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Youth for Justice Academy Kicks-Off in San Rafael's Canal Neighborhood

Two weeks of leadership training on good nutrition, physical exercise, drug & alcohol use prevention and direct action

SAN RAFAEL, CA (July 25, 2016) – The 4th Annual Youth for Justice Academy starts today. Approximately 25 Latino and other youth from 11 to 19 years old will gather at the offices of Alcohol Justice in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael to share unique experiences and learn new skills over the next two weeks. The San Rafael Alcohol and Drug Coalition, the Marin County Probation Department, and Alcohol Justice underwrite the project. Marin County Parks, the National Park Service, and Trips for Kids are providing additional support. Many youth continue volunteering for the advocacy group Youth for Justice after the academy.

“The Marin County Probation Department supports the Youth for Justice Academy program because it meets our interest in providing positive, pro-social opportunities to our youth,” said Kevin Lynch, Director of the Juvenile Services Division of the Marin County Probation Department. *“For far too long, the juvenile justice system has focused on telling youth all of the things they cannot do, without providing alternatives such as the Youth for Justice Academy. We believe that making this investment in the Academy helps reduce the numbers of youth who are referred to the juvenile justice system.”*

“Our Youth for Justice Academy is a powerful tool to challenge alcohol and drug use among young people here in our own backyard,” said Jorge Castillo, Alcohol Justice Advocacy Director and Program Manager of the San Rafael Alcohol and Drug Coalition. *“It’s a natural extension of our community coalition’s work to help place more Latino youth from the Canal district of San Rafael on the path toward success, enabling them to live healthier and safer lives.”*

The San Rafael Alcohol and Drug Coalition, now in its third year of a five-year federal grant, works to establish and strengthen community collaboration in support of local efforts to prevent youth substance use in the Canal district, a Marin County California neighborhood of 12,000 residents.

“This year’s two week academy will help a new generation of young people from the Canal experience new options by focusing on health, social justice, and nature,” said Maite Durán, Community Organizer for Youth for Justice. “These future leaders of Marin will participate in workshops dealing with organizing, and alcohol and drug prevention, learning to use tools that will enable them to give back to their community. They will learn while visiting beautiful Marin area parks. They will also participate in pro-social activities in our community by creating a new garden, learning to grow their own food, harvest, cook, and enjoy it.”

For more information about Youth for Justice or the San Rafael Alcohol and Drug Coalition, contact Jorge Castillo at 415-257-2488.

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