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Pacoima: 143 arrests in 30 days

In the face of sobering statistics, Job Training & Opportunity Center gets green light

The statistics for Pacoima are sobering. Long considered one of the toughest areas of the San Fernando Valley, Pacoima bears the weight of some of the more negative demographics for the entire valley: 143 arrests in 30 days, a crushing unemployment rate, 99% of the students at Maclay Middle School receive reduced or free lunch, and a large portion of the neighborhood has been covered by a gang injunction since 2001. In the face of these sobering statistics, the LA County Board of Supervisors and the City of Los Angeles has given the green light for the building of the Job & Training Opportunity Center, which will provide this beleaguered community with career development, gang intervention, and life stabilizing social services including group and individual counseling.

The Job & Training Opportunity Center (JTOC) has been a dream since 2001 when the nonprofit organization, Communities in Schools, first launched its fledgling job development activities in neighborhoods with high poverty, high crime, and high dropout rates. Communities in Schools, founded by Bill Milliken, and endorsed by a wide array of public figures such as former President Jimmy Carter and Russell Simmons the founder of Def Jam Music, functions on the principles of offering community-based resources to school children. The Project Manager, Vince Guerra, says one of the JTOC's purposes will be to "provide hope to gang-involved and gang-oriented youth through gainful employment".

The \$1.2 million 5,000 square foot facility, to be located at 12605 Osborne Street, will feature a computer lab and classrooms as well as meeting spaces for the development and

implementation of individualized Participant Service Plans (PSPs). The site is located on the Los Angeles County Fire Department's facilities and maintenance offices property and has been leased to the organization free of charge. AMG & Associates, Inc., general contractors based in the Santa Clarita Valley, is to commence the ground breaking in the next 60 days. The President/CEO of AMG & Associates, Mr. Albert Giacomazzi, calls the project "a rather important step in transforming the chemistry of a community in crisis". Mr. Giacomazzi goes on to say that he feels proud that his firm "can give back to the community and young people of Pacoima".

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If you would like more information about the building of the Communities in Schools Job Training and Opportunity Center, or to schedule an interview with the Owner & CEO of AMG & Associates (Albert Giacomazzi), please call Sophia Case at 661-251-7401 or e-mail Ms. Case at scase@amgassociatesinc.com.