

Youth Speak Collective

Staff Spotlight



Name: David Andrés Kietzman

Title: Executive Director

Education: B.A. in Graphic Arts – Point Loma Nazarene University, Teaching Credential in Art for Secondary Schools

Hometown: Pasadena, Ca. Currently residing in Highland Park, CA

Family: Single, with a large family spread out between five different states

Hobbies: Graphic Design, Social Media, Gardening, Eating

How did you come to Youth Speak Collective?

We founded YSC back in 2005. The journey to start YSC started back in college when I began leading community assistance and social justice groups to various parts of San Diego County and parts of Mexico. My worldview expanded a lot and lead me to work abroad for two years in Honduras teaching art and coaching soccer. During this time I made the commitment to travel and get to know the people. Since then I have traveled to various Latin American countries including; Mexico, El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Brazil and Peru. In returning to the states, I found the Northeast San Fernando Valley and worked as an art teacher in various charter schools and directed youth services for other non-profits in the Valley. Through this experience we realized the need for more youth-driven, violence prevention programs and started Youth Speak Collective.

What is your role at Youth Speak Collective?

I'm the Executive Director and my job is to lead the organization forward in a sustainable, passionate, organized, competitive and effective path. My job requires me to every day think about how I can better serve our youth and their families, to think about the strengths and needs in our community and how we can assist in empowering more youth to become community leaders. To accomplish that I try to empower our team to all organize around our core beliefs, to find the funds necessary for us build up our programs while raising awareness of YSC to our great city of LA and to the world. I attempt to make decisions based on what is best for the youth and our organization, and they usually go hand in hand.

What is the best part of your role?

My interaction with our youth members and their families, learning from the community and other non-profit leaders and our staff is the best part of my role. Every day figuring out how to do my job better and just watching our programs empower youth is amazing. I am blessed that YSC is a progressive youth-driven model and that we have the flexibility to think outside the traditional box to run our programs, seek funding and raise awareness about our causes.

What is your favorite TV Channel?

History, Travel and Food networks

Favorite place you have been and why?

Santa Lucia, Honduras. This is a small town in the hills of Honduras. It is a great place to explore, buy local crafts, meet local gardeners and artists and really enjoy the tranquilidad of a mountain town right outside the madness of the capital, Tegucigalpa.

Where is the next place you would like to go?

Italy, because my grandmother is Italian and I promised my girlfriend we would travel there one day.

What makes you laugh/cry?

People make me laugh. I am a people watcher and everyone has different mannerisms and different tactics to be humorous. Good people always put a smile on my face. *What makes me cry?* Random violence in our community and in our world makes me frustrated and sad. Seeing people, corporations or bureaucracies that seem to just don't care about some of the simplest tragedies that are going on around us, causes me concern