

## **Create Now Facts**

### ***Transforming the Lives of At-risk and High-risk Youth in Los Angeles***

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**WHO WE ARE:** **Create Now** is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that transforms the lives of the most troubled youth in Los Angeles through creative arts mentoring, education, resources, and opportunities. We serve high-risk and at-risk children and youth ages 2 to 25 who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, orphaned (foster children), are homeless, runaways, teen parents, victims of domestic violence, substance abusers, gang members or incarcerated. For 13 years, we've reached over 18,000 of these high-risk and at-risk children and youth.

**WHO WE SERVE:** The youth we serve come from poverty-stricken families with histories of violence, substance abuse, or neglect. These "forgotten children" are tucked away in group homes, shelters, detention facilities, special centers and schools throughout the region, under the radar of the general public.

**WHY WE EXIST:** Over 102,000 children in California are currently in foster care due to child abuse and neglect. A child in California is abused or neglected every four minutes, the most in the United States. More than 450,000 youth were arrested in California last year and 18,000 are now in correctional facilities. 80,000 kids are members of gangs in our city. In addition, there are 13,000 runaways and 25,000 homeless children living on the streets of Los Angeles.

**WHAT WE DO:** Founded in 1996 by screenwriter Jill Gurr, the organization has since reached over 18,000 Southern California-area high-risk and at-risk youth through arts mentoring programs such as writing, painting, music, dance, video production and cultural excursions. With these projects, the children learn to express themselves in a positive manner that can be shared with others, as they enhance their skills, learn teamwork and develop self-worth and confidence. It helps them to heal from traumatic experiences, while teaching them about potential careers.

**OUR OUTCOMES:** Writers, artists, photographers, musicians, dancers, filmmakers and other creative individuals volunteer as mentors. They encourage English skills, cooperation, self-discipline, accountability and self-respect. They work closely with the children, usually every week, teaching them the basics of their art. Just as our mentors inspire our youth, our mentors are also inspired through their ability to use their talents to guide and heal the lives of these disadvantaged kids. They are also exposed to worlds they have never known. They learn of diverse sub-cultures, with unique traditions, languages and rules.

**Create Now** encourages program participants to work towards a common purpose with their mentors. They develop trust in an adult, which for many of these children is unheard of in their traumatic lives. The fact that the mentors come from outside "the system" to visit them on a regular basis is astonishing to them. The self-esteem gained through sharing with others what they have created is invaluable.

