

# Program Providing a New Hope

## La Mirada Insider

9 Jul 2006

Teenagers are learning, prospering, and enjoying it. Project RYTMO, founded by Joey Arreguin, La Mirada resident, is succeeding in educating at-risk youth about the music industry.

RYTMO's purpose is to expose at-risk and adjudicated youth who demonstrate artistic potential to a positive professional environment where they can explore and develop a variety of musical skills. RYTMO has graduated their first three groups of teenagers. There were three 6-week sessions beginning earlier this year and ending in July. RYTMO is funded by a federal sub grant from the Department of Labor and the Latino Coalition.

Commencing their success, a graduation was held for the last two 6-week sessions at the Anaheim studio on July 9. Family, friends, and loved ones joined in celebrating this milestone for these young teenagers.

Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez was also present as the keynote speaker. Growing up in an abusive home, Sanchez shared that she beat the odds by graduating school and college to later become congresswoman. She encouraged the students to press onward no matter what their life brings. "Every day there are people thinking about you, how they could help you. Parents have pushed you, judges have given you opportunities. I'm here tonight because I think and I believe that in a world where we hurt each other we find time to get together to help each other," said Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez.

The program has evidently grown since the attendees had tripled from the first graduation. The studio was full. There were people standing in the back trying to get a glimpse of the graduation.

Some of the students performed a song they wrote. After they performed, one of the students said, "I came here and there was nothing but love and language."

Since the inception of the program, the Youth Guidance Center has partnered up with RYTMO to allow incarcerated youth to participate in the program. They are allowed to leave only for the 1 hour session.

"We've seen incredible results", said founder, Joey Arreguin. According to Arreguin, parents have expressed deep gratitude for making a difference in their child's life. One mother shared that the program has changed her son. He was addicted to drugs, but since participating in the program he wants nothing to do with drugs. It was such a positive experience for him that it changed his outlook on life. RYTMO provides youth with hope.

The Heritage Forum in Anaheim has partnered with RYTMO by providing the students with employment opportunities. They help with lighting, stage, and sound at the Heritage Forum on given occasions.

RYTMO has breathed so much success that the Department of Labor and the Latino Coalition has approved funding for another year. Next year there will be an expansion program in Whittier, so surrounding cities like La Mirada will benefit from this life changing program. Twenty at-risk and adjudicated youth will be recruited to participate at the Whittier location. The sessions will be held at My Friends House church in Whittier.

This program not only provides youth with a learning experience, but it also provides them with a mental canvas to begin painting a picture of their future dreams.

"Many people see a need for this program. There is nothing like it around. It's a glamorous program. The youth see it as fun and exciting, opening doors for many possibilities." Joey Arreguin stated.

For further information on RYTMO and sponsorship opportunities or ways to donate equipment, please visit them online at [www.rytmo.org](http://www.rytmo.org) or contact them at their Office at (714) 776-0467.

**Brenda Velasco**