

# **U.S. Department of Justice Awards Jenesse \$1,000,000 Grant to Break Cycle of Violence for South LA Youth**

## ***Organization Rolls Out Activation Plan***

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(Los Angeles, CA - March 10, 2015)-- **Jenesse Center, Inc.**, which is celebrating 35 years of service to the Los Angeles community, was awarded a **\$1,000,000 grant** from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women (OVW). The grant was funded to help break the cycle of violence for underserved and unserved youth (ages 13-18) who are victims or are exposed to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, gang violence, bullying and/or sex trafficking. Jenesse was the only organization in the State of California to receive this grant.

**Jenesse Center** is a nonprofit domestic violence prevention and intervention organization that provides a holistic, comprehensive program to nurture families victimized by domestic violence back to a place of mental, financial, physical and emotional well-being.

Bea Hanson, Principal Deputy Director of OVW said, "Every year, millions of children and adolescents across the United States are victimized and exposed to violence in their homes and neighborhoods, and often suffer severe, long-term emotional and physical consequences. As we work to help keep our children safe, we must view prevention and intervention as intertwined, not separate and distinct. This grant program is an essential part of our vision for safe and healthy communities, places where young people can grow to their fullest potential."

Karen Earl, Jenesse CEO said, "We are grateful to The United States Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women for funding this important project, especially the prevention strategies. Jenesse's ultimate goal has been to eliminate the need for domestic violence shelters altogether, and our programs and policies have always reflected this objective. We believe that significant, meaningful and culturally relevant programs and services that educate young people about what healthy relationships look like, can reduce the cycle of violence in our community, including the loss of so many of our youth to the criminal justice and prison systems. We have designed this program to address all of the critical issues that literally stop young people from enjoying their lives."

Congresswoman Karen Bass (37th District, California) said, "For many years, I have watched Jenesse Center perform the very difficult task of combatting the cycle of violence that prevents many in our community from having healthy relationships and

peaceful homes. Under the leadership of one of our city's most talented CEOs, Karen Earl, Jenesse has distinguished itself as an authority in using a holistic and culturally relevant approach to not only save lives, but transform them. This new program will be an excellent addition to our schools and a lifeline for the underserved youth who need it most."

The project includes a prevention, intervention and training component that targets youth, service providers, teachers and school counselors. To activate the program, Jenesse partnered with Green Dot Public Schools, the Los Angeles Police Department, Watts Healthcare Corporation and South Central Mental Health Training Consortium.

To ascertain the community need, Jenesse launched a research study on youth's perceptions about violence, including bullying, dating/partner violence and violence at home.

**The survey was completed by 641 local youth. Key findings from the research study revealed the following:**

1. Unhealthy relationships are more prominent in the 9th grade than any other high school grade.
2. Two-thirds of the respondents reported that teens being sexually assaulted is a "big problem".
3. Forty percent of respondents reported that they know someone who was sexually assaulted.
4. Half of the youth surveyed reported teens having sex in exchange for money or gifts is a "big problem" in the community.
5. Twenty percent of the respondents reported they know someone their age that has had sex for money or gifts.
6. Exposure to violence at home was a major issue reported by respondents. Half of the respondents reported that domestic violence at home was a "big problem".

The activation plan features extensive grassroots outreach education and awareness activities to local students and parents. **The year-end goal is to educate more than 600 students, 50 parents, 30 mental health workers, and outreach to more than 3,000 students from Locke, Jordan and King/Drew High Schools.**

For more information on Jenesse and its programs, please visit [www.jenesse.org](http://www.jenesse.org).

### **About Jenesse Center**

Approaching 35 years of service, Jenesse Center Inc. provides culturally sensitive programs, services and outreach efforts to families and move women, men and children from crisis to self-sufficiency, offering education, referrals and resources that go beyond shelter. Housing women and children from 30 days up to two years through its emergency and transitional shelters. Jenesse also provides a variety of support services including mental health counseling, independent life skills classes, computer training, job referrals, after school programs for children, field trips, tutoring and legal assistance offering assistance with obtaining restraining orders for domestic violence victims.

If you or a friend needs help, please call the confidential **24/7 hotline** at **1-800-479-7328**.

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