



Meeting Minutes

Date: 09-19-2024 **Time:** 3:00 PM

Meeting Called to Order By: Van Roberts

Location: Wayside Center @ 44219 10th St W, Lancaster, CA 93534

Organizations in Attendance

Voices of Our Youth, LASD Lancaster Station, Parents Anonymous, LASD Veterans Mental Evaluation Team, Children's Law Center, Auto Pros, Beyond A Home, Lincoln Investigations, Tunnel Vision Foundation, Tarzana Treatment Centers, Kooth Digital Solutions (Soluna)

Minutes

Minutes were posted to the VOYCC webpage on the Voices of Our Youth website.

Reports

There are no reports at this time.

Old Business

There was no old business at this time.

New Business

Van extended a warm welcome to everyone and introduced our new sponsor, Big Shotz Bar and Grill. He expressed gratitude for their catering services at our meeting and announced that Big Shotz will be catering all future meetings. Steven, the manager, addressed the group and shared how Big Shotz enjoys supporting the community, especially those engaged in positive activities. As a gesture of appreciation, he distributed \$15 gift cards to all attendees. Steven also highlighted Big Shotz's new lunch buffet priced at \$12.99 from Monday to Friday from 11am to 3pm. Located at 227 Pillsbury St. in Lancaster, CA 93534 (off J and Division), Big Shotz can be contacted at 661-948-0115.

Van made an announcement that Big Shotz had provided a spread of Chicken Alfredo, Penne Pasta with Red Sauce, and Garlic Knots. He kindly asked everyone to enjoy the food before the meeting began.

Van went on to talk about how the evacuees from the fires are making their way to Lancaster. He highlighted the challenge of stretched resources across all organizations due to the increased demand for assistance.

Van reminded everyone that the primary goal of establishing this council was to support the sheriff's department by providing them with the necessary resources to perform their duties effectively, without resorting to force or arrests. The aim is to enhance community safety and well-being by working together as a team.

Van expressed his frustration with the perception that law enforcement officers only have handcuffs and weapons at their disposal, emphasizing the importance of offering more support beyond just enforcement tools.

Van shared the inspiring journey of Callie, a shining example of the success stories that emerge from Voices of Our Youth's Streets to Suites program. Callie's story began with her being abandoned on the streets but took a turn when a deputy took notice of her and called Voices of Our Youth for help. This led to Callie being provided with temporary housing in a motel, receiving essential medical care, and eventually being placed in a convalescent home. Today, Callie is thriving and living her life, a testament to the transformative impact of support and care.

Van highlighted the prevalence of misinformation within the community on various subjects and emphasized the importance for leaders to ensure the dissemination of accurate information.

Yasmin Arias recently presented information on Soluna, an online mental health platform designed for youth aged 13-25. This safe and cost-free platform offers confidential support through 1:1 chats with professional coaches, interactive tools for stress relief, as well as access to quizzes, videos, forums, and more. For further details, feel free to contact Yasmin at yarias@kooth.com or 805-265-3483.

Yasmin also mentioned that there is a sister app called BrightLife Kids for younger youth aged 0-12. We are planning to reach out to them in the future to invite them to present at an upcoming meeting.

Van then invited the deputies to share their thoughts. Sergeant Chapman did not have any updates to share at that moment. Lieutenant Lane emphasized the importance of collaboration between the community, deputies, and organizations. Deputy Ken introduced the LA HOP app, a homeless initiative tool that allows users to request help for a homeless individual from the safety of their car. The app only requires a name and email address for notification once contact is made, and operates 24/7. However, it is crucial for the homeless person to remain at the reported location until help arrives, so informing them of the assistance and asking them to wait is essential.

Sharae Jones from Parents Anonymous mentioned that their office is located on Lancaster Blvd. She also highlighted the availability of a 24/7 helpline catering to individuals of all ages, open every day of the week for anyone in need. Additionally, they provide emotional support groups, peer support training, as well as wrap-around services for disheartened youth, individuals involved in juvenile justice, and those associated with DCFS.

Deputy Laurence Green emphasized the urgent need for support from parents, acknowledging that some have allowed situations to escalate to the point where youth are engaging in criminal activities and displaying uncontrollable behavior. Parents are encouraged to seek assistance and ensure their child attends at least one therapy session. These are challenging situations involving large and strong youth, making it difficult for parents to intervene effectively. It is essential to find strategies to engage these youth and guide them towards a positive direction, as law enforcement cannot fulfill the role of a parent.

Deputy Laurence Green also emphasized the importance of having a compelling pitch to capture the attention of deputies for any program to be successful. It is crucial that they can easily remember and recall the information presented to them.

During a recent meeting, a parent who is part of Parents Anonymous brought their 14-year-old daughter along. The daughter shared insights on school fights and the influence of social media on youth behavior.

When we inquired about how she would seek assistance for herself and encourage her peers to do the same, she shared her approach. She mentioned that she would encourage them to seek help from adults or obtain permission to seek help on their behalf. Additionally, she highlighted the option of using resources such as the Soluna app, facetime, or telehealth visits, considering that most kids have access to phones. She emphasized the

importance of being open to seeking help, as it is a crucial step in receiving the support needed. Moreover, she pointed out that being able to observe facial expressions either through video calls or in person can aid in identifying the issues at hand.

Auto Pros Academy, a new program introduced by Danci Gutierrez of Auto Pros, located at 44136 10th St W, Suite 205, Lancaster, CA 93534, aims to reintroduce autobody education into schools. The program seeks to teach both boys and girls a practical skill that can be transformed into a fulfilling career. Scheduled to commence with 80 students in August 2025, Auto Pros Academy is dedicated to providing valuable vocational training to the youth. For further details regarding this initiative, feel free to contact Rudy Gutierrez at 661-726-7675 or via email at autopros Lancaster@gmail.com.

Danci asked the council for guidance on selecting students for the program. There was a query about whether schools would impose restrictions on students registering for classes, or if selection would be based on GPA.

One recommendation from Sergeant Chapman was for students to compose an essay reflecting on the significance of the opportunity and how it could positively impact their lives. Another proposal was to allocate a percentage of the enrollment towards supporting at-risk youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Another question that came up was about transportation to the shop from the schools. Maxwell Skipworth recommended using Hop Skip Drive, a ridesharing company specifically for minors.

Voices of Our Youth is excited to announce that our community BBQ is set to take place on September 29, 2024, from 4-7 pm at the King Bar. During our previous BBQ event, we were thrilled to serve a delicious meal to over 928 families, including steak, chicken, hotdogs, and various sides. The event also featured a special character for the kids to enjoy.

Voices of Our Youth will be hosting the Voices for Change Gala on October 26, 2024, in support of the Streets to Suites program. To learn more about this event, please visit our website at engage.voicesofouryouth.org/Wonka.

Other Information

None to report at this time.

Committee Reports

No reports at this time.

Announcements

No announcements at this time.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned around 5:00 pm.

Next Meeting

Thursday, October 17, 2024, @ Wayside Center @ 44219 10th St W, Lancaster, CA 93534, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.