

STORIES OF HOPE, CHANGE, & IMPACT

PRO YOUTH & families

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES
— SINCE 1981 —

During the summer of 1981 the problems of youth using drugs and alcohol, and an increase in violence in Fair Oaks Park, compelled a group of community leaders to come together to address these problems head-on. Today, PRO Youth and Families' vision and actions respond to the widespread impacts of trauma.

We know that trauma can be healed by developing healthy habits, compassion for oneself, nurturing social connections and bonds, and cultivating optimism. Teaching these habits is at the core of what we provide to the youth, families, and communities.



Leading by Example: Araiye Thomas-Haysbert

Photo and Story Credit: BHC Resident Profile, 2018.

Shortly after moving in to the Greenway Housing Community in the summer of 2015, Araiye recalled being at a crossroads in her life: "In my mind I was like I need to figure out when I go to high school what I want to do and become. I can go this way or that way – this way is drugs and fast cash or sit over here and be productive and not get in trouble." Araiye vividly recalls when she was approached by a young woman named Alondra [a PRO employee leading Building Healthy Communities' grassroots efforts in the neighborhood] who asked if she wanted to go to a camp called Sisterhood Rising.

For Araiye, being in a space predominately comprised of women of color fostered a sense of belonging and empowerment that prompted her to return to Sisterhood Rising the following years. "That is what caused me to go back for the next two years – I saw women like me, women of color, teaching powerful stuff...that is [like] nothing I was seeing in my everyday life." Overall, the invitation to Sisterhood Rising shaped Araiye's future trajectory and inspired her to become a youth leader. She became involved in a number of leadership opportunities and now works for PRO and inspires other young people to believe in themselves and get active in their communities.



PRO
YOUTH
FAMILIES

#EGUSD SOCK DRIVE

CAN YOU SPARE A PAIR?

Socks are the #1 requested item at homeless shelters, yet they are rarely donated.

Help someone in need this holiday season and donate socks at one of our participating elementary schools.

Interested in donating socks?
Contact Mandy Irvine at
mandyi@proyouthandfamilies.org

EGUSD Sock Drive: Equipping elementary students with the skills to make a real impact.

Fourteen Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) schools ran student-led sock drives on their campuses. Educated on the basic principles of advocacy and social emotional learning, students were able to find a solution for a problem that people in their community were having. Over 800 pairs of socks were collected and donated to UC Davis Children's Hospital, Pacific Charter School, Sacramento LGBT Center, and EGUSD Student Support Center.

More Valuable than Money: Students work to bring democratic process to school budgets.

Approximately 100 students have been trained to participate in the Participatory Budgeting Project at Hiram Johnson High School. Participatory budgeting involves community members in the democratic process of determining fund allocation in public budgets. The process empowers students with financial literacy skills and provides a forum in which community members' voices are taken in to account. Following a successful model in Arizona, the ultimate goal at this school is for the district to adopt this democratic process.

Relationships & Recognizing Self-Worth: Summer workshop series encourages youth to advocate for himself.

Students in our summer Relationships Skills workshop at Rosemont High School explored the topic of relationships covering subjects like attraction versus infatuation, the healthy relationship pyramid, and dating violence. PRO staff noticed at the outset of the program that two of the students were in a dating relationship. Within a week, the young man in the relationship approached PRO staff and said:

"Thank you for this class. I learned so much.

Most importantly I realized that my girlfriend may still be into her ex and that isn't fair to me. I may just be infatuated with her. She's not happy with me the way the way I am. And, she doesn't treat me nicely when her ex-boyfriend is around.

So, thank you for helping me figure that out."

#HOPEDEALERS

Agents of Change: Student & adult leaders listening to each other, learning from each other, and making change together.

Over the course of her participation in Summer @ City Hall, Atziry Chavez learned how to leverage her voice to speak out about an issue that was important to her. While “at the table” with local leaders, Atziry voiced her frustration that her school was not willing or able to provide the female wrestling team with their own uniforms and wrestling mats (things that the male wrestling team were afforded). Concerned by the double standard, City officials took this concern to heart and found money in their budget to pay for the expense – and, in doing so, demonstrated the power of authentic youth-adult partnerships in civic decision-making.

Aziry interned for the City of Rancho Cordova Economic Development Department and Chamber of Commerce Department.



Voter Registration: 73 new voters will have their voices heard.

PRO participants at Hiram Johnson, Rosemont, Kennedy, and Youth @ City Council worked alongside the League of Women Voters to register and pre-register 73 peers to vote. This two-day drive was part of a statewide movement that resulted in over 5,000 young people becoming registered to vote.

Rancho Cordova Civic Center: Students impact the design.

The 2018 Summer @ City Hall cohort surveyed around 100 of their peers to gather feedback regarding the function and design of the yet-to-be built Rancho Cordova Civic Center. The top nine suggestions for the civic center design presented by the youth include: community study rooms, mental health services, game room, pet cafe, cafe, movie theater, multipurpose community rooms, dance studio, and gymnasium.

The survey results were sent to design committee at City Hall, have made impact in terms of future design of Civic Center (e.g. mental health resources will be a priority).



Racism and Sexism: PRO youth tackle difficult subjects with creativity & thoughtfulness.

Students had in-depth conversations about restorative justice on their campus and the reasons behind suspensions and expulsions. They dug in to the reasons behind the fights on campus and concluded that many of these violent incidents were rooted in racist and/or sexist comments often spurred by social media. To address the issue, students designed a mural and social media campaign emphasizing the social-emotional pain inflicted by these comments and encouraging an atmosphere of respect and empathy. Additionally, students identified several alternative discipline practices that can happen in place of suspensions.

Youth Voice @ City Council: Students intellect and leadership on display at City Council.

Youth @ City Council students (from the 2018 class) researched and drafted mock ordinances. Upon hearing some of these proposals, youth were asked to formally present them at a City Council meeting for the official consideration. The ordinance proposals discussed expanding a city wide scholarship fund, having gender neutral bathrooms in public spaces, and requiring certain businesses to replace plastic straws with something more environmentally friendly. The Council had a discussion afterwards about potentially moving forward with the straw ordinance. Shortly after, California banned restaurants from giving out plastic straws unless requested so no further action was necessary.



#HOPEDEALERS