



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TONIGHT: YOUTH ALIVE! CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF ANTI-VIOLENCE LEADERSHIP
Civic and Community Leaders Gather to Recognize Oakland Nonprofit's Impact on Reducing Violence

Contact: Anne Marks, amarks@youthalive.org, Cell: (415) 425-7576, Ofc: (510) 594-2588 x306

Event Date/Time: 6:00pm, Thursday, November 10, 2011 (Program from 7:00-8:00pm)

Event Location: Bocanova Restaurant, 55 Webster Street, Jack London Square, Oakland

Please Note: Speaker media availability will be from 6-7pm. Camera set up can begin at 5:30pm.

Oakland – Tonight, Youth ALIVE!, a nationally recognized violence prevention and youth leadership agency, will celebrate its 20th anniversary at Bocanova Restaurant in Jack London Square. Over the last two decades, Youth ALIVE! has successfully worked to advocate against gun and other forms of violence, developed cutting edge programming that interrupts the cycle of violence, and empowered hundreds of urban youth to create change in their Oakland and Los Angeles neighborhoods.

“Since Youth ALIVE! was founded in 1991, we have trained over 900 youth leaders, educated over 45,000 students on violence prevention, assisted over 1,000 victims of violence in order to break the cycle of retaliation and re-injury, and built a national network of replication programs,” says **Anne Marks, Youth ALIVE!’s Executive Director**. “We’ve come a long way - but still have a long way to go. I am both proud and deeply humbled to be part of Youth ALIVE!, and the movement to end violence that we have participated in – and often led – locally, statewide and nationally.”

“California is lucky to have an organization like Youth ALIVE!, which not only has done a great deal to help prevent youth violence in Oakland and the East Bay, but has also successfully advocated for policies to make the entire state safer from gun violence,” states **Assemblymember Nancy Skinner (AD 14)**, who will present Youth ALIVE! with a certificate of recognition at the event. “I heartily congratulate Youth ALIVE! on two decades of dedicated work to prevent violence and develop youth leadership.”

“I am delighted to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Youth ALIVE!, an organization whose work with Alameda County youth is effective and absolutely essential,” adds **Alameda County Probation Chief David Muhammad**, who will attend. “Youth ALIVE! is a premier youth violence prevention and intervention agency, not only in Oakland, but across the country where its groundbreaking and cutting-edge and programs are studied and copied by any community seriously invested in ending violence.”

Over 140 people will gather at the celebration for dinner, wine, entertainment, and a silent auction. The program features remarks from Assemblymember Skinner, Youth ALIVE! Executive Director Anne Marks, and Caheri Gutierrez, a young woman who suffered a serious gunshot wound and now works as a Youth ALIVE! Violence Prevention Educator. The Oakland Youth Chorus and others will perform.

Youth ALIVE! is a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in Oakland, CA. Its mission is to prevent youth violence and build youth leadership in California communities. To this end, Youth ALIVE! operates three key programs: *Caught in the Crossfire*, a hospital-based intervention program for victims of violent injuries; the *Khadafy Washington Project*, offering immediate emotional and financial support to families and friends after a homicide; and *Teens on Target*, a youth leadership development and peer education program promoting violence prevention. Youth ALIVE! also founded and oversees the *National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs* spanning twenty cities, including Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

BACKGROUND:

Founded in Oakland in 1991, Youth ALIVE! believes that urban youth have the innate capacity to stop the violence plaguing our communities. Every day, we nurture leadership and life skills of young people affected by violence because addressing the root causes of violence *saves lives*.

Teens on Target (TNT)

"TNT didn't just change my life, it saved my life. And now I want to do the same thing for my friends and my community." – LaTrae, TNT member

We train teens to teach violence prevention workshops to middle school students, and develop their leadership skills to advocate for community issues. Our youth-developed six-session curriculum was published by Educational Media, and has been taught across the country, from New Mexico to New York.

- TNT has trained over 900 high school students to be youth leaders
- Over 45,000 students have received gang, gun, family and dating violence workshops

Why support TNT? Because it works.

- TNT youth got the Oakland Tribune to stop printing gun ads -- just one example of success!
- TNT was recognized by President Clinton as a "Top Ten Violence Prevention Program"
- 100% of TNT members graduated last year, compared to 64% for OUSD overall
- After TNT, students are *twice* as likely to try to avoid being around someone who has a gun

Caught in the Crossfire

"My Caught in the Crossfire case worker was the first person who made me realize that my life was worth saving." – "Johnny", 17 year-old former client

Caught in the Crossfire was the nation's first program working directly with young people at the hospital who have been shot, stabbed, or physically assaulted:

- Last year, over 500 young people ended up at Oakland's Highland Hospital due to violence
- Without intervention, 44% of these youth will get hurt again
- Since 1994, over a dozen programs throughout the U.S. have copied our model because it works

Why support Caught in the Crossfire? Because it works.

- No youth retaliated against their assailants*
- 98% were not re-injured*
- 59% reconnected to school*
- 70% were less likely to be arrested*

*Source: Becker et al. Caught in the Crossfire: The effects of a peer-based intervention program for violently injured youth. Journal of Adolescent Health 2004; 34(3): 177-183.

As a recognized leader in the field, Youth ALIVE! organized, in 2009, the **National Network of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs** (www.NNHVIP.org) to provide support and technical assistance to protégé programs.

The Khadafy Washington Project

"I heard the gunshots. I called his cell phone. No answer. We live it and then we relive it." – Robin Douglas, whose son Lamar, 21, was shot on his way to work at the post office

The Khadafy Washington Project was named after the murdered teenaged son of the program's founder, Marilyn Washington Harris, 2008 recipient of the City of Oakland Humanitarian Award. Part of the Oakland Crisis Response and Support Network, this project provides critical response to family and friends of homicide victims:

- Calming tensions to dissuade retaliatory violence
- Offering emotional support and guidance immediately after a traumatic event
- Assisting survivors with practical and financial assistance
- Over 100 families have been assisted so far this year

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