

# Best Practices for Working with Elementary Schools

## Stellar Example –

- The Hollywood United Neighborhood Council (HUNC) has worked closely with elementary schools within its boundaries, especially Cheremoya Avenue ES. HUNC has *contributed over \$4,000* for school supplies specifically requested by students, *hosted art workshops* (that included an art opening for the children with prizes), and various *after-school programs* (that had over 300 children participating!)

With the shortage of funds for LAUSD schools, teachers are limited when ordering supplies and students are restricted in the number of extra-curricular activities available. The HUNC and the local community work with teachers, parents, and students to fill in the gap! Through heightening children's learning experience in various ways, the community at large came together to form friendships and bonds, all the while trying to provide the best education to the future generation!

**Greatest Lesson –** *get everyone involved!* A continuously working relationship with the school, teachers, and kids is the most important. Teachers may not always know what the children want, but they are the best in making everything into a learning experience.

**Special benefit –** *a huge smile or jolly laugh from a child* is worth a thousand pictures!

**Big challenge –** *every child has different interests!* To ensure that no child is left out in boredom, provide more than one option if possible and allow room for exploration.

## Special thanks & acknowledgement to those interviewed:

Susan Polifronio, VP of HUNC

Interpretation of interviews & creation of "best practices" by DONE intern: Helen Leung

## Best Practices for Working with Elementary Schools:

- ❖ **Direct spending**
  - Contribute money towards specific things that directly influence the children, “like a tarantula for the science room” (Susan)
- ❖ **Make a wish list**
  - But let the children come up with the need, perhaps in the form of art!
  - Encourage explanation & justifications
- ❖ **Outreach**
  - Neighborhood associations & local businesses may want to help out
  - Publish wish items in flyers, pamphlets, local newspapers, Neighborhood Council newsletters, etc
  - Keep parents informed with monthly handouts that go home with the children
- ❖ **Involve your Council office**
  - They may have extra funds
  - Can inform you of the services that the city may provide for free
  - Get your Councilmember to attend an event!
- ❖ **Work with everyone**
  - but especially the “school, teachers, and kids” (Susan)
- ❖ **Provide child care**
  - So the whole family can participate whether it’s an after-school program, meeting, or fundraiser
- ❖ **Translation equipment**
  - Many parents do not speak English fluently so make sure there is enough translation equipment in all languages spoken.
  - Provided by the City through your Council office
- ❖ **Free food that’s healthy**
  - Sets a good example for the children during the ages of fast food obsession!
  - Especially during after-school programs when stomachs start to roar
- ❖ **Make it fun**
  - Children are especially stimulated when activities are fun
  - Finance a trip to the Children’s Museum, give out cool prizes...
  - Remember to provide choice & variety!
- ❖ **Invite the students**
  - For a day of learning in the community garden
  - To tour the local police station & fire department
  - Check out the various activities available in the community

**Remember to check in with your DONE Project Coordinator for regulation updates, new info, and other resources!**

