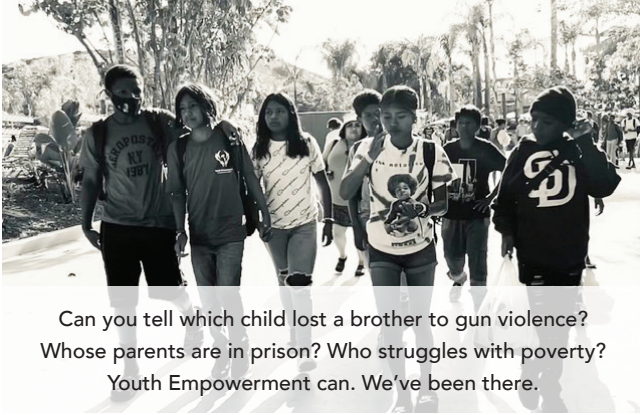


WHAT DRIVES TEENS TO USE DRUGS, JOIN GANGS, OR COMMIT CRIMES?



Can you tell which child lost a brother to gun violence?
Whose parents are in prison? Who struggles with poverty?
Youth Empowerment can. We've been there.

Trauma

witnessing violence at a young age

"My dad died six years ago. They shot him 18 times."

—C.M., age 16

Absent/irresponsible parenting

one or both parents incarcerated or addicted

"My parents are both drug abusers. I ran away when I was 13. My dad has visited once -- other than that, there has been no contact." —J., age 15

Poverty

lack of sufficient food; crime-ridden neighborhoods;
no healthy activities available

"We almost starved to death." —T., age 15

"Normal is not normal to me." —B.X., age 18



"I have learned that those who have hurt you are just as hurt. Hurt people hurt people. So although the pain they have caused seems so unfair at the moment, we have to love and forgive the broken. Because we all have been broken..."

— Sienna Gomez

HOW YOU CAN INVEST IN OUR YOUTH AND SUPPORT YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

You can make a secure, online donation at:
weblink.donorperfect.com/youth_empowerment_donate

Or send a check payable to:
Youth Empowerment's Finest
to the address below.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Founder/President & CEO - Arthur Soriano

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YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

"Transformation of a Lifestyle and Community"

Youth Empowerment is a thriving grassroots organization with programs that serve San Diego's justice-impacted and high-needs youth, families and communities. We are leaders of San Diego's Credible Messengers movement and have received local and national recognition for our work in this field.

An investment in Youth Empowerment will support programs designed to recognize and treat trauma, and guide youth and adults towards making positive decisions in their lives, creating safer, more productive communities while reducing recidivism.



GET INVOLVED!



Our Mission

To transform systems by serving high-needs individuals and families through a trauma-informed lens, and to inspire community leaders through mentorship, building resilience and advocacy.

Our Vision

Historically oppressed and marginalized individuals and communities are healed and transformed, reducing recidivism and making our communities safer.

CREDIBLE MESSENGERS • VICTORIOUS VOICES PODCAST • SEEKING SAFETY • PARENTS ON A MISSION • I.M.A.G.I.N.E.

THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT STORY

Arthur Soriano was released from prison in 2015 after serving a total of 23 years for charges including attempted murder, gang leadership, drug dealing, and armed robbery. Arthur returned to his community with a newfound vision and conviction to heal and transform others. With his wife Gabby and their lifelong friend Robert Ontiveros, they began holding weekly barbecues at Teralta Park in City Heights, establishing a sense of family and credibility that helped the youth see a life beyond the confines of their neighborhood. These grassroots beginnings would eventually become Youth Empowerment.

After serving 25 years of a 45-to-life sentence, Niki Martinez was released from state prison and joined the YE team as COO in 2020. While incarcerated she was certified in Relapse Prevention Counseling, Denial Management Counseling, Trauma-Informed Counseling, Motivational Interviewing, Emotional Intelligence, Domestic Violence, Healthy Relationships, Anger Management, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Freedom to Choose. She is devoted to giving back to the community and lives her life making amends and promoting restorative justice and resiliency.



▲ Youth Mentorship Program

Our Youth Mentorship program serves close to 300 mentees per year. The program is funded by fundraising, contracts and grants. It serves elementary, middle and high school students. Mentees can also be youth/young adults aged 13 to 24 currently on Juvenile Probation, including but not limited to those under Gang Supervision, Youthful Offender Supervision, or otherwise appropriately referred by a Probation Officer through the Community Resource Directory. Curriculums can include Forward Thinking & Interactive Journaling, Healthy Relationships, Seeking Safety, and Parents on a Mission for young parents. Mentors have lived experience and are trained to work with traumatized individuals.

▲ Adult Mentorship Program

The Adult Mentorship Program serves close to 200 mentees per year. The program is funded by fundraising, contracts and grants. It serves all interested adults. Special funding has been received to serve 18- to 60-year-olds on Post-Release Community Supervision individualized support and comprehensive wrap-around services. Curriculums include The Courage to Change (Social Values; Responsible Thinking; Self Control; Peer Relationships; Family Ties; Substance Use) and Parents on a Mission, which addresses self confidence and self-imposed guilt, and targets how to deal with feelings of failure. The goal of this program is to help adults successfully re-engage with their communities following incarceration and to avoid recidivism, as well as providing a bridge to support tumultuous parent/child relationships. Mentors have lived experience and are trained to work with traumatized individuals.

▲ Transforming Trauma

Youth Empowerment recently launched the Transforming Trauma Campaign. Our goal is to train organizations and individuals who work with traumatized populations to utilize the Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct during all interactions with this vulnerable population. Our approach is to address these populations through a justice-informed lens by using trainers with lived experience in gangs, incarceration, emotional, physical and substance abuse. The Trauma Informed Care Code of Conduct is a statement of four basic expectations and needs of youth and families who have suffered from trauma:

- Safety: A safe and open-minded place where I feel welcome
- Individualized Support: Assist me and consider the factors affecting my situation.
- Effective Communication: Provide me with clear and consistent information.
- Supportive Staff: Staff is kind and has a true and genuine passion for helping me.

Transforming Trauma is supported through fundraising and grants. If you would like more information regarding trainings in the Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct, call 619-381-6366.

Become a part of the Transforming Trauma Campaign!

Visit our website for information on how you can help.

YouthEmpowermentSD.org