



PATHWAYS

“Guiding Youth Toward a Hopeful Future”

SPRING 2007



Urban Compass kids had the Coliseum to themselves to play football and enjoy pizza, courtesy of Mr. Bill Chadwick, President of Exposition Park & the California Science Center and members of the Coliseum Commission.

Did you know...

- ... children in South Los Angeles join gangs as early as eight years old
- ... the rate of violent crime triples in the hours immediately following the school day?

Urban Compass is combating these alarming statistics and making a difference in the lives of children in Watts who participate in our programs:

- With personalized attention, they are gaining confidence in their abilities.
- With encouragement, their attitude about learning is improving daily.
- With motivation and mentors, they are learning the importance of education.
- With field trips, they are seeing that life can offer more than gangs and violence.



Urban Compass operates an after school program at Verbum Dei Jesuit High School to serve kindergarten through fifth grade students from 112th Street and Sage Elementary Schools in Watts. Student volunteers from Verbum Dei, as well as local colleges, universities and community members, provide tutoring support and mentoring.



Urban Compass Program Director—Brings It Back ‘Home’

Urban Compass is succeeding where other youth programs have failed. The gangs have left us alone even though they

have driven many other youth programs from the neighborhood. This is due in large part to our Program Director, DeAnthony Langston. The ultimate testimonial to the headway we are making is receiving phone calls from gang members in prison asking DeAn-

thony to save their children and keep them out of the gangs.

DeAnthony grew up in Nickerson Gardens and attended 112th Street Elementary. And while many of his boyhood friends ended up in prison or dead, DeAnthony was fortunate. He attended Verbum Dei High School and it changed his life. After college, he played professional basketball in Japan, where he had the opportunity to learn another culture and language. Following his illustrious basketball career, he returned to

Watts, to give something back and make a difference.

Parents trust Urban Compass with their children because they trust DeAnthony. He is role model for the children. He didn't join a gang. He graduated from college and traveled around the world. He beat the odds. He is a living example of what is possible if we give these kids a chance to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams.

Project Watts Takes New Approach to Academic Enrichment



Film director extraordinaire, F. Gary Gray, is responsible for bringing *Project Watts* to students at Verbum Dei High School and 112th Street Elementary school.

One of the generation of film directors who crossed over from the world of music videos, F. Gary Gray has proven himself to be among the most inventive, creative and commercially successful of the crop.

His feature film directorial debut, "Friday" (1995), was made for \$3 million and grossed 10 times that, with audiences applauding the collection of vignettes in the life of Ice Cube in a day in South Central Los Angeles. Additional films to his credit include "Set It Off" (1996), "The Negotiator" (1998), "A Man Apart" (2003), "The Italian Job" (2003), "Be Cool" (2005) and "The Brazilian Job" (2008—recently announced and in production).

★★★At this year's NAACP Image Awards Diversity Symposium on February 28, there will be a presentation of the Future Filmmaker's Scholarship for the F. Gary Gray Filmmaking Workshop: *Project Watts* in the amount of \$10,000.

The F. Gary Gray Filmmaking Workshop inspires underserved youth to tell their unique stories through the art of filmmaking by introducing them to highly successful industry professionals and challenging them to produce their own work.

"Project Watts" is a ten-month filmmaking workshop, involving 20-30 student-participants. The partnership between F. Gary Gray, Urban Compass, 112th Street Elementary and Verbum Dei High School is dedicated to recapturing and realizing the human potential in our young people.

Filmmaking involves numerous skills including writing, working cooperatively, budgeting, time management and forward-thinking—important skills that are completely transferable to the academic sphere as well as in life itself. Furthermore, the final product is the reward for hard work, diligence and commitment to getting things done.

Spago Benefit—Good Times for a Good Cause - Draws Hundreds for an Inspiring Evening



Verbum Dei High School and West Los Angeles College have created a partnership where for credit classes are offered on Verbum Dei's campus.



Guests at the fundraiser socialize "red carpet style" while contributing to Urban Compasses efforts.



Shaq's jersey was one of the many unique "celebrity endowed" gift items sold at the raffle that night.



Lorenz Willis, Athletic Director/Teacher at Verbum Dei High School and Kimberly Paggett-Willis, Verbum Dei Freshmen Writing Teacher smile for the camera.

Robin Zamora, Verbum Dei English teacher, leads this project located at Verbum Dei High School which operates Wednesday after school.

**2007
NAACP
Image
Awards**



Urban Compass Holiday Party Brings Smiles to Little Faces

For a child, the holidays are an exciting time—gifts, parties, singing, sweets and the anticipation of gifts. Last holiday season, no one left empty handed!

Staff, board members and community members all came together to help make this event extra special. Sometimes it is the little things in life that bring joy and for the kids who participated in the event, such was evident by their smiles and excitement.

Thank you all who made this event a memorable one!

112 Street
Elementary School

Verbum Dei Jesuit
High School



Sage
Elementary School

West Los Angeles
College

Planting Seeds of Change



Dr. Susan Abelein
Principal
Verbum Dei High School

As an educator, I spend each and everyday trying to make the most of each and every day so that I can feel a sense of fulfillment for having made a difference in someone else's life. This is what drives me and, if I am correct, what drives most people towards "helping behaviors."

Whether assisting others through an organizational conduit, a school, a nursing home, a penitentiary or even in our circles of families and friends most of us are making a difference. As an active board member involved in the activities of Urban Compass I am finding that there truly is a "community of caring" - people gathered together to contribute their time, energy, talents and resources to work collaboratively on solutions to some of most pressing problems of the inner-city, which reflect the larger problems of our very society. Luckily, *giving back* has not gone out of style nor has it lost its inherent effec-

tiveness and impact upon social change and individual transformations.

Change does not occur immediately and one must be willing to make a long-term commitment, oftentimes, never fully realizing the full impact of his or her individual efforts. For every seed that is planted, a large tree will eventually grow. There are no guarantees as to whether or not the planter is able to taste the

sweet fruit that the tree will eventually yield, yet his/her motivation is not to *taste* the fruit but rather to ensure that the seed itself is planted knowing full well there will always be someone who will, next, water the tree, and another who will prune its branches and ensure that, decades into the future, the tree will thrive.

This analogy represents the greater hope that Urban Compass has for creating a better Watts, a better Los Angeles and ultimately better lives for all those who are connected to its efforts and beyond. Most of us may not be here to see the fruits of our labor, but we find solace in the realization and acceptance that a future can only be impacted by efforts put forth today!



Want More Information?
323.383.7588

Lots of smiles and high energy! That's a typical Urban Compass Participant. If per chance you stop by the Urban Compass After-School Program located on the campus of Verbum Dei High School you get lots of smiles and high energy from students anxious to get started with their home work and participate in enrichment activities that are planned for them. In addition to assistance with homework and other learning and social skills activities, students were **ALL SMILES** about:

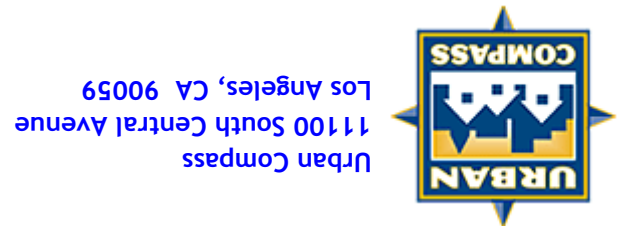
- Pumpkin Patch on October 21 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, which included games, rides and prizes, coordinated by Whitney Morgan
- Football game played in the historical Los Angeles Coliseum @ USC on November 26, coordinated by Pat McNicholas
- Christmas Holiday Party on December 23 and Holiday Toy Distribution on December 24, in collaboration with Project CLIMB
- Magic Johnson Theater Movie Premier Screening of *Crossover*, on August 30, coordinated by F. Gary Gray & Robin Zamora
- Admissions to Verbum Dei Sporting Events on and off campus

These are just a few of the program highlights. Through the efforts of DeAnthony Langston, Program Director, clothing and food are distributed to families in Nickerson Gardens and recently computers were donated to Urban Compass by an active board member to address the need of technology in the home of Urban Compass participants and will be distributed to both Verbum Dei and 112th street students. The student population at Verbum Dei is approximately 340 and over 200 students completed the application process and are enrolled in college courses that are free. Our goal is 100% next semester.

Last, but not least planning is in process for the middle school component as a feeder to Verbum Dei High School and other private and public high schools. The goal of the middle school is to provide the missing link to capture students who are lost in the system at the middle school level, by preparing them to be successful at all grade levels by providing a rigorous academic schedule and orientation to other resources available throughout the community. If OPRAH can WE can build a school to serve our community. All **The Smiles** are made possible by **YOU**, community support, board member contributions and donations from individuals and corporations. Thanks for the **Smiles**.

Kathy S. Walton
Urban Compass President





MISSION

Urban Compass provides a safe, welcoming, and innovative environment that challenges our youth to envision and navigate a course for a rewarding future characterized by achievement, independent thought, and social responsibility through education, mentoring, and play.

URBAN COMPASS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susan Abelein, PhD.	Jason Frank	Vanita Nicholas
David Adams	Steve Garcia	Ruben Ramirez
Angela Barfield	Demet Guidry	Kell Stone
Kent Bennett	Steven Jones	Cathy Tate
Stu Bernstein	DeAnthony Langston	Kathy Walton
Cynthia Bollinger	Brenda Manuel	Dave Walsh
Brian Davis	Don Morgan	Rev. John Weling
William Flaherty	Patrick McNicholas	Felipe Velasquez



Back row (l-r): Mallory Engers, Brenda Manuel, Susan Abelein, Kathy Walton, Don Morgan, Cynthia Bollinger, Steven Jones. Front row (l-r): Kell Stone, William Flaherty, David Adams, DeAnthony Langston, Jason Frank.