



JOSE HUIZAR
COUNCILMEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT:

Rick Coca, (213) 473-5807, (213) 200-9974 cell
rick.coca@lacity.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Councilmember José Huizar Announces \$200,000 for Anti-Gang Program

The California Endowment award will allow Legacy L.A., a start-up nonprofit based in Boyle Heights, to fund 10 'Dream Big' youth fellows, who will design anti-gang programming

LOS ANGELES (July 9, 2008) – Councilmember José Huizar today announced the awarding of \$200,000 in funding for Legacy L.A., a grassroots nonprofit organization that plans to provide youth development services at the Hazard Park Armory in Boyle Heights. The funding comes from The California Endowment, a private statewide foundation with a focus on community health.

Councilmember Huizar, whose hands-on approach has been instrumental in helping the burgeoning nonprofit get off the ground, also announced 10 winners of Legacy L.A.s' Dream Big Fellowship.

“We have to give children an option to gangs and drugs,” said Huizar, a Boyle Heights resident, who lives in the same neighborhood he grew up in. “Gang life and violence is like an illness in our community and unless we treat it immediately and aggressively, our kids are in serious jeopardy. I’m absolutely dedicated to supporting programs like Legacy L.A., whose aim is to not only steer our children away from trouble, but to elevate them to the highest plateaus possible where they can realize their dreams.”

Selected from a pool of high school students who live in Boyle Heights, El Sereno and Lincoln Heights, the 10 fellows will participate in a year-long program. The young people will conduct community studies to analyze what programs are needed in the area, particularly in Ramona Gardens, which has long been besieged by gangs, poverty and lack of opportunity for its youth.

Legacy L.A. is finalizing a proposed lease agreement with the City’s Department of Recreation and Parks for the former federal armory built decades ago. With community support, it hopes to use the space to offer art and science programs as well as other community-based programs, such as a youth action center, an arts center and a nature center.

-- more --

Councilmember José Huizar Announces \$200,000 for Legacy L.A.

Page 2 of 2

Robert K. Ross, M.D., president and chief executive officer of The California Endowment, said focusing attention on Ramona Gardens can only help its overall health as a community.

“This project represents a promising step toward improving the environmental factors that serve as barriers to Ramona Gardens’ overall community health, and an opportunity for the youth in the community to develop their leadership skills and make positive contributions to the community,” Ross said.

The Hazard Park Armory is ideally located for Legacy L.A. to meet the needs of the community. Its work converting the armory as well as the work of the fellows will focus on creating a haven of peace and safety for local youth.

“It is much easier for youth in this community to be recruited into leadership positions in the neighborhood gang,” said Lou Calanche, Legacy L. A. co-director. “To end the cycle of gang affiliation and sense of hopelessness in this community, we have to take the time to develop and foster positive leadership that gives youth an opportunity to develop personally, academically and lead change in their own communities.”

The Dream Big Fellows are: Genesis Galvez, Karla Garcia, Jose Hernandez, Lucy Herrera, Marcela Juarez, Andres Martinez, Ismael Quezada, Arnold Ron, Martha Rosales and Jesus Valdez.

For more information about Councilmember Huizar and the 14th District, please visit www.lacity.org/council/cd14.

For more information about Legacy L.A., please visit www.legacyla.org.

For more information about The California Endowment, please visit www.calendow.org.

###