



a service provided by Leadership for Urban Renewal Now



David Kietzman, Executive Director - Youth Speak Collective



There is all this talk about innovation, but how important should innovation be to community organizations such as yours?

Always having an innovative approach is important to stay competitive in any line of work, especially in the non-profit

sector. At the core of being "innovative" is simply thinking about a variety of strategies or decisions to make in any situation and trying new things. Too often we stick to the norm or what we have been doing for years. Not every community based org is the same, but those that take a step outside of their comfort zone are usually the more successful and effective ones. Not every situation requires the same solution and if we are dedicated to enhancing the transparency, accountability and overall performance of our business then we need to be innovative in our approach.

How do you approach innovating your programming to increase funding and impact?

As far as being innovative at the program level, at Youth Speak Collective what makes our programs unique is that the program designs come from the students themselves. Students help create and implement the programs, making for more sustainable and effective results. All of our staff are from the community and we have an "open door" policy when it comes to generating new ideas and taking constructive feedback. Two of our core beliefs are youth development and staff development, it's important to give your staff a voice in the programs they run and the students a say in the programs that are being offered to them. Having this approach has helped YSC see an increase in funding over the years, develop a solid team of staff and we have had a positive impact in our community.



Featured Establishment



The Bucket

Located in Eagle Rock since 1935, the Bucket serves up delicious burgers and beer for the hungry individual!

David recommends the Bucket Burger with a side of fries, of course!

Check them out!

4541 Eagle Rock Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90041
323.257.5654

We notice YSC has a strong eye towards design, what is your intent with the design and messaging of your org?

We have varying target audiences depending on what we are designing or marketing. When we create marketing we try to think about our target audiences, generally we have three; our supporters, our community, and youth. I believe good design can change the world, so I try to think of different and fun ways to market the same old thing. With so many tasks to get done on a day to day basis, it is hard for any non-profit to make their website or marketing a priority, but if that is what represents you, shouldn't it be one of your priorities? Everything is online now days, and we control that. Youth Speak has worked hard at building our online content and social media presence and it has paid off bringing in new supporters and resources every year. In regards to having good design and effective messaging, I have a quote up in my office that sums it up: "The most important creative force is to be focused" -Cristo

What are the core tenets of your organizational theory?

At the core of our culture at Youth Speak Collective is our values. Two years ago we got our staff, board, volunteers, youth and advisers in the room and developed five core belief's that mold our work and help define our organizational culture. These values are: youth-driven, community engagement & collaboration, youth development, education, and staff development. You can read more about these on our website. But in general we pride ourselves on having a relationship-based and strength focused model of running our organization and programs. The community comes first. We pride ourselves on being mission-driven and focused on advocating for the needs that our youth and their families have. I am confident that because of the time we have spent developing our organizational culture and having focused values our organization will grow sustainability so that we can continue to foster the next generation of leaders in our community.

On Enjoyment:

There's a little place in San Fernando called Carrillo's. It's a hole in the wall Mexican place that has been around for 50 years. They have home made tortillas and a great community atmosphere.

I also love The Bucket in Eagle Rock. If I feel like rewarding myself, I go there to grab a burger and a beer.



INNOVATOR SPOTLIGHT

David Kietzman
Executive Director
Youth Speak Collective

To learn more about YSC
www.youthspeakcollective.org
www.linkedin.com/in/dakietz