

# Community Needs Assessment Project - 2007

## Voices from the Community – **Parents**

The goal is a good quality of life for those who live and work in the Northwest Pasadena and Altadena community. In what ways does this currently exist?

### Safe Neighborhoods/ Connectedness

- Good neighbors/people

### Activities/Opportunities for Youth

- Sports opportunities for youth
- Day One Youth Month activities for older teens

### Services/Programs

- Free programs (like BRITE) with tutoring and music lessons
- Supportive environments at facilities caring for children
- Programs such as Boys & Girls Club, Mustangs on the Move, Loma Alta horseback riding program

### Other

- Historical city figures, such as Jackie Robinson

In what ways does the community fall short of this goal?

### Drugs/Violence

- Drugs/drug trafficking
- Kids using drugs
- Smoking in public places, like the park
- Lack of police response to calls

### Lack of Access

- High rents
- City unaffordable
- Lack of affordable, desirable enrichment activities
- Opportunities not communicated in timely way
- More meaningful work opportunities for youth needed
- Not enough organizations that deal with youth, 13-17
- Public transportation is too infrequent, hard to get around

### Disparities

- Tolerance for blight

- City doesn't put resources into Northwest Pasadena—imbalance in appearance compared to other parts of the city
- No redevelopment where needed
- African-American dollars spent in areas where they aren't hired. Inequity in cultural diversity in hiring practices
- Children of color are treated unfairly in court and/or on the street

Other

- Traffic
- Reckless driving

**On a scale from 1-10 (1 = little; > 10 = great), how much does financial stress impact households in the Northwest Pasadena community?**

- No resources for Northwest
- Paying \$1,200 per month is a struggle
- High rent—we use 2/3 of our income for rent
- It's too expensive to live here
- Adults are losing their jobs
- Cost of living is constantly increasing and is greater than the income earned
- Adults work constantly, leaving children unsupervised
- Everyone is struggling
- Unable to buy a house
- High gas prices
- Lack of education for higher paying jobs
- Part-time jobs only
- Criminal backgrounds prevent employment

**How are youth perceived in the Northwest Pasadena Community? How would you complete the following sentences:**

**Youth in this community are interested in ...**

Negative/Potentially Negative

- Money
- Sex
- Name brand clothing
- Having a family
- Fighting

Positive

- A home
- A job
- Being safe on the street
- Socializing, being with friends, hanging out
- Music
- Sports
- School

## **Youth behaviors I see in this community on a regular basis are ...**

### Negative/Potentially Negative

- Disrespect—for parents and adults in general
- Gang involvement (for safety and belonging)
- Low self-esteem and respect
- Lack of interest in school
- Lack of cooperation at home
- Fighting
- Lack of values
- Social diseases

### Positive

- Kids going to college
- Volunteering

## **Youth in this community need ...**

### Opportunities to Develop

- Exposure to a variety of things to encourage them to dream
- Career training
- Mentoring
- Place for music lessons
- More places for sports

### Services/Resources

- Quality and quantity of everything
- Well-resourced, well-run programs
- Quality programs that come to them (e.g., bookmobiles)
- Transportation to resources

## **What types of things prevent youth involvement in gangs?**

Several people agreed that, when cutbacks were instituted and in-school and after-school programs in the arts and sports were cut, gang violence and youth problems increased. It was noted that, when crime increases, money is provided for these activities, but when it decreases the funding is removed, which in turn leads to more negative behaviors.

There was also discussion of the value of trades for some students who may not want to go to college, but who have skills or interests that could be cultivated into marketable trades.

Discussion also centered on how important it is that youth have adults in their lives who are sincere, consistent and unhypocritical, and who encourage a positive view of the future. Adults also need to advocate loudly for youth activities.

### Parents, Friends, Caring Relationships

- Improve parenting skills and parent-child communication
- Parents to spend more time with their kids
- Long-term relationships

### Access to Sports, Arts, and Other Activities

- Treat EVERY MONTH like Youth Month

- Art and sports programs

#### Self-Esteem/Sense of Belonging

- Highlight the successes of kids—even if they are small
- Positive reinforcement
- Ensure youth are given a sense of “belonging.” An academy for foster youth would give sense of connection to other youth and help create pride
- Community involvement

#### Role Models/Mentors

- Influential people of color to serve as role models
- Mentors to provide guidance, positive relations with adults
- Opportunities to hear from successful adults who have triumphed over adversity
- PUSD schools need to open doors and serve as hub for surrounding students with mentors and support

#### Law Enforcement

- Culturally competent police
- More partnerships with law enforcement

#### Skill/Job Development

- More resources and job opportunities for Altadena youth and for youth who are not “super stars”
- Options for emancipated foster youth
- Learning a marketable skill/trade

#### Other Services/Programs

- More Healthy Start programs

### **What would it take for a young person to end his/her gang involvement?**

#### Negative Consequences

- A bad experience, such as getting beat up

#### Positive Support

- Good role models
- Partnership with law enforcement
- Change behavior

#### Other

- Spiritual awakening

### **What else is needed?**

More parenting classes  
 Mental health services for children  
 Counseling for younger children  
 Support groups for married couples  
 Drug prevention classes for children  
 More parental involvement  
 Conflict resolution classes  
 Planned parenthood classes for young couples

Sessions on how to talk to children about difficult things such as sex; classes to teach parents how to help children when they need help; more volunteer programs to get children involved

**5. In providing support and resources to the community, in your opinion what does NOT work or is NOT helpful?**

- Only focusing on achievers
- Schools working in isolation from the community, not tapping into adult volunteers
- Certain types of policing
- Repeated suspensions from school
- The current foster care and educational systems—kids are behind
- Unqualified staff working with students
- Uninvolved and divisive community (bad role models)
- Lack of ambition in kids