

L.A. youth teacher's guide

Publishing Schedule

L.A. Youth will arrive the week of Sept. 20, 2010

Key to using the September 2010 issue:

ARTICLE and PAGE NUMBER	KEY TEACHING POINTS
<p>What makes a good teacher? p. 5 Teens say it's passion, high expectations and relatable lessons.</p>	<p>Who have been some of your best teachers? What did they do that helped you learn?</p>
<p>Can I unplug? pp. 6-7 These teens tried to go a week without their favorite technology.</p>	<p>What would be hard for you to give up? What are some benefits and drawbacks to technology?</p>
<p>So many videos, so little time p. 9 YouTube is where Cindy goes to laugh, get help with math and be awed by regular people.</p>	<p>What's your favorite website? Why do you go there? Do you think you spend too much time on it?</p>
<p>COVER STORY Saying no to gang life pp. 10-12 A girl wanted to be a gang member until her cousin got killed in a drive-by shooting.</p>	<p>See lesson plan on page 2.</p>
<p>Wait, don't recycle that yet p. 13 Alma realized that reusing old handouts was an easy way to help the environment.</p>	<p>What are ways that you could help the environment? Do you think it would be hard to get your family and friends to do the same?</p>
<p>L.A.'s forgotten river pp. 14-15 Elliot was surprised to find out that the L.A. River is more than concrete and trash.</p>	<p>What's your view of the river? How would a more accessible river change the city?</p>
<p>Finding harmony pp. 16-17 Brian used to be picked on but band gave him the confidence to make friends.</p>	<p>What groups have you been part of that made you feel like you belonged? Have you helped others feel accepted?</p>
<p>Too important to forget pp. 18-19 Julian is inspired by César Chávez, who fought to improve the lives of farm workers like his grandfather.</p>	<p>What do you know about César Chávez? Does your school celebrate César Chávez Day? Do you think it should?</p>
<p>I never gave up pp. 20-21 Marisa was determined to get her education, even though her family wasn't there for her.</p>	<p>What do you want to accomplish? What obstacles have you had to overcome to achieve that goal?</p>
<p>Freaked out by birds p. 23 Elizabeth's phobia is hard to live with because birds are everywhere.</p>	<p>What are you afraid of? How has that affected your life? Have you ever tried to overcome your fear?</p>

How our neighborhoods shape us

A lesson plan to go with “Saying no to gang life” from the September 2010 issue of L.A. Youth. In this article, a writer shares how growing up surrounded by gangs had her dreaming of joining a gang. But after her cousin was killed in a drive-by shooting, which was common in her neighborhood, she saw that she could be headed for a similar fate and distanced herself from the gang lifestyle.

By Mike Fricano, co-managing editor

Grades: 7-12

Subjects: language arts, social studies, life skills

Time Allowance: 45 minutes-1 hour

Resources/Materials:

- copies of the article “Saying no to gang life” (one per student)
- pens and paper
- white board or blackboard

Overview:

Students will examine how the neighborhood they live in influences their lives and their goals for the future.

Warm-up:

Write the word “neighborhood” on the board and have your students write lists of three to five words or phrases that describe where they live. Next ask volunteers to share their list with the rest of the class and write their answers on the board. They might have chosen words/phrases like “peaceful,” “dirty,” “lots of things to do,” “families,” “dangerous,” “ocean views,” “lots of nice cars.”

Discussion:

Using the lists they shared, ask your students how their neighborhoods have influenced them. A student who lives near the beach might be someone who is passionate about protecting the beaches and oceans from pollution. Another person, who lives in a neighborhood that has gangs, might have a negative feeling toward police because they think the cops harass innocent people and don't do enough to stop criminals. Someone who lives in a neighborhood that doesn't



Illustration by Michelle Cao, 16,
Temple City HS

have a lot to do, might spend most of their time inside watching TV. Or someone who lives in a neighborhood where many people they know dropped out of high school, might say that finishing college is a priority so they have a different life than what they've observed.

Activities:

Have your students read the story “Saying no to gang life” on pages 10-12. After reading the story, ask students to make a list of the ways the writer was influenced by her neighborhood and the people she knew growing up. There are examples of how the writer emulated those around her and examples of how her environment inspired her to be different.

Examples of how she was following the path she thought she was destined for:

- She dreamed of joining a gang because she admired how people in the neighborhood gave her cousin and other

gang members free food at restaurants and money.

- She and her friends started a tagging crew in middle school and modeled it after the gangs they knew.
- A shared feeling of not having a family to support them contributed to her and her friends starting the tagging crew.
- She started using cocaine because the gang members she knew gave it to her as payment for helping them sell marijuana.
- She figured she would drop out of high school and get pregnant because most of her older friends had.

Examples of her trying to be different:

- After her cousin's funeral, her friends wanted her to forget her problems by smoking marijuana, but she realized that wouldn't help her feel better.
- A new friend she made at school told her that she didn't have to be in a crew.
- Seeing that so many people she knew ended up victims of violence or even dead, made her realize that she didn't want to end up the same.

Writing assignment:

Combining your students ideas raised from the discussion with the examples of how the writer was influenced by her neighborhood, have them write an essay about how they are both similar to and different from the environments they've grown up in. Make sure that they explain in their essays why they think they are different or similar? How has their environment shaped their goals?

Extension activity:

None of us live in neighborhoods that are free from negative influences. And we all wish for things that we don't have in our neighborhoods. While it can be hard for teens to change things at the government level, they wield some power at their schools. What do your students think could be added at the school that would be a good influence? Challenge them to start a club or program that they think will improve the school and make it a more positive place.



Would you like a speaker from L.A. Youth?

Editors Laura Lee and Mike Fricano speak about journalism, current events, working as a reporter, how to be a better writer and how students can get involved in L.A. Youth.

Call Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194 or e-mail llee@layouth.com or mfricano@layouth.com. PLEASE NOTE: You'll be asked to **pay \$5** to help offset the cost of gas.

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Teens: Join the staff of L.A. Youth

*the newspaper
written by and
about teens*



Next Newcomer's Orientation: Saturday, Oct. 2, 11 a.m.-noon at
L.A. Youth 5967 W. Third Street Suite 301, L.A. 90036 *(between Fairfax and La Brea)*

Call Amanda, Laura or Mike at (323) 938-9194.