



www.gangfree.org

Gang Alternatives Program

309 W. Opp Street
Wilmington, CA 90744

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January 20, 2011

Dear GAP Staff, Board Members, Friends, and Supporters:

As everyone knows, GAP faced a potentially debilitating blow to its Community Clean Up program as the Los Angeles City Council considered a recommendation from the City's CAO to cut 50% from the graffiti budget of every community-based organization in the City. For GAP, this would have meant nearly half a million dollars in lost funding. It would have cost several people their jobs, reduced salaries for up to half of GAP's staff, and impacted the vitality of the organization.

When faced with this challenge, we stepped forward to meet it. Through a series of staff initiatives and activities, we stood up to meet the policymakers and bureaucrats on their own field to deliver our message of "ZERO CUTS on graffiti removal!"

I challenged all of you to do what you could to help us. Through phone calls, emails, and direct conversations, you contacted decision makers and those who influence decision makers to get the ZERO CUTS! message out. I met with affected staff and charged them with having a hand in their own destiny. The resolve that they exhibited was more than I could have hoped for.

We planned and we worked. We supported each other. We came together as a team and avoided the "every man for himself" attitude that so often comes out in tough situations. We kept up our high standards of work and professionalism, and we kept our trust with the community even as the threat of loss hung over our heads.

I cannot remember a time when I was more proud to be at GAP and to be a co-worker with so many amazing people. We do a lot with what we have, and we don't get much for what we do. So it must be character and pride and integrity that makes us so strong.

It's hard to explain or even to imagine the feeling of speaking before City Council with 26 of the best people I've ever known standing behind me in solidarity. We didn't get a picture of that amazing moment, but we have a list, which is on the next page.

When the City Council failed to reach a decision on that day, we renewed our determination for ZERO CUTS! and we refused to let the delay take the issue out of the spotlight. After some good work by the PGA Team, we were able to make petitions available to the CCU staff and post a petition online that was destined for the City Council. Meanwhile, I networked, met with people I knew at City Hall, the Council Offices, and other local groups, while Victor, SueAnn, and Shanelle did the same in their community service areas.

When we went back to the next City Council meeting, again it was a long ordeal of waiting, waiting, waiting. When the time for comments came, this time my card was not pulled, but we still had several cards to play, including the petitions from CCU.

In a 24 hour period, over 800 signatures were collected, from Wilmington to Watts to Boyle Heights! It was beyond belief that so many could be collected so quickly, and the online petition brought in scores of signatures as well. When these were delivered to the council office to be put in the public record, it was a great accomplishment, and it proved the depth of our public support.

All I can say to you is congratulations and well done! We have our ZERO CUTS! for the rest of this fiscal year. for now, the cuts are off the table.

As good as that is, we must remain vigilant. Next year's budget is just around the corner for the City, and graffiti will be on the chopping block again.

But for today, be pleased with what we accomplished. We deserve that moment of satisfaction.

With gratitude and respect,

Doug

GAP Employees At City Hall

NAME:	Location:	Title:
1. Abena, SueAnn	WLCSC, WILM	PGA Officer
2. Davis, Dimmery	WLCSC	Lead Gangfree Life®Advisor
3. Davis, Michelle	WLCSC	STEP UP! Admin Asst
4. Delgado, Jose	Boyle Heights	CCU Manager
5. Galindo, Luis	Boyle Heights	Crew Supervisor
6. Guerra, Carlos	WLCSC	Crew Supervisor
7. Guillen, Osmaro	Wilm. Warehouse	Crew Supervisor
8. Guillen, Francisco	Wilm. Warehouse	Crew Supervisor
9. Jordan, Shanelle	WLCSC, Wilm. Office	PGA Associate
10. Lynch, Chaz	WLCSC	Gangfree Life® Advisor
11. Martinez, Jessica	WLCSC	Assoc. Director
12. Martinez, Mario	Wilm. Warehouse	Director Of CCU
13. Maye, Douglas	WLCSC	Crew Supervisor
14. Medina, Victor	Wilm. Office	PGA Outreach Coord
15. Ponce, Ruben	WLCSC	Flood Control Mgr
16. Roybal, Veronica	Wilm. Warehouse	CCU Coordinator
17. Sanders, Brian	Wilm. Warehouse	CCU Manager
18. Santana, Mariano	Wilm. Warehouse	Crew Supervisor
19. Streater, Willie	WLCSC	Crew Supervisor
20. Torres, Juan	WLCSC	Ass. Dir. Of CCU
21. Tynes, David	WLCSC	Director Of Operations
22. Vanegas, Fatima	WLCSC	Bookkeeper
23. Vargas, Miguel	Boyle Heights	Crew Supervisor
24. Velasquez, Maribel	WLCSC	Gangfree Life® Advisor
25. Villerias, Manuel	Wilm. Warehouse	Crew Supervisor
26. Warren-James, Miesha	WLCSC	STEP UP! Manager