

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **INNOVATIVE NONPROFIT SERVING THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY IS AWARDED A \$100,000 GRANT**

The Funding will Provide Operating Support and Engage At-Risk Students  
by Making High School and College Education a Priority

**Los Angeles, (August 15, 2011)** — Youth Speak Collective (YSC), the Pacoima-based non-profit organization received a generous donation of \$100,000 from an anonymous benefactor. The organization is highlighted for its innovative work and their diverse range of programs that provide crucial academic, life and work-readiness opportunities to at-risk youth living in the Pacoima community. YSC was selected from among a group of organizations all across California, this is the largest gift from a single donor in their history.

The funding will focus on transforming the physical and economic neighborhoods in the Northeast San Fernando Valley. In addition, the grant will expand some of Youth Speak Collective's signature programs such as their Academic Support Services, Youth Development and Creative Expression programs, Project Youth Green (PYG) and Futbolito Pacoima. Currently, YSC serves approximately 500 youth a day and over 3,000 students last year through school based and community centered events.

“We know we're making a difference and we're thrilled that we have the funding to expand our programs so we can reach even more young people,” said David Andrès Kietzman, Executive Director & Co-Founder of Youth Speak Collective. “Our programs are effective and sustainable because of the integration of youth through its planning and implementation. Our goal is to incorporate our participants in the revitalization of our community, encouraging them to become stakeholders and active collaborators in the programs that serve them.”

According to the last U.S. Census, sixty-nine percent of households in Pacoima are home to children living below the federal poverty threshold. Pacoima has high levels of gang violence, a large youth population and is historically one of the most economically disadvantaged and violent districts in the City of Los Angeles. Many of Pacoima's youth have limited opportunities to graduate from high school with only 52% of students graduating local high schools.

“The current economic climate is difficult for everyone, but the families we serve in the Northeast San Fernando Valley have been disproportionately affected. All of our programs are essential to leveling the playing field for our youth to succeed in school,” said Kietzman.

**About Youth Speak Collective:**

Founded in 2006 by a handful of high school students and the current Executive Director, YSC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to empowering at-risk youth and their families with the skills necessary to pursue higher education and create strong communities. YSC annually helps more than 3,000 individuals, including some of the most disadvantaged youth and families in the Northeast San Fernando Valley. The organization provides a broad spectrum of integrated direct services designed to strengthen families, build self-sufficiency and guide them towards productive futures.

For more information, please visit the web site at: [www.youthspeakcollective.org](http://www.youthspeakcollective.org).

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