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CITY OF OAKLAND



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TO: Members of the Life Enrichment Committee
FROM: Vice Mayor Desley Brooks
DATE: June 28, 2011

RE: **An Informational Report And Presentation On The Homies Empowerment
Program At The Eastlake YMCA**

Attached for your reference is a presentation letter from Mr. Cesar Cruz, Co-Founder of the Homies Empowerment Program at the Eastlake YMCA, and a brief description of the program. Mr. Cruz and young adult representatives from Homies Empowerment Program will be delivering a power point presentation and will be available to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Desley Brooks".

Desley Brooks
Chair of Life Enrichment Committee

Item: _____
Life Enrichment Comte.
June 28, 2011



Urban Services YMCA
YMCA of the East Bay



Homies Empowerment Program

@Eastlake YMCA 1612 45th Ave. Oakland, CA. 510.776.3740 HomiesEmpowerment@gmail.com

June 15, 2011

City of Oakland- Life Enrichment Committee

RE: Homies Empowerment Program presentation to the committee

To whom it may concern:

Many blessings, my name is Mr. César A. Cruz. I am the Director of Intervention Support Services for the Urban Services YMCA. I am also the co-founder for the Homies Empowerment Program. We are honored to give a brief powerpoint presentation detailing some of our programs at Homies Empowerment. We hope to have some of our young people deliver those presentations. Enclosed you will find our brochure which gives you a brief description of our programs.

We look forward to engaging with all of you and to our time well spent with the committee.

Sincerely,

Mr. César A. Cruz
Co-Founder, Homies Empowerment Program
510.776.3740
CCruz@ymcaeastbay.org

THE YOUTH SPEAK

What does Homies Empowerment mean to you?

- "Real education." –Brenda Paz
- "Homies Empowerment opens doors for youth. It's a place where people of all ages express themselves without being judged and are constantly learning from each other. It means a lot to me because I have seen it grow from nothing, into a beautiful environment for everyone."
– Mariela Lara
- "Well Homies to me means a BIG familia unida that works together." – Alvaro Peña
- "It opens my 3rd eye, new doors and paths to a better life."
–Roy Ramos



Our original logo created by Jeanette "Coco" Vargas, "One Family," "United for Life."

HOW WE WORK

Lizbeth Gomez and Director César A. Cruz are two of the individuals that founded the Homies Empowerment Program in 2009. We are associated with the Urban Services YMCA. A lot, if not all of our work is volunteer work, **not for free, but for freedom**. The youth that make up a large portion of the program and do a great amount of work for Homies Empowerment are primarily students from local high schools in East Oakland: Castlemont, ARISE, and Fremont.

Homies Empowerment

1612 45th Ave. Oakland, CA. 94601
Phone: 510.776.3740 Email:
HomiesEmpowerment@gmail.com
Facebook: Homies Empowerment

Brochure by Kenia Rodriguez



Homies Empowerment Program

BANGIN' FOR FREEDOM

*In association with
the Urban Services YMCA,
YMCA of the East Bay*



"We begin with knowledge of self."

- Co-founder of Homies Empowerment, César A. Cruz



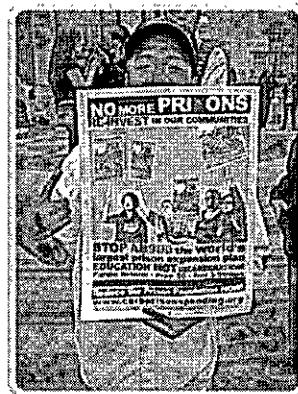
Youth led 100-block march, sign reads "No Human Is Illegal."

HOMIES EMPOWERMENT

Homies Empowerment is a youth development program for gang-impacted and gang-involved youth based out of Oakland, CA. This program directly involves itself with issues that affect our community. Our goal is to create a positive and revolutionary change through programs that are primarily run by youth who *bang for freedom*.



Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú speaks at a Homies Empowerment event.



Banner for Day Laborer Breakfast Program.

OUR PROGRAMS

- **Jornalero Breakfast Program** – Inspired by the Black Panther Party, this youth-run program serves breakfast to Day Laborers. It takes place on the corner of High St. and San Leandro early Monday mornings (Instructor: Isvia Gonzalez).
- **Gender-Based Violence Awareness Class** – from a global/local level including human/child trafficking, prostitution, suicide amongst queer youth of color, as well as teen pregnancy, domestic violence, and rape. Mondays @ Eastlake YMCA (Instructor: Natalie Sarellano).
- **Homies Dinners** – A weekly peace gathering where youth from rival hoods come together to break bread. Dinner is prepared and served by the youth and the Freedom Soui Kitchen (Instructor: Jill Contreras). Wednesdays 6-8:30pm @Easlake YMCA.
- **Empowering Speaker Series** – Including Rigoberta Menchú, Tarika Lewis, Father Greg Boyle, Malcolm Shabazz, Immortal Technique, Brown Berets and many others.
- **Raza History Through Film Class** – Students in this class critically analyze films in order to create political and social consciousness. Through this process students gain knowledge of self. Based at Fremont, Castlemont and ARISE High (Instructor: César A. Cruz).
- **Youth Leadership**–The decision making body of Homies Empowerment. Meets Mondays 6-7:30pm at Eastlake YMCA.