

THE MAYIM CENTER FOR SOCIAL & CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Our Mission

Our mission is to educate, inspire and empower young people to become significant in every aspect of life, and advance the cause of peace and positive change in our society.

We believe that our greatest legacy is our children - and family still remains a child's most important influence. The Mayim Center will provide teaching, counseling, networking and fellowship, to develop strong fathers and mentors, help stabilize our families and communities, and provide our youth with hope for the future, and the right tools for success.

Statement of Need

In recent years, the population of the High Desert has become increasingly diverse. This positive trend is due in part, to a government-subsidized influx of low-to-moderate income youth and their families from South Central Los Angeles. Unfortunately, in many instances, these youth are the victims of fatherlessness and/or the lack of positive adult male role models.

In the wake of an already sluggish economy, broken homes, high truancy and often ineffective and/or under-funded programs affecting the community as a whole, the High Desert is experiencing record unemployment, and rising levels of violence, vandalism and racial tension.

This crisis has caused division in our neighborhoods, placed excessive demands on our schools, Police Departments and Correctional Facilities, and contributed to budgetary cuts and economic shortfalls in our cities. If these problems persist, the safety and security of our communities will only continue to decline.

Project Description

The Mayim Center, Inc. is a non-profit agency that will provide family services to residents of the High Desert. Our organization will be dedicated to mentoring fathers and other positive adult male role models from our communities and connecting them with their young people, and providing service to High Desert families as a whole.

Studies suggest that some 65% of youth projected to benefit from our programs come from fatherless homes, and/or lack positive adult male role models. These youth are most often at risk for truancy, school dropout, substance abuse, violence and other anti-social behavior.

The Mayim Center offers the High Desert a unique opportunity to assist our communities with programs that inspire new commitments to fatherhood, provide family support through mentoring, training and networking, and guide our youth toward personal integrity, moral courage, higher education, entrepreneurship, and creating a brighter future for their communities and our society.

Our Vision

With all of our zeal as responsible adults to salvage our at-risk youth and secure their future, there remains a crucial fact all-too-often overlooked. At-risk youth come from at-risk families. We believe at the end of the day, our young people cannot be cultivated apart from the family context in which they are shaped, and from which they emerge. Healthy families produce healthy children. For this reason, we envision a comprehensive community approach to saving our youth - placing increased focus on our families; and fatherly involvement and support in particular.

By all accounts, fatherlessness lies at the core of what plagues our young people. Study after study has shown that 85% of men and women in the United States who are incarcerated or otherwise under the supervision of the Criminal Justice System, grew up in fatherless homes.

Secondly, according to the latest polls, when it comes to the masses of today's youth, hip-hop culture and its icons have more impact on their lives than doctors, lawyers, educators and other professionals combined - particularly among males. We believe this is because our current system of higher education is preparing America's youth to inherit a faltering established order, that hip-hop culture, more often than academia, accurately reflects - and increasingly, defines.

We envision responding to this urgent need for education reform through closer working partnerships with our schools and colleges, and bold initiatives to add new revelation and understanding to the current curriculum; while at the same time, inspiring and preparing our young people to broaden the movement toward morality, ethics, responsibility and service in hip-hop culture, and all aspects of media.

And finally, in the process, we envision connecting our home foreclosure crisis with our unemployment crisis, to help bring economic stability to our youth, families and communities.

We envision:

- Building cross-generational ties between fathers and other positive adult males and our young people.
- Offering mentoring to fathers, mothers, elders, role models, youth and families as a whole.
- Bringing in entertainment and media figures to encourage, motivate, instruct and inspire our youth, and providing networking and related career opportunities.
- Holding classes on fatherhood, motherhood, childhood, young adulthood, family support, community conflict resolution, employment and entrepreneurship.
- Convening summit meetings to resolve racial conflicts, promote greater tolerance and understanding, and initiate new social and economic alliances.
- Establishing online networks for 24-hour information, fellowship and support.
- Providing a facility that houses classrooms, counseling areas, a computer lab and a multipurpose room for public meetings, performances, and developing our youth in all aspects of media.

Our Goals

- To encourage, inspire, motivate and equip fathers and other positive male role models from our communities to fully embrace and fulfill their responsibilities as husbands, fathers and community elders, to help secure a brighter future for their own children and our young people as a whole.
- To strengthen and support at-risk families through one-to-one and group mentoring, teaching and networking.
- To educate, inspire and empower our youth to achieve success and significance in life; as future parents, community and society leaders, entrepreneurs, world citizens, and effective agents for positive change.

Our Objectives

- A measurable improvement in family stability and fatherly involvement.
- A measurable decline in truancy, school dropout, substance abuse, theft, violence and vandalism.
- A measurable increase in youth employment, vocational and entrepreneurial training, college enrollment and community service.
- A measurable positive change in community relations, employment and entrepreneurship.

(*Add specific targets and numbers - a downward trend leading to a certain percentage over a set period.)

Methods

Our goals & objectives will be achieved through the implementation of a three-fold programmatic strategy:

Fatherhood -

- Man-to-man mentoring – Fathers4Life –“Fathers Need Fathers”: Counseling, inspiration and support program for fathers, elders, leaders and role models.
- Group Support - F.A.M.I.L.Y. (Fathers And Mentors to Inspire Lost Youth): Program for group mentoring and instruction.
- Online studies & networking - ‘Fatherhood’ section of project web site, providing 24-hour access to information, fellowship and support. Utilization of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and Yahoo Groups.

Family -

- Youth mentoring - A.I.M. (Advancing Into Manhood) and V.O.W. (Virtues Of Womanhood): Innovative new programs for our at-risk youth, including utilization of social networking sites.
- Family Support - ‘Families Need Families’, ‘Mothers Need Mothers’ and ‘Child Development’: Programs for family group mentoring and instruction.
- Online studies & networking - ‘Family’ section of project web site, providing 24-hour access to information, fellowship and support, along with utilization of social networking sites.

Community -

- Racial & Cultural Reconciliation - ManUp/C.R.E.D. (Men Advancing Neighborhood Unity and Peace/Conflict Resolution to End the Destruction.): Programs combining classroom instruction, community rap sessions and racial summit meetings to introduce creative alternatives to violence, promote tolerance and understanding, and help initiate new social and economic alliances.
- Online Studies & Networking - 'Community' section of project web site providing 24- hour access to information, fellowship and support, along with utilization of social networking sites.
- Employment & Entrepreneurship
 1. Cultural Arts Program - To recruit and develop new artists and entrepreneurs, and create and fill media-related jobs. Program will provide:
 - Hands-on experience, instruction and mentoring in all aspects of media.
 - In-house and guest speakers from entertainment and media to instruct and inspire.
 - Career opportunities and networking for budding artists and entrepreneurs.
 2. Computer Literacy Program - For mastering basic computer skills, mastering intermediate to advanced computer skills, and instructing prospective entrepreneurs and technicians in various fields of computer science.
 3. Real Estate Program - To address the foreclosure crisis by recruiting and guiding prospective entrepreneurs into various aspects of real estate and housing development; and recruiting and guiding prospective skilled workers in solar panel installation and other aspects of housing restoration.

Prospective Board/Staff/Advisers/Donors

Virgil Roberts - Entertainment attorney. Board chair of Families in Schools. Board member of the Los Angeles Education Partnership. Holds a Bachelors Degree in Political Science from UCLA, and a Jurist Doctor Degree from Harvard Law School.

William Allen Young - Acclaimed actor/educator and public speaker. Founder/President of The Young Center for Academic & Cultural Enrichment. Holds a Masters Degree in Sociolinguistics from USC.

Tommy Davis - Former professional athlete and record promoter. Veteran business owner, batting instructor and motivational speaker. Member of the Los Angeles Dodgers Speakers Bureau.

Kevin A. Walker, 'Shabar' – Project co-founder and 20-year veteran of LAUSD, teaching and mentoring at-risk students at the middle school and high school levels. Holds a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration, Management.

Leon Sylvers III, John McClain, Al McKay, Jerry Peters, Maria Mora, Col. Felix Diaz, Clarice Murray, Robert Garcia, Margaret Gilmore.

“Receiving the unlikely honor at age fifteen, of having ‘America’s Favorite Dad’, Bill Cosby, as a mentor, opened a door for me in terms of how I perceived myself and what I could accomplish

in life. As a responsible and caring adult, my great blessings obligate me to pass on similar opportunities to the young people of today.

Despite unprecedented access to information, our youth, for the most part, have been cut off from direct access to the wisdom and guidance of those who came before them. At this stage, I find myself in a unique position to help build cross-generational ties in general, and provide our young people with the inspiration that comes from being personally touched by the media figures who so greatly influence their lives.”

- Yashah Bayn Y'shua Yisrael, Project Co-Founder