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Clorox Supports Safe Haven for Teens

Laura Bilskey | 10/25/2010

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Imagine an inner-city scene. People – friends, family, neighbors – just trying to get by in a tough neighborhood wrought with the challenges many major metropolitan cities face today. In the midst of it all lies a quiet oasis; a place where kids from this underserved community can go to get help with homework, play sports, meet-up with friends and receive support. Housed in a nondescript beige building with purple trim, it's a place many young people look forward to going most every day.

Highlights

- The East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC) aims to provide youth from underserved areas an opportunity to pursue a more promising future.
- Clorox been involved with the for nearly 40 years, from it's founding to volunteering there today.
- This year The Clorox Company Foundation made a grant of \$500,000 to help improve the EOYDC facilities.

People

This is the East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC); a place where kids in east Oakland, California can go to flourish.

Enter through the main doors on any given day and you are likely to be hit with an overwhelming wall of heat as you enter a dimly lit gymnasium. You'll see a group of boys on the basketball court in a fierce competition to win bragging rights of a victory. The building may be a bit worn from excessive use, it may not have air conditioning, it may be dark, but this place is a home, a safe haven for many young people. It's a place where "Ms. Regina," the executive director, is right there to welcome students, ask about their day and give them the encouragement they need to achieve their dreams – whatever their dreams may be.



Keeping with Bob Shetterly's vision of an urban community center where young people could go and thrive, the EOYDC provides many programs from job training to art programs. Children have the opportunity to explore their personal creative expression with help from professional artists.

A Clorox cause for decades, changing lives today

I first visited the EOYDC (or the "Center," as members often call it) in April of 2010, as part of a Diamond Leadership Institute (DLI) program. I was immediately moved by the mission of the organization, the positive impact it has on underserved children's lives and the role Clorox has played in the EOYDC since the very beginning. The EOYDC was actually founded by former Clorox CEO Bob Shetterly in 1973 as a way to give back to the neighborhood where Clorox started.

Through educational, recreational and artistic programs, the EOYDC helps kids build their self-esteem, develop their skills and expand their vision of what their future could be. Since its inception, the EOYDC has provided services to over 30,000 members of the Oakland community and has been recognized for its successful job training, Pathway to College scholarship, GED and athletic programs – turning out many track stars and basketball heroes such as Brian Shaw, Leon Powe, Jason Kidd and Gary Payton. While the EOYDC has helped some excel in athletics, it's enabled thousands of others to graduate from college, foster successful careers, and drastically improve their lives and those of their families.

Clorox gives \$500,000 grant to the EOYDC and individual employees volunteer their time

Regina Jackson, executive director of the EOYDC, would be the first of many to say that "The Center's relationship with Clorox has been critical to its success." The EOYDC was the very first nonprofit organization supported by The Clorox Company Foundation. And it makes perfect sense; the mission of the Foundation and the EOYDC are closely aligned. Both focus on enriching the lives of youth through educational and arts programs.

The Foundation has supported the EOYDC for more than 30 years and this year we made one of our largest contributions yet: a \$500,000 multi-year grant. This funding will pay for much-needed facility upgrades including a central ventilation system, improved lighting and refurbished bathrooms.

Regina described the children's reaction to the recent upgrades, "Blank faces faded and smiles grew as the children toured their upgraded gym, almost shielding their eyes from the unexpected brightness of the new gym lighting. Then, as they opened the bathroom doors, they said, 'Wow! Clorox did this all for us? This is the best bathroom I have ever seen!'"

The Foundation plays a big part in the EOYDC, but it's not the only way Clorox is involved with the EOYDC. George Roeth, General Manager – Specialty Division, has served on the Center's Foundation Board for over 10 years. "Every youth deserves a safe environment and equal opportunity" said George. "I am awed by what a difference the EOYDC makes in the lives of very deserving children in need and proud of the role Clorox has played in The Center since its inception."



The EOYDC is viewed as a 'safehaven' for many in the East Oakland community.

Last year's DLI's Leadership Forum allowed me and several others to enhance our skills by helping the Center solve some real business challenges. We were all touched by the work being done at the EOYDC, the passion of the organization's staff and their track record of changing the lives of youth in the Oakland community. After the experience, I joined together with


several other DLI participants to identify ways we could continue supporting the EOYDC. For example, I volunteer on the Center's Community Board and I am currently working to help coordinate a volunteer day for a marketing group at the EOYDC in November.

You can help make a difference

Clorox is making a difference at the EOYDC through the Foundation and individual employees' desire to give back.

If you'd like to learn more, donate or get involved with the EOYDC, please visit their website (<http://www.eoydc.org/>) or contact [Laura Bilskey](#) (510-271-3199) for more details.

The EOYDC was recently showcased in a World News Tonight episode on ABC as an organization that is solving big problems in Oakland. Substantive building upgrades have been sacrificed over the years in order to preserve quality programming.

[Watch the video here.](#) 

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Great work, great cause!

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Very cool. Oakland is better for it. thank you.

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I am proud to work for a company that is really making life better for the less fortunate.

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Hi Laura! great to learn about the on-going activities and to see the continuing support. All the best. Bobby

We make everyday life better, every day.