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PARA LOS NIÑOS ENDORSES ANTI-GANG VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

Leading children, youth and families services provider strongly supports local measure to combat gang violence by supporting youth programs

Para Los Niños, one of the leading children, youth and families service providers in Southern California, is endorsing Proposition A, a local initiative on the November ballot that would provide funding for after-school, youth workforce and gang-prevention programs.

The nonprofit organization, which provides educational and family support services to 3,500 at-risk children and youth each week and 5,000 low-income families annually, has rarely taken positions on ballot initiatives in its nearly 30 year history. The organization determined, however, that the importance of this measure warrants its engagement.

“The lack of financial support for high quality and reliable youth programs is undermining young people in our communities every day,” said Gisselle Acevedo, President/CEO of Para Los Niños. “This measure will provide a much-needed and consistent source of funding for programs like ours, which has a proven track record of helping children, youth and families succeed. We work in some of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in Los Angeles, with some of the most at-risk teenagers. It is imperative that they have access to resources and tools that will enable them to graduate from high school and attain employment skills. Proposition A will help to ensure a steady stream of funding to do just that.”

Para Los Niños has a long history of providing gang prevention and youth development services in Los Angeles. The organization works in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District by operating 11 after-school programs on their campuses. It also runs a Youth Center, which draws 60 teens each day from 11 middle schools and 11 high schools to its location on Skid Row. In conjunction with the City of Los Angeles, Para Los Niños is the lead agency for a youth workforce training program that collaborates with 17 other service providers, and under a contract with the County of Los Angeles, provides transitioning foster youth in South Los Angeles with life skills training and educational enrichment services.

“Proposition A will keep L.A.'s kids safe by preventing them from joining gangs in the first place,” said Councilwoman Janice Hahn. “Para Los Niños works so hard on behalf of our kids and it's great to see them support this important opportunity.”

Funded through a \$36 annual parcel tax on each property in Los Angeles City, with exemptions for low-income property owners, and senior citizens, which comes to \$3 a month, Proposition A will ensure that students in Los Angeles have more opportunities to participate in safe after school, job training, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs.

Para Los Niños opened its doors in 1980 in response to the plight of children living in Skid Row hotels. Initially, 45 children received care at the agency; today, in its 28th year of operation, Para Los Niños assists 3,500 children and youth each week and 5,000 families from 26 sites throughout Southern California. The agency's core services include early child development and education, a Charter School (K-5), after-school enrichment, youth diversion and delinquency prevention, youth workforce services, and a life skills training and academic assistance program for transitioning foster youth. In addition, Para Los Niños offers support to at-risk families, including child abuse prevention and intervention, mental health services and comprehensive family support.