

Neutral Ground

Official Newsletter - September 2nd, 2022



To our Neutral Ground Family,

On behalf of all of us here at the Neutral Ground Team, we want to thank you for spending your summer with us at our 2022 Summer Night Lights events! Since 2018, Neutral Ground has sustained a critical partnership with the City of Santa Ana to facilitate our annual Summer Night Lights 5-week prevention programming. Every single one of you who attended, volunteered, promoted the events, donated, or touched SNL in some way is a part of **changing the story** of community resilience and community safety.

Thank you, and welcome to the second issue of the official Neutral Ground Monthly Newsletter!

Summer Night Lights 2022:

A Success!



Summer Night Lights is Neutral Ground's 5-week summer prevention program serving to address the rising rates in gang activity and violence that often accommodate the summer months; offering positive alternatives to an area of our city that has been prominently impacted by this community violence.

Modeled after programming implemented in some of our most gang-imbued communities in Los Angeles and extending community engagement programming that increases feelings of safety, Summer Night Lights reclaims El Salvador Park for Santa Ana families.

Additionally, numerous of those who help facilitate the event and volunteer alongside us are currently or formerly gang-involved, system-impacted youth with opportunities to give back to and restore relationships with their community.

2022 WAS OUR FOURTH YEAR HOSTING SNL, AND WE WERE ABLE TO SERVE OVER 2,000 UNDUPLICATED COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN JUST OVER A MONTH!

Summer Night Lights 2022:

A Success!



"This is a bliss! I grew up here in this neighborhood, never seen it like this! I think this is a great event that's happening here. Good to see the young and old together. I'll be back next year!"

-Billy, SNL 2022 Attendee

"I think this is a great event! It's good to see the community coming together, it's great to see the kids playing in the park, families getting together. It's like a Backyard Boogie event!"

-Priscilla, SNL 2022 Attendee



"I personally, as a volunteer, was blessed to see families getting together, and I'm talking about families; babies, toddlers, teenagers, parents, grandparents, getting together and having fun in their own neighborhood, their backyard! So many happy faces! People of all ages were having a blast. It was a perfect night in the hood! This is how it's supposed to be. Families getting together and having a great time. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this memorable moment!"

-Ruthie Roll, SNL 2022 Volunteer

2022 Chicano Heritage Festival in Santa Ana

On August 17th of 2021, Councilmember Nelida Mendoza and Councilmember Johnathan Hernandez worked in collaboration to proclaim August in Santa Ana as Chicano Heritage Month. In consistent collaboration with our team here at Neutral Ground--a gang & violence prevention, intervention, and mediation organization homegrown in Santa Ana--the City of Santa Ana hosted the first annual Chicano Heritage Festival at El Salvador Park on Sunday, August 28th, 2022.



The event featured a lineup of old-school and contemporary Chicano/a artists, rappers, & DJ's, like Little Willie G, Joe Bataan, Lighter Shade of Brown, etc., Chicano/a-owned food trucks, local Santa Ana street vendors, kids' activities and games, merchandise, resource booths, a literary arts festival presented by Libramobil, an art exhibit, a book signing, a panel of influential Chicano/a Santa Ana community members who are changing the story, and so much more! In total, we had approximately 7,000 attendees!

2022 Chicano Heritage Festival in Santa Ana



Partnership with Suavecito for Chicano Heritage Festival



In honor of our first annual, 2022 Chicano Heritage Festival hosted during Chicano Heritage Month in Santa Ana, we partnered with Suavecito Pomade and are proud to present the official merchandise for the festival.

With three styles featuring original Chicano artwork, thematic elements of our community, and our event's details, these shirts embody the significance of Chicano history and of those making it every day.

We are incredibly thankful for Suavecito and their amazing team who put this together!

ALL proceeds from every purchase will be donated directly to Neutral Ground to help fund our gang prevention & intervention services in Santa Ana.

Purchase Online at This
Link:

Back to School!

with Neutral Ground



It's 'Back-to-School' season and Neutral Ground is going back to school too! You can find our Restorative Practice Specialists on-site at Washington Elementary School, Esqueda Middle School, Villa Fundamental Intermediate School, Chavez High School, Santa Ana High School, Reach Academy, and Lathrop Intermediate School.



At each of our schools, we place 1-2 trained Restorative Practice Specialists to facilitate services in the realm of prevention, intervention, and mediation.



This might include but is not limited to: providing compassionate approaches as alternatives to traditional punitive punishments (i.e. facilitating a mediation between two youth rather than suspending/expelling them because they could not be at the same school together), leading training initiatives in restorative practices for school staff and administrators, maintaining case files for youth in need of intensive case management, resolving gang-related conflicts, and so much more.

NG Live

with SAUSD Superintendent Jerry Almendarez
and Councilman Johnathan Hernandez

The purpose of NG Live is to share the amazing ways that people are changing the story all around us that may often go unnoticed, and to provide a platform to some of our most committed and impassioned community members and stakeholders to share the incredible work they are doing and the service they are engaging in. At Neutral Ground, we believe that every single person has a story that is worth sharing and worth hearing, and we wanted to create a space to ensure that others feel that themselves and their stories are worthy of being seen and heard.

On August 18th, 2022, we hosted NG Live with special guest Superintendent Almendarez of the Santa Ana Unified School District, and on August 25th, 2022 we hosted it with special guest Councilman Hernandez of Ward 5 of Santa Ana. You can watch the full videos at the links below to listen to how these local superheroes are changing the story, partnerships with NG, the importance of trauma-informed care and restorative practices for SAUSD students, Chicano Heritage Month and more!



Just In: The Neutral Ground Official Gear Shop!



Purchase Online at This Link:

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Purchase Online at This Link:

Donating to Neutral Ground

What Your Kindness Can Do

Neutral Ground is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, in which **every single one of our programs & services comes at no-cost** to the youth, families, and community members we serve. Much of our funding comes from our contracts with our SAUSD schools to provide restorative justice practitioners and services, which means that **we rely on individualized donations, grants, and sponsorships** from people like you to continue serving our community.

Any amount you are able to provide will directly benefit the youth we are serving, and **you will be actively contributing to community-based gang & violence prevention and intervention** within your community. Please share our story, our programming, and our donation information with others, so we can continue to change the story!



Paypal: bree@ngservices.org
via Paypal account or credit/debit
card

Donating to Neutral Ground

What Your Kindness Can Do

\$5.00

Sponsor boxing wraps for one youth in NGBC OR sponsor one grocery item for Nati's House residents

Sponsor 2-3 grocery items for Nati's House residents OR 2-3 basic school supplies for students we serve

\$10.00

\$25.00

Sponsor snacks and water for one month of NGBC participants OR sponsor half of the initial basic groceries for a Nati's House resident

Sponsor one pair of boxing gloves for NGBC OR sponsor one month's groceries for a Nati's House resident

\$50.00

\$100.00

Sponsor one punching bag for NGBC OR sponsor a bus pass and \$60 worth of groceries for a resident of Nati's House

Sponsor one punching bag and three pairs of boxing gloves for NGBC OR sponsor one youth we serve with all new school supplies

\$250.00

\$500.00

Sponsor one youth we serve with new clothing & shoes OR sponsor almost 13 bus passes for youth we serve to attend school and/or Neutral Ground's programming

Sponsor 3 pallets of dry goods for families in need OR sponsor 2-4 youth we serve with new clothing & shoes

\$1000.00

Developing a presence, forming relationships, and changing the story

Changing the Story

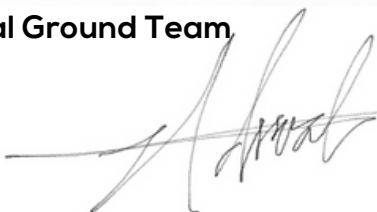
To the Neutral Ground Family,

On behalf of all of us here at the Neutral Ground team, we want to thank you for supporting our most recent community-based events and endeavors. Between our five weeks of Summer Night Lights programming, our return to our schools to facilitate restorative practices, and the first annual Chicano Heritage Festival, Neutral Ground has been working tirelessly to serve our community, to meet our most vulnerable youth where they are at, and to change the story.

I was born and raised in Santa Ana, and spent a significant portion of my youth at El Salvador Park –where our SNL programming and our CHF event both took place. It warms my heart to see this space that myself and so many others have understood to be a controlled territory, a park not safe for the youth it was built for, a place sometimes characterized by violence, trauma, and disinvestment, transform into a place of healing, restoration, community, and kinship. Neutral Ground is changing the story of our parks, our streets, and our communities.

If you would like to become more involved with Neutral Ground or if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, our contact information is located below. Thank you again! Let's continue to change the story!

In community,
Executive Director Pastor Nati Alvarado & The
Neutral Ground Team



Neutralground



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Neutralground

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