



"Our Town, Your Town, Koreatown. Improving Quality of Life for Over 35 Years."

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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New projects launch in Koreatown, Pico-Union & Westlake to prevent underage drinking and marijuana use

LOS ANGELES, CA—March 21, 2013—KYCC (Koreatown Youth & Community Center) introduced its PATCH (Promoting Advocacy Through Community Health) campaigns to reduce youth access to alcohol and marijuana in both social and retail settings. As part of the PATCH program, KYCC unveiled new local data on alcohol and marijuana use among Korean, Latino and other immigrant youth.

"In our agency's experience working with local youth since 1975, we see on a daily basis the toll that substance abuse has on our communities, leading to other social problems such as crime, broken families, and school drop-out," stated John Ho Song, Executive Director of KYCC. "The younger a youth first drinks alcohol, the greater their chances are of binge drinking. That's why prevention is so important – to ensure that each young person can be healthy and reach their fullest potential"

Alcohol is the top substance abuse problem in Koreatown, Pico-Union and Westlake, with marijuana as a close second, according to KYCC's most recent research.¹ Use is closely linked to access, as 72% (or 336 of 467 total respondents) of community members from all three neighborhoods shared that it is easy for minors to get alcohol.²

In response to survey data indicating the number one reason for alcohol use by minors as "peer pressure or influence," KYCC PATCH has implemented **Creating Lasting Family Connections**, a substance abuse prevention education with local middle school students at community centers and school settings.³ This nationally recognized evidence-based curriculum focuses on building resiliency, positive peer interactions, and healthy decision making to increase a youth's ability to resist alcohol and drug use.

Parental influence also plays a key factor, either negatively by exposing their children to drinking at an early age, or positively to reinforce healthy behaviors. KYCC PATCH is recruiting for its **Community Prevention Council** for local parents to be actively engaged on how to create a supportive environment for their children and provide feedback on the Creating Lasting Family Connections program.

¹ 95% or 276 of 288 total respondents. County of Los Angeles – Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, Survey Analysis Report, 2012.

² 86% or 250 out of 288 total respondents. Ibid.

³ 56% or 163 of 288 total respondents. Ibid.

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The number two reason for alcohol use by minors revealed by the community survey is “too many liquor or grocery stores” that sell alcohol to minors.⁴ From a focus group conducted by KYCC, youth said that “Friends share information about certain liquor stores that sell alcohol to minors and access alcohol.”⁵ To encourage responsible alcohol sales, KYCC PATCH has launched its **Card Under 35 Pledge Campaign** to partner with local stores to commit to card customers who look under 35 years old, so as to avoid any potential alcohol sales to minors and ultimately to protect their business from penalties as a result of violations. In order to support businesses that make this commitment, KYCC PATCH will provide linguistically and culturally relevant technical assistance, trainings and resources free of charge.

With the support of the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, KYCC conducted an extensive community needs assessment to have the most current picture of what alcohol and other drug use looks like in these three communities. The research included collecting nearly 500 surveys; interviews with key stakeholders including law enforcement, school officials, health providers and neighborhood councils; focus groups with Korean, Latino and Filipino students and parents; and archival data reviews. These survey data should be interpreted with caution because they represent the responses of only 467 respondents who were not randomly sampled.

KYCC was established in 1975 for recently immigrated, at-risk youth. Since then, it has grown enormously, with children and family services, economic development, environmental, childcare, and affordable housing units. The mission of KYCC is to serve the evolving needs of the Korean American population in the greater Los Angeles Area as well as the multi-ethnic Koreatown community. Today, KYCC serves over 11,000 people each year, mostly first-generation immigrants from Latin America and Asia.

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⁴ 37% or 107 of 288 total respondents.Ibid.

⁵ County of Los Angeles – Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention & Control, KYCC Focus Group #1.

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