

# Southern California

## Education and Youth Development

World Vision®

Building a better world for children



*Cosette Tiguila, a member of the Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) in Los Angeles, has not one but several dreams. This seventeen-year-old student has overcome abuse and hard times and now has her sights set on the future. "I really love math and I want to be a math teacher," she says. She is participating in YEP because there are things she would like to see change in her city. "I would envision our city focusing on education and respect for others," she says. World Vision is giving her the tools and resources necessary to advocate for these changes. "It makes me feel like someone who is important and is also very involved in our city." says Cosette.*

### Youth Empowerment Project

In each of World Vision's communities of focus around the United States, "cadres" of 8-10 young people are recruited to participate in an intensive training program that culminates with a Summit in Washington, D.C. These future leaders spend 3-6 hours per week for 20 weeks taking part in a leadership curriculum designed to unleash the potential of youth to engage in positive, productive ways to create a just and equitable society.

Participants learn to identify and select issues that are negatively impacting their community which they wish to address with government and community leaders. They will prepare a Creative Media Project to use to present the issues to local and national government leaders.

Part of the beauty of this program has been to encourage youth from different walks of life to come together and learn from each other.

**The Need:** There are an estimated 750,000 persons below the poverty level in Los Angeles City. Of these, an estimated 295,000 are below the age of 18 years old. In Los Angeles County, up to 84,000 are homeless on any given night. About 25 percent of all poor Los Angeles County households lived in overcrowded conditions. Sixty-three percent of students in Los Angeles County schools live in economically disadvantaged families; approximately 75 percent of students in Los Angeles Unified School Districts and 95 percent of those in Compton Unified School District qualify for the Free or Reduced Priced Meal Program. 38 percent of eighth grade students in Los Angeles County scored below basic in mathematics.

Young people living in under-resourced and under-served communities daily see and experience the issues of poverty, discrimination, unequal access, school failure, unemployment, and crime, as well as the indirect impacts from living in communities that experience these issues at high rates. They feel powerless to do anything about them which can lead to hopelessness or rage.

#### Project Objectives:

- Build youth understanding of the value of, and skills needed, for working in partnership with adults to accomplish goals.
- Build youth knowledge of community organizing and social policy development and equip and empower them to use that knowledge to improve the lives of their own families and neighborhoods.
- Build youth skills and confidence in advocating to policy-makers, in partnership with adults and create opportunities for them to do so

**Beneficiaries:** High-risk youth living in poverty in Los Angeles.

**Funding Need:** Total Annual Budget Amount – \$34,322

**To Sponsor This Project Please Call: 1-888-511-6548**