

Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities

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December 2012

Dear Friend of Project YANO,

I recently had the opportunity to give a presentation on behalf of Project YANO at the MAAC Charter School. Also speaking was Fernando Suárez del Solar, one of our Advisory Board members whose son was killed in the Iraq war.

PROGRAM

COORDINATOR:

Rick Jahnkow

As we stood in front of an assembly of 300 students, in the back of my mind was the memory of a recent incident where a girl from Mission Bay High School was beaten and sent to the emergency room by a boy who had been in the military's Jr. ROTC program for three years.

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I was doing laundry with my mother when my brother, a student at MBHS, called to be picked up and told her about the fight that had occurred at school that day. He was particularly frustrated by the fact that none of the students had tried to stop the fight, even when the girl had fallen to the floor and was still being beaten by the boy.

When I arrived at home, my brother was sitting on the couch and had us watch the video, which was being circulated by students all over Facebook and Youtube.

FISCAL CONTRIBUTOR:

Committee Opposed to
Militarism and the Draft

Throughout the video, you can see more than 20 students standing around, some taking video, but none trying to intervene. Once the video was over, my brother said, "The guy was in JROTC." I felt a twinge from past memories: during the time I was at Mission Bay High and organizing to remove the shooting ranges (which were part of the JROTC program), I had personally perceived a hostile, violent response from JROTC students.

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The aggressive attitudes of JROTC students attest to the need to promote non-military alternatives in schools. This is why it was imperative for Project YANO to participate in the campaign that succeeded in banning shooting ranges from high schools in the San Diego Unified School District. This effort also produced a drop in JROTC enrollment that led to the complete removal of the program at Mission Bay in 2012. Removing such a class, which teaches that violence is permissible, is a step in the right direction.

It is important to note that violence is a motif of our society, perpetuated through the media and a very high amount of taxpayers'

money spent on war. Our government sponsors and promotes programs such as JROTC to recruit students into the military by militarizing their culture. For this reason the work of Project YANO is crucial.

Project YANO is one of very few organizations doing counter-recruitment and peace work in San Diego, and we are now the ONLY organization in the entire U.S. that maintains a full-time counter-recruitment organizer. Project YANO takes initiative to go into schools that have students who are considered primary targets for military recruitment, like the MAAC Charter School we recently visited. We are fortunate to have veterans, students and professionals who serve as role models and resources for the youths we reach. Our local work includes presentations and the distribution of information on alternatives for job training and college financial aid outside of the military.

At a national level we have a prominent role. Project YANO frequently receives requests from various organizations and individuals seeking assistance with counter-recruitment organizing, and we produce educational literature that is used by grassroots groups across the country.

Because our work often challenges some of the most dominant institutions in society, we do not have the resources that many nonprofits enjoy. As a result, we sometimes don't know if the work of YANO can be continued another year. It is only because of support from people like yourself that the organization has been able to carry on and increase its impact for 28 years!

Our future, however, is always uncertain, and in order to ensure that this work will endure, we ask you to please support it with a donation today.

We thank you in advance and wish you a happy new year!

Un Fuerte Abrazo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Cruz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nancy Cruz

P.S. Donations are tax-deductible and can also be made via credit card at www.projectyano.org. Automatic recurring donations are also possible this way.