

Omni Youth Programs

empowering the future

At risk youth...how do you become one? Low-income housing, gangs, violence, drug and/or alcohol abuse - any and all of these factors put our innocent young people at risk.

How do you break - what for many children is - a destructive cycle of simply being born into a tough neighborhood? In two fortunate Sacramento-area school districts, you can turn to Omni Youth Programs and their award-winning Peers Against Substance Abuse (P.A.S.A.) program.

Omni Youth Programs is proud to be a certified United Way agency. And we are proud to have them!

Omni services six elementary schools in the Twin Rivers and Folsom-Cordova Unified School Districts. With only four paid counselors and six volunteer interns, this amazing team meets with 55 small groups (4-5 students per group) each week for a one-hour counseling session that provides the tools and techniques to empower 4th, 5th and 6th graders to make tough – and brave – choices to avoid confrontations, steer clear of gangs and just say no to drugs and alcohol.

For many of these children, having parents or older siblings that are already involved with drugs, alcohol and gangs is a way of life. Breaking that cycle within their own families would seem nearly impossible, but with the help of Omni the success stories are striking. *“I’ve been smoking weed every day with my mom for three years. I didn’t know it was bad for me ‘til you guys told me, so I quit!” – 5th grader*

Based on scientific research and the principles of prevention, versus intervention, Omni has been helping to make the Sacramento area a more healthful, happy and productive community since 1979. The P.A.S.A. program provides children with the decision-making skills to effectively evaluate their surroundings so that they can make positive choices in determining their own behavior and ultimately their futures. This program is overwhelmingly supported by the school districts that use it. *“P.A.S.A. is absolutely the best prevention program I’ve witnessed in 25 years!” – P.A.S.A. Teacher* The time students spend in a P.A.S.A. session is easily recovered as absentee rates are lower and teachers spend less time resolving conflicts in the classroom. And P.A.S.A. is not just for the students. Omni programs ensure parent participation with homework assignments that encourage open discussions between the student, parents and all household members.

In addition to their remarkable school program, Omni also provides parenting workshops, professional training for people who work or volunteer with youth such as after-school employees or school-yard supervisors, and alcohol-free community events such as their annual *“Family Fun Fest.”*

Unfortunately, the recent economic stress has forced Omni to eliminate their P.A.S.A. programs to 4th graders. That service was deleted at the beginning of the September 2010 school year. Omni can use monetary donations (either donated directly to Omni or through the United Way and/or any of its work-place giving campaigns), volunteers to work with their counselors (free training!), or to provide fundraising, website promotion or administrative support. Also, Omni needs new, family-friendly board games, which are used as end-of-the-year rewards for the participants in the Omni school programs.

You can find out more about Omni at www.omniyouth.net. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities please contact Cynthia Siegel at Cynthia@omniyouth.net, or call (916) 362-2000 ext 11.