



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pacoima Creates Community Forum Through Theatre
June 26th at 10:00am

June 2, 2010, Pacoima, CA- The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company in conjunction with the LA County's Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project, San Fernando/Santa Clarita Valley Child Abuse Council, and Friends of the Family presents *Lifting Our Youth*, an original theatre performance created by the residents and neighbors of San Fernando Gardens on June 26, 2010 at Pacoima Charter Elementary School. A resource exchange will begin at 10:00am with the performance of *Lifting Our Youth* at 11:00am in both English and Spanish followed by a community forum. Admission is free and lunch will be provided.

Lifting Our Youth follows the story of a troubled community where the voices of good and evil whisper to its youth. The community helplessly watches as these youth choose which voice to follow. As the whispers grow, a mother cries for change and challenges the community that they may not be helpless after all. *Lifting Our Youth* is a unique theatrical performance that incorporates poetry, live music, movement, and spoken word.

A Resource Exchange will be held before the performance where community members can seek out information from various service providers and community-based organizations. Resource exchange partners include Los Angeles Education Partnership- LAEP, Youth Speak Collective- YSC, Dispute Resolution Services – DRS, and Grandparents As Parents- GAP among other organizations to be announced. Following the performance of *Lifting Our Youth* the actors will facilitate a community forum regarding the themes of the play.

To make a reservation or for more information please call 213-488-8488, x201 or email RSVP@theunusalsuspects.org. Pacoima Charter Elementary School is located at 11016 Norris Ave., Pacoima, CA 91331.

The Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) is a one-year, \$5-million, countywide effort to demonstrate effective approaches to reducing child abuse and neglect. This partnership between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and community-based organizations in the eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) is designed to strengthen families while providing opportunities for government agencies and community residents to increase the safety and well-being of children, families, and the community. PIDP will inform DCFS' continued development of successful child abuse prevention measures that can be sustained and replicated across the County.

*Born out of the ashes of the 1992 L.A. Riots, **The Unusual Suspects Theatre Company** has grown into an award winning, model mentoring program using theatre arts to reach youth in underserved and at-risk environments, including kids in foster care, violence-plagued neighborhoods, gangs and juvenile corrections facilities. The Unusual Suspects offers two consecutive 10-week (60-80 hours) playwriting and performance workshops where youth develop self-esteem, tolerance, and the communication and coping skills needed to make positive life choices. For more information, visit The Unusual Suspects website at www.TheUnusualSuspects.org.*

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