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President, Los Angeles City Council  
COUNCIL DISTRICT 13



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GARCETTI ANNOUNCES AT THE PARK AFTER DARK NAMED  
“BEST NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM OF THE YEAR” FINALIST**  
*Nation’s oldest grassroots organization recognizes local program*

Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti today announced that At the Park After Dark, which he started in Glassell Park, has been named a finalist in a national program recognizing the country’s best neighborhood programs.

“At the Park After Dark gave kids in one of our city’s toughest neighborhoods a positive, supervised place to be last summer. I am pleased that it has been recognized as a model for our nation, and I look forward to expanding the program to additional sites this summer,” said Garcetti.

At the Park After Dark kept the Glassell Park Recreation Center opened until 11 p.m. for nine weeks during Summer 2007 and offered high-interest, innovative programming to draw urban teens off the streets. Garcetti created the program after the fatal shooting of a 16 year-old girl who was walking at dusk just two blocks from the Glassell Park Recreation Center. With schools closing for the summer and the neighborhood experiencing a spike in tagging and other gang activity, Garcetti wanted to provide a safe, supervised space for the young people in the neighborhood that would be available to them during the hours it was most needed.

Key to the program’s success are its activities, which were selected to ensure they would be appealing to the most at-risk kids. The community-based organization Artstorm provides canvas, paint, and instruction on graffiti art. The Aztecs Rising firefighter crew – comprised of former gang members who now fight fires across California – teach boxing lessons to At the Park After Dark participants. Other innovative activities include skateboarding at a mobile skate park and turntable classes given by local DJs. More traditional activities such as basketball, swimming, and soccer are also offered.

At the Park After Dark has been named a finalist for a Neighborhoods, USA (NUSA) 2008 Best Neighborhood Program Award. Through these awards, NUSA recognizes the outstanding work of neighborhood organizations, businesses and municipalities from all across the United States for their exemplary efforts in improving the quality of life for their neighborhoods, residents and municipalities.

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Neighborhoods, USA is a national non-profit organization committed to building and strengthening neighborhood organizations. Created in 1975, NUSA ([www.nusa.org](http://www.nusa.org)) encourages networking and information sharing as a way to facilitate the development of partnerships between neighborhood organizations, government and the private sector.

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