPOLITANO**
 EVELYN HERRERA



Local WorkSource Center Honors SYEP Participants and Worksites at Pico Rivera Awards Ceremony



Cynthia, 18

Cynthia Cazarez spent her early childhood living with her mom in Hemet, CA. She will never forget the day her mother's friend called on the phone, a Pastor at a church in Whittier. He told her mom to come live in Whittier, get away from the drugs and crime in Hemet, promising that he would help her and her family by providing them with a place to live, a little car to putter around in and a support

structure. Her mom made the decision to bring her young family to Whittier and they have never looked back.

Having been exposed to crime and drugs in the home, Cynthia is determined to break that cycle. She wants to show that you don't have to follow in the footsteps of the adults around you if those footsteps are not worth following. True, over the last fifteen years she has been raised

in a Christian environment, her mom has kept those corrupting influences away from her family, but Cynthia still remembers what it was like living in Hemet.

She is currently enrolled at Everest College majoring in Criminal Justice. It is her desire to become a Parole Officer or Youth Advocate working with teens, helping them get off the streets, using her own experience to identify with them.

Cynthia chose to do her work experience at the Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse (L.A.CADA). It was a near perfect match. Cynthia made herself invaluable to the point that when it came time for her to say goodbye, her supervisor Connie Reynosa approached the executive director and made her case for keeping Cynthia on part-time. It didn't take much convincing, according to Reynosa, "You explain it once, she learns quickly, it gets done and it gets done right."



Andrea Veas, an eleventh grader at Pioneer High School, heard about the SASSFA Summer Youth Employment Program at school. The same day, she came home and her Mom told her about the program too! So she decided, why not work for the summer, stay busy and make some spending money.

What she got was an amazing summer experience that taught her skills that will come in handy in the future. She describes her experience working at the Santa Fe Springs Fire Department as wonderful. She was exposed to an office working environment for the very first time and learned to appreciate such intricacies as answering phones in a professional manner, working on Excel spreadsheets and even riding in a real SFS Fire Engine.

She plans to attend San Diego State and major in Criminal Justice. When asked to elaborate, she says she "...wants to be a cop on the street, I like to help people, to serve others...it would give me a chance not only to serve, but the opportunity to save others, it would be a daily challenge."



Mario, 18

Valdemaro (Mario)

Morales was raised in Santa Fe Springs by his Grandmother from the time he was two years old. She is all he has ever known, and is obviously very close to her. If you spend any time working with Mario, it is easy to see the work ethic she raised him with. If you would have been at the SYEP Awards Ceremony for the preparation or the clean-up, you would have seen his Grandmother busy pitching in

with whatever needed to be done. She didn't ask she just jumped right in, volunteering her time and effort to help get things done.

Looking back, Mario wishes he had done a few things different, but is sharp enough to realize, it's not too late to turn things around. It was nothing sudden or overly dramatic, it was gradual, but it still led him to a place he wished he had not gone to. He started hanging out with the wrong crowd, a crowd that didn't think school was important; it left him out of school without a plan, no direction, and a life going nowhere.

In an effort to jump start his life, he enrolled in a self-directed curriculum at Sierra Vista Campus in Whittier. But even that didn't do much to get him rolling in the right direction. So Grandma took it upon herself to get him going. Mario came home one day to hear she had enrolled him at SASSFA, you're going to work. What could he say? It was his Grandmother; he did what he was asked. He didn't expect much, but something clicked at SASSFA. The people he met there were very helpful and nice to him. He suddenly had a structure to his life, SASSFA provided structure and it quickly lent structure to the rest of his life.

He is now enthusiastic about school, his grades are much improved and soon he will have his high school diploma. He is still not sure what he wants to do with his life, but he does know he wants a four year university in his future. He is exploring the possibilities, weighing out his options, suddenly his life going somewhere, it has direction.



*To dream the impossible dream
 To fight the unbeatable foe
 To bear with unbearable sorrow
 To run where the brave dare not go
 This is my quest
 To follow that star
 No matter how hopeless
 No matter how far
 And I know if I'll only be true
 To this glorious quest
 That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
 When I'm laid to my rest
 And the world will be better for this
 That one man, scorned and covered with scars
 Still strove with his last ounce of courage
 To reach the unreachable star*

Joe Darion

Tiffany McNeal

is a 2008 Paramount High School Graduate and is currently attending Los Angeles Southwest College where she is majoring in Child Development. She comes from a family that has no history of a college education and she is determined to become the first in her family to get her degree.



Tiffany, 19

She heard about SASSFA's summer job program in school, she applied and not long after was called in for a group orientation. She met with several possible worksites, but wanted something different, something out of the ordinary, something more. She decided to go with the Los Angeles Juvenile Court and it turned out to be one of the best decisions she has ever made. "I learned some valuable lessons from my supervisors Mrs. Kim Feigan and Mrs. Nannette Sanchez. I met some amazing people that showed me and taught me so many different things about the court (operations)... Thanks to these people, and there letters of recommendation, I got a permanent job working for the Los Angeles Children's Collective, Inc., as a Teacher's Assistant!"

Tiffany credits her Case Manager Lidia Medrano with much of her success, "...this job is a stepping stone to helping me buy the car I've needed, I could not have done this without Lidia's help.

She helped me through this the whole way and because of her and the experience this program gave me, I know I will be able to graduate from college. This program inspires me, it allows me to finally believe, that anything is possible if you have faith."

In a perfect world, every summer youth participant gets the kind of work experience that Tiffany enjoyed. For Tiffany, it was the kind of experience that shapes a lifetime.

Claudia Aguilar has seen the best of times and the worst of times (apologies to F. Scott Fitzgerald), she has seen the highs and the lows, a literal roller coaster life. A lot of people that have gone through the kind of events and circumstances that Claudia has gone through are quick to lay the blame on someone, or something else, hanging out with the wrong crowd, a bad childhood, but not Claudia.

The 22 year old mother of six year old Kimberly is adamant, that it is clear to you and anyone that will listen, that it is "nobody's fault but mine". Dropping out of school at fifteen was her decision. "I have made some



poor choices in my life that have affected me greatly, but I own them, I don't want my daughter to know about some of the places I have been, or things I have done, but I want to be a good mother to her. I want to be a good

example for her, so it's time for me to start working on my future." At one point in her life she went to school for Medical Assisting and actually worked in the field for two years. She left to go on to a better job, but that job fell through. Once again, Claudia hopped on that roller coaster, careening down until she ended up in trouble with the law. But as is her style, she didn't allow herself to stay down! She heard about Summer Youth Employment Program and was soon working at the SASSFA Pico Rivera office as an Administrative Assistant. She rediscovered her faith that had been missing in action for a while. She is determined to stay focused on the future and being a good mom to Kimberly. She will find a career that will allow her to be an independent woman that is not reliant on someone else to support her. Remember her words, in the worst of time and in the best of times, nobody's fault but mine!



Claudia, 22



Yela, 23

Yela Rodriguez is a 23 year old Cerritos College student that is very close to transferring to a four-year university. On the surface, she appears to be your typical everyday All-American young adult, working her way through college and in many ways she is.

However, if you scratch just beneath the surface there is an amazing story of leaving her home in Texas at a young age to escape overwhelming obstacles, bad relationships, abuse, bad decisions and coming to California to start a new life. What she found was, being in California alone, was not a lot better than what she left.

As things got worse, she moved in with an aunt, but that did not last long, as Yela's own behaviors led her aunt to ask her to leave, so she had to spend six months of her young life living in a transition shelter in Whittier. She was able to maintain her schooling despite living in the

shelter, however, when she got the news that she was about to lose her eligibility to stay there, she went to one of her counselors in the recovery program where she was enrolled in desperation and afraid she would have to stop attending college, to ask for direction and help.

Yela was referred to the Southeast Area Social Service Funding Authority (SASSFA), who happened to be recruiting for the Summer Youth Employment Program. The staff at SASSFA quickly indentified her as a young lady that could step right in and help any organization, so they put her to work immediately in the SASSFA Summer Youth Office in Pico Rivera as an administrative assistant, helping to run the program itself.

She has since been able to continue with her schooling, she has found a small one room rental in Pico Rivera and is working part time in the SASSFA Main Office in Santa Fe Springs. Her dream is to continue on with school majoring in Psychology.



SYEP Participants Give “Thank You” Speeches at Awards Ceremony

When signed up for this summer program, I was a little apprehensive. I didn't think there was a job out there for me. Luckily I was proven wrong. I had the pleasure of working at the SASSFA office in Santa fe Springs. Being that this was going to be my first job, I was a little worried about how other workers would receive me. A great sense of relief came over me when I was met with such a warm and welcoming staff. After just my first day I felt settled in. I felt like I had been working there for a year. I was happy to be surrounded by intelligent, ambitious people. It was evident that this was a good team and a team that I was honored to be a part of. I was given a great opportunity, an opportunity that I'm sure men twice my age would be happy to have. So I was determined to make the best of it. I was so grateful that they would give me, a kid out of high school with no resume a chance to show not only them but myself what I was capable of. SASSFA provided me with skills that would build up my resume and skills that will be very useful throughout my working career. SASSFA also provided me with skills that hold a deeper meaning to me. They taught me life skills and people skills. These attributes not only helped me become a better worker but a better person and I thank them for that. So Once again thank you SASSFA for giving me this opportunity of a life time and thank you all for listening.

Mario Morales



This year has been quite a blessing. From December of last year and even before, I had many ups and downs which resulted in a horrible employment history. I found it pointless to continue applying for jobs. I felt embarrassed of the gaps; the limited times I worked at each job, and how many jobs I have had—TOO MANY!

I remember the week before I worked at SASSFA; my employment history had left me unemployed for more than a year. I met Arthur and went to orientation the same day, then I met Blanca Cuevas and the next day I got interviewed and ran out excited after she told me I got the job. She also helped me in developing my resume. Arthur continues to help me to this day. Thank you SASSFA for lifting my spirits and confidence up. Thank you so much and thank you Elizabeth for keeping me on my toes and shaping me up for my next employer

Yela Rodriguez



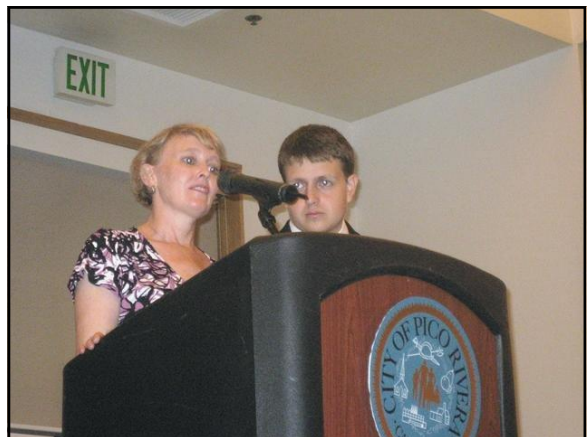
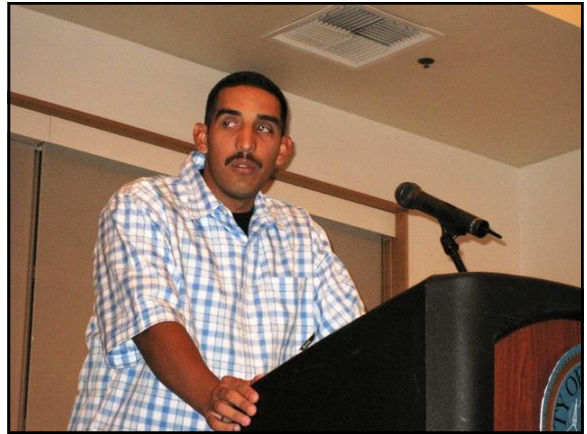
I would like to give a brief description of my work assignment. First, I want to begin by thanking SASSFA for giving me the opportunity to work this summer at the number one fire station in Santa Fe Springs. This was my first time getting work experience so I really did not know how to go about getting a job. However, the orientations that SASSFA provided were very informative and helpful. They taught me what and what not to say at interviews. They also taught me what the appropriate dress code is and more. I chose the fire department because I want to do something in law enforcement, so this was a good step for me to take. My learning experience was answering office phones, filing, and just the general office duties. I even got to ride in the fire truck. In closing, I want to thank SASSFA and all of its members for a wonderful work experience.

Andrea Veas



My name is Cynthia Cazarez, and I am 20 years old living in Whittier. I just got hired by L.A. CADA and I really like working there, because I have learned a lot. I love the environment there and how they treat everybody the same without any type of discrimination. I love all the new things I have learned there from the littlest thing like how to use a type writer to working with clients. In the future, I see myself getting my Bachelors degree, as well as my Masters and hopefully becoming a parole officer. Thanks to LA County and the SASSFA Summer Youth Program, this is now my second year participating in the program. This has been my lucky year because I was hired on by L.A. CADA, which is the company that I originally was hoping to work for. I really enjoy working for LA CADA and am continuing to learn a lot.

Cynthia Cazarez



sassfa
 SOUTHEAST AREA SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING AUTHORITY



Los Angeles County Summer Youth Employment Program is operated by Los Angeles County Community and Senior Services and Los Angeles County Workforce Investment Board with funding from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

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