

The Height of High Tech, for Youths

■ Boyle Heights' new high-tech youth center opens to much acclaim.

Story courtesy Community Development
Photos by Angel Gomez, Member Services Manager

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT — It wasn't just a ribbon cutting, it was a celebration of hope as Mayor Villaraigosa, Councilmember Jose Huizar, CDD General Manager Richard Benbow and community residents hailed the opening Sept. 22 of the Boyle Heights Technology Youth Center.

The 19,000 square foot, \$10.9 million facility in the heart of Boyle Heights is a state-of-the-art full time learning center that features computer-equipped classrooms to prepare students to compete in the global technology revolution. The facility under construction was featured on the cover of *Alive!* in May.

"Every one of our children should dream big and reach for the stars with the best technology and resources that money can buy," Mayor Villaraigosa said. "We want to have our children prepared to bridge the digital divide and compete in a global marketplace."

The Los Angeles Community Development Department (CDD) directs the Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement (LAYOM), which will operate programs at the tech center. LAYOM programs promote youth achievement through education, employment and personal development goals. The tech center will complement and expand those programs. "The world of technology is ever changing and expanding," said CDD General Manager Richard Benbow. "We must prepare young people in the communities we serve to use technology as a pathway to higher education, job training, and employment opportunities."

The Boyle Heights Technology Youth Center houses an alternative high school operated by the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Along with a core curriculum, classes in multi-media and graphic design, computer literacy, advanced computer training; various workshops, enrichment opportunities and a tutorial for the high school exit exam will be offered.

This technology center will give area youths, many considered at-risk, an infusion of hope and the opportunity to develop the skills they need to get and keep a job in an increasingly competitive job market.

Funding for construction of the tech center came from a variety of sources, including \$5,741,236 from an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG); \$4,738,764 from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); \$630,000 in Proposition-12 funds; and \$100,000 in federal EDI Special Project Grant funds.

The Boyle Heights Technology Youth Center is at 1600 East 4th St. For more information on CDD's Youth Opportunity Movement, go to: www.lacity.org/cdd.



Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement (LAYOM) students sit next to a new Podcast station.



Guests discuss ideas in one of the new computer rooms.



The front entrance to the New Technology Center.



From left: Councilmember Jose Huizar, Executive Director Jimmy Valenzuela, CDD General Manager Richard Benbow and Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa hold up a plaque.



Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement (LAYOM)'s Boyle Heights Executive Director Jimmy Valenzuela leads in the Pledge of Allegiance at the grand opening ceremony.



A group of City employees, including Executive Director Jimmy Valenzuela and Councilmember Jose Huizar, take part in the ribbon cutting.



Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa comments that he grew up in the same area.



Area citizen Thalia Banos speaks to the audience about how program has helped her achieve many of her goals.



Ruth Aleman, alumna of the Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement (LAYOM) program.



The Boyle Heights Los Angeles Youth Opportunity Movement (LAYOM) staff.

Haven House

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