

A New View of the City



## Local Kids Aid Homeless, Earn an A in Obama 101

Publish Date : 06/05/2009

What do desert plants, homeless folks, and President **Barack Obama** have in common?

They each have a role in plans by a group of third-grade students who will set out to help the homeless by responding to Obama's call to action and putting their recent studies of desert environments to creative use.

The plan is expected to come together at the Para Los Niños Family Learning Complex at 1617 E. 7th Street on the eastern edge of Downtown. That's where the kids from **Gabriela Cardenas'** class at Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School plan to open a café with a desert theme, offering diners fare such as waffles with agave syrup, dishes with nopales—or tender cactus strips—and other cuisine that fits the theme.

Businesses in the area are donating food, and students are hoping that other community members will come and dine as part of a fundraiser, with proceeds to go to one of Downtown's homeless shelters.

The effort amounts to a chain of lessons the children have learned this school year. The first link came when Para Los Niños administrators rented a stadium-sized screen to allow all 400 of the charter school's students to watch Obama's inaugural address in January, when the new president issued a "Call to Service." The children later began studies of desert habitats, learning about the environment and finding out that some edible stuff grows amid all that sand.

Credit the kids for the final link in the chain. Many of them noticed the large numbers of homeless individuals throughout Downtown. The kids decided to respond to Obama's call, and they used the lessons from their science class to create something unique to offer in return for donations to help the homeless.

It all sounds like a delicious bit of fun, and the event will be open to the public between 10 a.m. and 12 noon on Saturday, June 6, with the dining experience going for \$25 per person.

Para Los Niños is a non-profit provider of social services and education, with various operations throughout Los Angeles and surrounding cities, providing assistance to 4,600 low-income children and youth and 4,000 challenged families from 28 sites.