



Contact: Jessica Nolan Daugherty
jdaugherty@newearthlife.org
714.390.6301
www.newearthlife.org

September 10, 2015
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Innovative Leadership Program for Formerly Incarcerated Youth Opens in Culver City Official Opening of the New Earth Arts and Leadership Center

Los Angeles, CA: New Earth, a non profit organization that provides mentor-based arts, educational, and vocational programs for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth, ages 13-24, just opened a comprehensive re-entry center that includes educational programs, a career training center, jobs, and other services focused on life skills and leadership.

The center serves as an alternative to incarceration for youth who have been in and out of the system, a supportive academic site for youth who currently reside in a group home or are in foster care, an educational site for youth who have been suspended or expelled or dropped out, and a creative progressive experiential model for those who are in need of a high school diploma, vocational development, and other wrap around services. Partnership with the John Muir Charter School of California and YouthBuild provides the on-site academic program – New Earth YouthBuild.

On August 24th, at 8:30AM, 30 bleary eyed young adults arrived for the first day of school at 6001 Bristol Parkway in Culver City. Like many first days of school, there was electric energy in air, a bit of disorganization, and a plethora of awkward introductions. There were also rival gang members, probation officers, and court hearings to deal with.

Unlike in traditional educational settings, New Earth students bring a variety of personal, academic, and alternative experiences and assets with them. In order to create a tight-knit culture that celebrates this diversity and fosters shared responsibilities, respect, and collaboration, the first two weeks of programming are explicitly focused on "Mental Toughness" orientation. David Durand, Site Director of New Earth YouthBuild, explained mental toughness as *"an effort to build community using leadership development and restorative justice practices as tools for transformation while also checking each applicant's 'mental toughness' –desire to be in the program and willingness and ability to work hard, get along with others, and make change in the community."* After completing Mental Toughness, students receive an invitation to participate in the formal academic program.

The New Earth YouthBuild program can accommodate up to 100 young people aged 16-24. Each day begins at 8:30AM and ends at 3:30PM. Admission is 100% free and enrollment is on a rolling basis. If you would like to visit the center, enroll in the educational program, speak to one of the students, or want more information, please contact Jessica Daugherty at 714.390.6301. More photos available upon request.

ABOUT: New Earth provides mentor-based arts, educational, and vocational programs that empower juvenile justice system involved youth ages 13-25 to transform their lives, move toward positive, healthier life choices, and realize their full potential as contributing members of our community. New Earth is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization. ###

