

## Teen Creative Expressions Showcase

# *"The Dream of Family"*

Saturday, January 15, 2011  
Westminster Mall, Macy's Court - Westminster, CA

Artwork, Poetry, and Performances by Orange County Teens  
Inspired by Dreams of their Future Families

### Teen volunteers

Expected: 50  
Actual: 273

### Attendees

Expected: 300  
Actual: 500+

### About the event

More than 500 people of all ages attended a 3 1/2 hour lively event in the Macy's Court of Westminster Mall as young adults age 13 to 22 creatively expressed their "dream of family" through music, art, spoken word, dance, and poetry. All in all, there were 8 performances on stage, numerous visual arts pieces, and more than 35 youth and young adults who contributed to "The Dream of Family" teen creative expression showcase. There were tears and cheers from the audience all throughout the event.



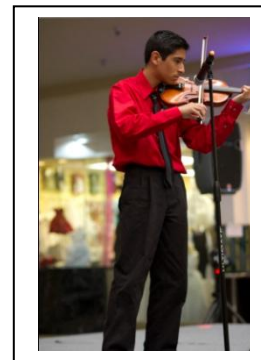
The program was hosted by Education for Successful Parenting (ESP) - a non-profit organization that is improving the well-being of children in our communities by teaching teens about parenting responsibilities before they form a family. The purpose of the Showcase was to increase awareness of ESP's curriculum that empowers teens with information and life-skills, so they can make healthy, responsible decisions. ESP also wanted to increase awareness of the strides they have made in Orange County. Sharing the creative expressions of teens was anticipated to inspire public appreciation and support for the valuable work of this nonprofit organization.



A number of government officials and representatives also attended the event to honor the work of ESP and the teens. Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez made a special appearance to present a certificate and announce that the organization had been recognized in the Congressional Record. Her presence was especially appreciated in light of the prior week's tragedy in Tucson. Extra police and security were on hand at Westminster Mall to ensure her visit took place without incident.

## Performance highlights

- Cathy Dang (age 22) opened and closed the Showcase with a vocal / guitar performance of her original song “Love You Can Breathe In,” accompanied by Jonathan Medina, written for Education for Successful Parenting
- An energetic hiphop dance was performed by the seven male members of Ohana, with a choreographic storytelling of a teen finding family through friends with a shared passion for dance
- There were two daunting and beautiful instrumental performances – one by Clemente Salgado (age 15) on violin, and one by Joe Di Fiore (age 17) on saxophone
- Amber Ellis (age 16) offered a courageous, soul-baring spoken word recounting of her journey from a challenging childhood to the strength of family and spirituality, followed by a remarkable gospel vocal performance
- Original poetry on the complexities of family was recited by Noemi Trevino (age 16)
- Two youth spoke to honor their parents: Brenda Sandoval (age 18) expressed heartfelt appreciation for her mother’s devotion, and Lurae Rubenstein (age 13) daughter of ESP’s founder/executive director read an essay about why her mother is her hero.



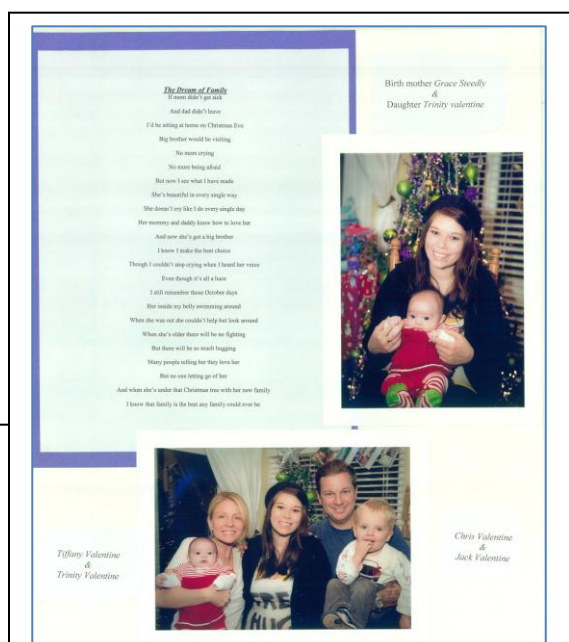
## Display highlights



By Emanuel Villarreal



By Brenda Sandoval (18)



By Grace Steedly (16)  
Her story of open adoption for her daughter

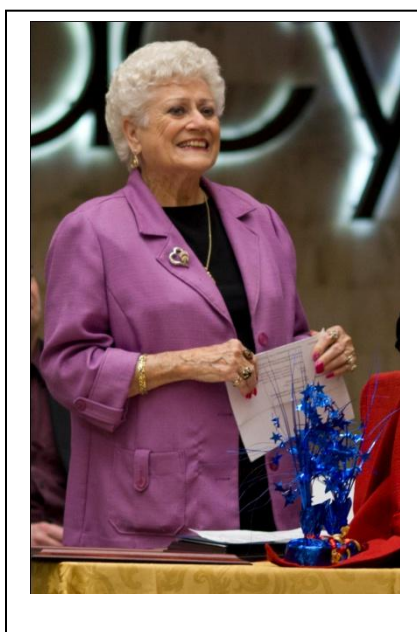
### *The Dream of Family* by Grace Steedly (16)

If mom didn't get sick  
And dad didn't leave  
Big brother would be visiting  
No more crying  
No more being afraid  
But now I see what I have made  
She's beautiful in every single way  
She doesn't cry like I do every single day  
Her mommy and daddy know how to love her  
And now she's got a big brother  
I know I made the best choice  
Though I couldn't stop crying when I heard her voice  
Even though it's all a haze  
I still remember those October days  
Her inside my belly swimming around  
When she was out she couldn't help but look around  
When she's older there will be no fighting  
But there will be so much hugging  
Many people telling her they love her  
But no one letting go of her  
And when she's under that Christmas tree with her new family  
I know that family is the best any family could ever be.



### **Guest speakers and government officials**

- Michael Bargas, a football coach and health instructor from Estancia High School, who offered a testimonial about how his students and school have been welcoming the ESP programs into their classroom for the past 5 years
- Several teenagers - some leaders of ESP's Generation Next teen group -- shared the importance of the program in influencing them to make healthy, responsible choices before they form a family
- Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez spoke about how the support and encouragement of her immigrant parents made it possible for her and her siblings to go to college and pursue their dreams
- Westminster's Mayor Margie Rice – who is a mother, grandmother, and great grandmother - spoke of our community responsibility to protect vulnerable children and commended ESP's work to create safer family environments
- California State Assembly and Senate offices were also represented, and presented certificates of recognition and commendation
- Orange County Supervisor Janet Nguyen sent a proclamation declaring January 15, 2011 as "Education for Successful Parenting Day" in Westminster and Orange County.



### **Event activities**

- A table and display panels for teens to create and post their own dream of family
- Face painting
- Opportunity drawings for raffle prizes



### **Event sponsors**

- Palo Capital
- West Coast Artwear
- CD Players Entertainment
- InfoMedics, Inc.
- Carlton Hair
- Pridea
- Infinity Printing
- and Lucky Take

Westminster Mall/Simon Malls generously donated use of Macy's Court space to make the event possible. Simon Youth Foundation® helps at-risk kids in Simon mall communities nationwide earn high school diplomas and scholarships to realize hopes of going to college.



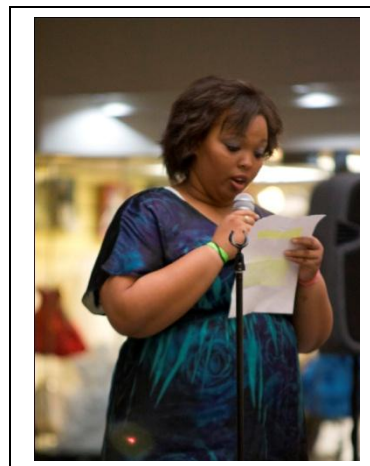
All 33 young adult contributors to Showcase were presented with personalized certificates from each of the government officials and received a goody bag of gifts from event sponsors.

Photos by: Alex Centenos, Raynard Price, Keri Gee Semmelman

## Special Awards

### InfoMedics Award

**Contributor:** Amber Ellis (age 16)  
**Assn/School:** ACCESS / Harbor Learning Center  
**Submissions:** Spoken word "Blasphemy", Gospel Song



### The ESP Board of Directors' Award

**Contributor:** Tony Huynh (age 19) and dance group  
**Assn/School:** Ohana group / Orange Coast College  
**Submission:** Dance – Hip-Hop  
**Title of Piece:** "Ohana"

### The ESP Founder's Award

**Contributor:** Cassandra Gonzalez (17)  
**Assn/School:** Westminster Mall /  
 Community Day School  
**Submission:** Art / Poem – Mixed Media  
**Title of Pieces:** "Happy Loving Family" (right)  
 "Behind Closed Doors"  
 "If Teddy Bears Could Talk"  
 (next page)





## Artwork and Poem by Cassandra Gonzalez



### If Teddy Bears Could Talk

If Teddy Bears could talk  
 What would they say,  
 What would they tell you  
 About the children with whom they play?  
 They might tell you things  
 You don't want to hear,  
 Like Mommy hurt Tommy,  
 Or Daddy is who we fear.  
 The Teddy Bears of children  
 Are not just some toy.  
 They're sometimes the only love felt  
 By some little girl or boy.  
 So when you see a child  
 Scared and alone,  
 Find him a Teddy Bear  
 In need of a home.  
 Know that you've done good  
 By the deed in your heart.  
 You've given the child  
 A place for love to start.

**"Love You Can Breathe In"**  
**Theme for *The Dream of Family***  
**By Cathy Dang**



I know what it feels like to grow up in a broken home  
And I know it can feel like you're running on empty and you're alone  
My childhood still haunts me today  
And if I could, I would change the way I was raised  
But I can only—no, I can only do that for you

So I swear not to have you until I'm ready  
And I swear to provide you with everything I can  
And I swear to be that person you believe in  
And I swear to give you all the love you can breathe in

I will do my best to grow into the person I need to be  
So I can prepare to give you all the tools you need to succeed  
I'll dedicate all of my time  
To guiding you through whatever walk of life you choose  
I will support you; oh, I'll support you in every way

I promise to be there for you  
So you'll never have to feel alone  
I'll protect you and make sure that you  
Grow up in a safe and happy home

So I swear not to have you until I'm ready  
And I swear to provide you with everything I can  
And I swear to be that person you believe in  
And I swear to give you all the love you can breathe in

© Cathy Dang, 2010



## Attendees Comments

*"You and your entire organization did a wonderful job last Saturday. Our students felt appreciated, included and proud. Thank you!" – Dennis Herzog, Westminster Mall Community Day School, Simon Youth Foundation*

*"What a wonderful turnout! The artwork and poetry were wonderful. I overheard teens talking about how they don't want to have kids until they are much older. It is incredible how much information I still carry with me from the program; it has a tendency to come up often with fellow teachers, classmates, family and friends. I recently had a conversation with two teachers who instruct students with mild disabilities, and all their students but one have some sort of family issue from drugs to living in a shelter. The issues that come up with these kiddos at home affect their success at school." – Elvira Rivera, Special Education Instructor*

*"The whole time I was driving home after the event I was thinking how amazing it is for ESP to help these kids think about a better future. I love their message ... To be good parents when you start a family. That is a movement that needs to be told. Events like this Showcase will improve and empower the movement. ESP is the leader of this movement. To see my daughter so enthusiastic about it – I am so happy she is preparing now to be a good mom for the future. This organization is the best thing to happen for her ... empower her." – Maria Sandoval, parent*

## About Education for Successful Parenting (ESP)

Executive Director/Founder – Randi Rubenstein [rubenstein@eduparents.org](mailto:rubenstein@eduparents.org)

VP Development – Ursula Luciani [uluciani@eduparents.org](mailto:uluciani@eduparents.org)

*The mission of ESP is to improve the health and well-being of children in our communities by educating adolescents about parenting before they conceive the next generation of children. Education for Successful Parenting (ESP) empowers teens with the information and life-skills to make healthy, responsible choices before they conceive the next generation of children.*

By helping teens understand children's needs and the responsibilities of parenting, ESP provides teens with motives to stay in school and postpone parenting until adulthood, so they can fulfill their dreams of a happy and healthy family.

ESP's Goals: Reduce rates of teen pregnancy, Improve preconception health, Increase father involvement, and Prevent child abuse.

Since its inception, ESP has conducted 84 classes, instructed over 2,000 teenagers, developed programs for parents of teens, and launched a youth-led volunteer group called Generation Next.



After completing an ESP course, **over 90% of students report they are more willing to wait until adulthood before parenting, and they will be better able to provide, protect and nurture a future family.** These results are vitally important given the high numbers of fragile families. Child Abuse Reports were filed on behalf of 27,000 children in Orange County, and on behalf of 6 million children nationwide, during last year alone! Imagine if all teens were empowered with the information and life-skills that Education for Successful Parenting provides. Imagine if we could reduce the number of fragile families by even 50%!

ESP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has been serving the community since 2005. Donations to ESP support classes, curriculum development, and organization sustainability.



***County of Orange***  
***Education for Successful Parenting Day***  
***January 15, 2011***

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**WHEREAS**, being a parent is one of the most important and hardest jobs a person can ever do; and

**WHEREAS**, Education for Successful Parenting , an Orange County, CA based nonprofit founded by Randi Rubenstein in 2005, pursues the mission of improving the health and wellbeing of the next generation of families by empowering adolescents, who have yet to conceive children, with parenting information and skills; and

**WHEREAS**, the organization's goals are to reduce rates of teen pregnancy, increase fatherhood involvement, improve prenatal health, and prevent situations that often lead to child abuse and neglect; and

**WHEREAS**, the organization's vision is to create stronger foundations for future families and better beginnings for all children; and

**WHEREAS**, Education for Successful Parenting offers innovative curriculum and workbooks to guide adolescents in understanding the demands of parenting and also offers programs for parents of teens; and

**WHEREAS**, Education for Successful Parenting has so far delivered 84 workshops to provide more than 2,000 teenagers on high school campuses and within youth organizations with the information and life-skills to make good decisions and fulfill their own dreams of a healthy, loving family; and

**WHEREAS**, to give youth a voice the organization has planned its first annual "The Dream of Family" Teen Creative Expressions Showcase for January 15, 2011, at Westminster Mall, Westminster, CA; and

**WHEREAS**, this event will attract hundreds of people throughout the community, and will feature presentations by elected officials, recognition of youth, teen activities, and an inspiring visual artistic showcase of paintings, sculptures, speeches, songs, and other performances; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** that Supervisor Janet Nguyen does hereby recognize January 15, 2011, as **Education for Successful Parenting Day** and acknowledges Randi Rubenstein, Founder/Executive Director of the organization for her vision and commitment to help make Orange County a great place for children and families to grow and thrive.

**Janet Nguyen**  
*Supervisor, First District*  
*Orange County Board of Supervisors*

January 15, 2011