



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
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Steven Angel, President
Drumming for Your Life
8141 2nd Street #340
Downey, CA 90241

Dear Steven:

We are writing this letter in strong support of the Drumming for Your Life (DFYL) Reading and Rhythm and Life Skills Programs. Your work in the Probation Juvenile Halls and the Probation Camps over the past eleven years has served to help a large number of youth who are entangled in the juvenile justice system.

Specifically, the Life Skills Program has helped many youth discover the unique values of their character and to have a positive sense of self-worth during potentially very low points in their lives. The Life Skills program allows our youth to work through and process issues which have brought them into contact with the justice system. Many of these youth have never had the opportunity to participate in program such as the Life Skills program. While the results of participation in the program are not always easily quantifiable, there is no doubt regarding the effectiveness of the program when you are able to observe the unmistakable beam of pride on the face of a youth who has been fortunate enough to participate in the Life Skills program.

In addition, the Reading and Rhythm Program has demonstrated amazing results through objective pre- and post-test measures which reflect significant increases of the youth's fluency and reading comprehension. Participating youth also demonstrate increases in their reading grade level. DFYL has afforded the opportunity for youth to participate in the Reading and Rhythm Program at even the most remotely-located of our Camps, including Munz and Mendenhall in Lake Hughes and several Challenger Camps in Lancaster.

As a result of the positive effects of DFYL's efforts, the Department of Mental Health has continued to fund the Life Skills and Reading and Rhythm programs even during difficult budget times. The Life Skills and Reading and Rhythm programs have demonstrated effectiveness in a variety of juvenile justice settings, with a variety of populations, including the Unfit Unit where youth are being tried as adults; in acute treatment units with seriously mentally-ill youth; and in a variety of Probation Camps. We greatly appreciate the work that DFYL provides to our youth in all of our Probation programs.

Very truly yours,

Terri Boykins, LCSW
Deputy Director
Transition Age Youth System of Care
Department of Mental Health

Karen Streich, Ph.D.
Mental Health Clinical Program Manager III
Juvenile Justice Mental Health Programs
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TB:KS:jy