

**We Care for Youth (WCFY)** is a California not-for-profit (501(c)(3)) organization. Since 1991, WCFY has provided mentoring, character education, leadership training, organizational management training, pre-employment readiness training, event planning, entrepreneurial instruction and activities, peace training and activities to more than 9000 youth.

Incorporated in 1994, WCFY was founded in 1991 by Co-Executive Directors, Linda Maxwell and José R. Quintanar. Volunteering with a civic organization, Linda and José "adopted" 20 young women from rival gangs. By demonstrating unconditional love, Linda and José worked to build the girls' self-confidence and got them on the right track. Word spread about Linda and José's unique abilities to touch and transform troubled youth, and Glendale schools and local law enforcement agencies approached them for help with youth-related issues.

Linda proposed a business-to-youth mentor program in which teens would be trained in job readiness and local businesses would hire and mentor the youths.

The super-regional shopping center, the Glendale Galleria, was the first business to accept the challenge. Since 1992, The Galleria has sponsored 23 free training programs to thousands of youth. Mall stores, such as JC Penny and McClave's Jewelers, hire outstanding graduates. Over the years, many entry-level graduates have become store managers and business owners.

WCFY trainers have taught at many middle and high schools in Los Angeles, Santa Clarita, Montebello, Pacoima, Pasadena and other California communities. **Sought as consultants**, WCFY has advised organizations in Ojai, Santa Clarita, Montebello, CA, South Bronx and Brooklyn, NY and El Paso, Texas.

WCFY opened a youth-developed and operated gift business, Bliss Unlimited. Started as a corporate basket business, Bliss became a retail store in the Glendale Galleria in 1997. With the Galleria providing the premium space at no cost, WCFY developed a curriculum on small business management that offers students high school course credit in exchange for their work. Exceptional students are then offered the opportunity to apply for sales and management positions. Bliss has been hailed as a model of community cooperation and won a prestigious international award for the Galleria.

WCFY has directed youth in putting on peace and teen issues conferences *Creating Safety for the 21st Century: Youth Choosing Peace, Now* and solution summits Burbank Youth for Youth: *Take a Stand; It's Your Choice*; Hoover High School's *On*



*Our Mind: Issues Facing Teens Today* and, most recently, Burbank High School's *Youth Bringing Global Peace Club's How to Save a Life: Teens Spreading Peace*. The youths were responsible for all segments of the events including workshop facilitation, security, outreach, entertainment and food. Reports from each conference are developed for the School Boards and City Councils. In Burbank, the City Council earmarked \$1,000,000 to implement the youths' recommendations.

After the tragic death of a young man in May of 2000, WCFY was invited to help design and implement a program to increase student connectedness on campus. Project P.L.U.S. (Promoting Learning, Unity and Success) helps to identify students with special needs, breaks down barriers between races, develops leadership qualities in youth, and connects youth to positive role models adults. Further, it develops relationship in the surrounding community to

assist the youth in more comprehensive ways.

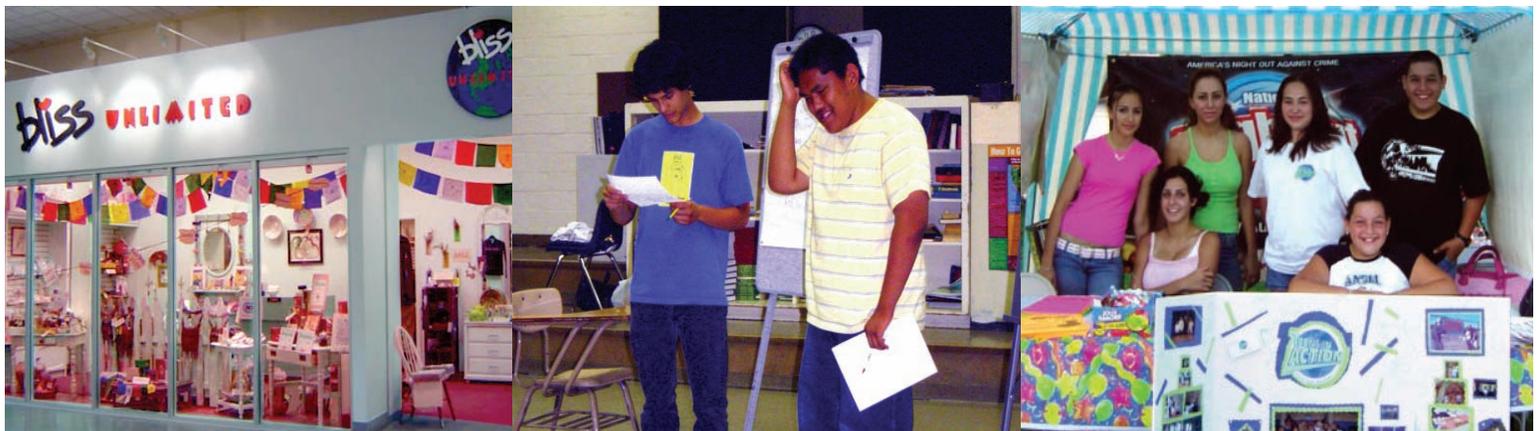
WCFY co-operates the S.P.I.R.I.T. (Students Problem Identifying and Resolving It Together) Council. This 'club on campus' teaches leadership and character education through projects that contribute to the well being of the community. Students have hosted car washes to raise funds to benefit projects like the domestic violence shelter operated by the YWCA in Glendale. S.P.I.R.I.T. is also the organization that conducts peer mediation and the youth solutions summit, *On Our Mind: Issues Facing Teens Today*. In 2005, these students hosted a conference for teens focused on nonviolence.

Using **Appreciative Inquiry**, a recognized organizational management model, WCFY facilitated the groups that successfully accomplished a youth-directed solution conference for 200 Burbank students, resulting in recommendations

being implemented by the City of Burbank; five summer peace leadership institutes which have resulted in 'friendship', 'unity' and 'giving back' gardens and a city (Ojai) seeking a framework to include residents in decision-making with a focus on youth. WCFY programs were evaluated by Fuller Graduate School of Psychology and found to be consistent with **Positive Youth Development** Technology.

Additionally, WCFY serves as a crisis response organization in communities where youth have been killed by violence, providing comfort for those grieving and support for families experiencing loss. WCFY was invited by the U.S. Department of Justice to be a panelist at the **2001 International Police Chiefs Association** conference to speak on the value of community-based organizations in managing community crisis.

WCFY's 7-member Board of Directors is made up of community and business



leaders and young people who have come up through the programs. WCFY serves youth ages 12-22 representing Armenian, Hispanic, Pacific Asian, Chinese, Korean, African-American and Caucasian backgrounds.

In 2003, WCFY received two national awards. The first, **Facing History and Ourselves: The Power of One**, recognizes a philosophy of WCFY: our

thoughts, words and actions create our reality. The second award, **The Jefferson Award**, was presented to Co-Founder José R. Quintanar in Washington D.C. The Jefferson Award is considered to be the Nobel Prize for Public Service in the United States. Additionally, in 2004, WCFY received the rarely given **Philanthropy Award** from the Glendale Community Foundation. In October of 2006, WCFY founders

received the **John Anson Ford Award** from the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission.

In 2005, WCFY was awarded a congressional earmark, for its' high school violence prevention program, making it a national demonstration site for "Promising New Practices." The expanded version of the program debuted in Fall 2006.

