

## **West Coast Credible Messengers Program Testimonials**

### **Anthony., Credible Messenger**

*"Being a Credible Messenger has been transformative not just for the youth I mentor but for me as well. Coming from a similar background, I understand their struggles and aspirations. I've seen firsthand how my story of overcoming adversity inspires them to make positive changes in their lives. This program is not just about reducing recidivism; it's about empowering individuals to realize their potential and break the cycle of violence and incarceration."*

### **Rosa, Program Participant**

*"Before joining the Credible Messengers Program, I felt trapped by my circumstances. Meeting my mentor, someone who had been through what I was going through, gave me hope. They didn't just talk at me; they listened and understood. They helped me find a job, stay in school, and believe that I could have a future. This program saved my life."*

### **Laurence Community Partner**

*"Working alongside the Credible Messengers has been eye-opening. Their unique approach and genuine connection with the youth have achieved what traditional methods often fail to do. They build trust and rapport that can lead to real, lasting change. This partnership has made our community safer and more cohesive, proving that rehabilitation and support can be more effective than punishment alone."*

### **Lisandra Barrera-Rising Director of The Women's Empowerment Network**

*"The Credible Messengers Program has filled a critical gap in our community. These mentors, with their lived experiences, provide a perspective and level of understanding that traditional social services often lack. Their impact on youth is profound, offering guidance, support, and a tangible example of success after adversity. It's a reminder of the power of peer mentorship and the importance of community-driven solutions."*

### **Philip Labeled A Gang Member and Now A Credible Messenger Mentor**

*"I used to be part of the problem in my community, but now, through the Credible Messengers Program, I'm part of the solution. Sharing my story with young people who are where I once was helps them see that change is possible. This program gives them hope and a path forward. It's about turning our past mistakes into a powerful message for the next generation."*

### **Emily R., Parent of a Participant**

*"My son was on a dangerous path, and I felt helpless. The Credible Messengers Program connected him with a mentor who truly understood him. This mentor didn't judge him but offered*

*support and guidance. I've seen a remarkable change in my son's behavior and attitude. He's now focused on his education and has a job. This program has been a blessing to our family."*

### **Ryan Flaco Rising Executive Director**

*"The success of the Credible Messengers Program lies in its authenticity. Our mentors are not just counselors; they are individuals who have walked the same difficult paths as the youth they guide. This shared experience fosters a unique bond and credibility that facilitates real change. We've seen incredible transformations, proving that with the right support and mentorship, anyone can turn their life around."*

These testimonials highlight the transformative impact of the West Coast Credible Messengers Programs, showcasing the profound changes in individuals and communities through genuine, peer-based mentorship.

## **West Coast Credible Messengers Impact Report**

### **Overview**

The West Coast Credible Messengers Programs, operating in Long Beach and Orange County Juvenile Hall, aim to reduce recidivism, promote positive behavioral changes, and support the social rehabilitation of at-risk youth through transformative mentoring. This report highlights the significant impact these programs have had over the past year.

### **Long Beach Program Impact**

#### **Program Overview:**

- **Participants:** 150 youth
- **Mentors:** 25 credible messengers
- **Duration:** 12 months

#### **Key Achievements:**

1. **Reduction in Recidivism:**
  - 75% decrease in reoffending rates among participants.
  - Only 10% of participants were rearrested within six months after completing the program, compared to 40% in a control group.
2. **Educational Attainment:**
  - 80% of participants improved their school attendance.
  - 65% reported better academic performance, with a significant number achieving honor roll status.

3. **Employment and Skill Development:**
  - 70% of participants engaged in job training programs.
  - 50% secured part-time or full-time employment within three months of program completion.
4. **Behavioral Changes:**
  - Significant decrease in gang involvement and violent behavior.
  - 85% of participants reported improved relationships with family and peers.
5. **Community Integration:**
  - 60% of participants involved in community service projects.
  - Enhanced community cohesion and support networks through program activities.

#### **Testimonials:**

- **Participant:** "The program helped me see a different path for my life. My mentor showed me that I can achieve anything I set my mind to."
- **Parent:** "My son has turned his life around. He's back in school and doing well, thanks to the support of his mentor."

#### **Orange County Juvenile Hall Program Impact**

##### **Program Overview:**

- **Participants:** 100 youth
- **Mentors:** 20 credible messengers
- **Duration:** 12 months

##### **Key Achievements:**

1. **Reduction in Recidivism:**
  - 70% decrease in reoffending rates among participants.
  - Only 15% of participants were rearrested within six months after completing the program, compared to 45% in a control group.
2. **Educational Attainment:**
  - 75% of participants improved their school attendance.
  - 60% reported better academic performance, with many pursuing higher education opportunities.
3. **Employment and Skill Development:**
  - 65% of participants engaged in job training programs.
  - 45% secured part-time or full-time employment within three months of program completion.
4. **Behavioral Changes:**
  - Significant decrease in substance abuse and aggressive behavior.
  - 80% of participants reported improved self-esteem and self-control.
5. **Community Integration:**
  - 55% of participants involved in community service projects.

- Strengthened ties between participants and local community organizations.

### **Testimonials:**

- **Participant:** "Having a mentor who understands me has made all the difference. I'm now focused on my future and staying out of trouble."
- **Juvenile Hall Staff:** "The Credible Messengers Program has brought a positive change to our facility. The youth are more motivated and hopeful about their futures."

### **Conclusion**

The Credible Messengers Programs in Long Beach and Orange County Juvenile Hall have demonstrated substantial success in reducing recidivism, enhancing educational and employment outcomes, and fostering positive behavioral changes among participants. These programs highlight the importance of peer-based mentoring and community support in the rehabilitation and empowerment of at-risk youth. Continued investment and support for such initiatives are crucial for building safer, more resilient communities.

## **Success Stories from the West Coast Credible Messengers Programs**

### **Long Beach Program**

#### **Success Story 1: Jason L.**

- **Background:** Jason was deeply involved in gang activities and had multiple arrests for violent offenses. His future seemed bleak, with limited prospects for change.
- **Intervention:** Through the Credible Messengers Program, Jason was paired with Ryan Flaco Rising, a mentor who had a similar past but turned his life around. Flaco worked with Jason, helping him set realistic goals and find alternative ways to channel his energy.
- **Outcome:** Jason's transformation was remarkable. He enrolled in a local community college, joined a sports team, and eventually secured a part-time job at a community center. His academic performance improved significantly, and he became a positive role model for his peers.
- **Testimonial:** "Flaco showed me that my past didn't have to define my future. With his guidance, I found a path to success and happiness I never thought possible."

#### **Success Story 2: Maria R.**

- **Background:** Maria struggled with school attendance and was on the verge of dropping out. She faced familial issues and had little support at home.
- **Intervention:** Lisa, a Credible Messenger with a background of overcoming similar challenges, connected with Maria. Lisa provided consistent support, helping Maria navigate her educational and personal difficulties.
- **Outcome:** Maria's school attendance and grades improved dramatically. She joined a peer support group and became active in community service projects. Maria graduated high school and is now pursuing a degree in social work, inspired to help others like herself.
- **Testimonial:** "Lisa believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself. She helped me see that I could achieve more and be more than my circumstances."

## Orange County Juvenile Hall Program

### Success Story 1: David H.

- **Background:** David was incarcerated for drug-related offenses and struggled with substance abuse. He had little hope for rehabilitation and reintegration into society.
- **Intervention:** David was paired with Tyrone, a mentor who had overcome his own battles with addiction and the justice system. Tyrone's guidance and unwavering support helped David through the toughest times.
- **Outcome:** David completed a rehabilitation program and developed a passion for helping others in similar situations. He now works as a counselor in a local rehab center and is pursuing certification in addiction counseling.
- **Testimonial:** "Tyrone showed me that recovery was possible. His belief in me gave me the strength to change my life and help others do the same."

### Success Story 2: Veronica K.

- **Background:** Emily had a history of violent behavior and was a frequent resident of the juvenile hall. She felt isolated and misunderstood.
- **Intervention:** Through the program, Emily was mentored by Lisa, who had also experienced violence and incarceration in her youth. Lisa's empathy and practical advice helped Emily manage her anger and find healthier ways to express herself.
- **Outcome:** Emily's behavior improved significantly. She became involved in conflict resolution workshops and peer mentoring. Emily was released early for good behavior and is now a youth advocate, working to prevent violence among teenagers.
- **Testimonial:** "Lisa helped me see that I wasn't alone and that I could control my future. Her support changed my life, and now I'm committed to helping others find their way."

## Conclusion

These success stories from the Long Beach and Orange County Juvenile Hall Credible Messengers Programs illustrate the profound impact of peer mentoring and support. By leveraging the lived experiences of credible messengers, these programs offer hope, guidance,

and tangible pathways to a better future for at-risk youth. The transformations of Jason, Maria, David, and Emily underscore the effectiveness of this approach in fostering resilience, empowerment, and lasting change.

## **West Coast Credible Messengers Alumni Network**

### **Overview**

The West Coast Credible Messengers Alumni Network is an initiative designed to maintain and strengthen the connections between former participants of the Credible Messengers Programs in Long Beach and Orange County Juvenile Hall. This network serves as a platform for ongoing support, professional development, and community engagement, ensuring that the positive changes achieved during the program continue to flourish and benefit the broader community.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Alumni Network is to:

1. **Support Continued Growth:** Provide ongoing mentorship, resources, and opportunities for alumni to continue their personal and professional development.
2. **Foster Community Engagement:** Encourage alumni to give back to their communities through volunteering, advocacy, and leadership roles.
3. **Build a Strong Network:** Create a robust network of former participants who can support each other, share experiences, and collaborate on community initiatives.

### **Key Components**

1. **Mentorship Program:**
  - Alumni are paired with new program participants or younger alumni to offer guidance and support.
  - Regular check-ins and mentoring sessions help mentees navigate challenges and achieve their goals.
2. **Professional Development:**
  - Workshops and seminars on resume writing, job interviewing, and career planning.
  - Partnerships with local businesses and organizations to provide internships and job opportunities.
  - Access to educational resources and scholarships for continued learning.
3. **Community Service and Advocacy:**
  - Opportunities for alumni to engage in community service projects, such as neighborhood clean-ups, youth sports coaching, and educational outreach.
  - Training in advocacy and public speaking to empower alumni to become voices for change in their communities.

#### 4. **Networking Events:**

- Regular meet-ups, both virtual and in-person, to foster connections among alumni.
- Guest speakers and panel discussions featuring successful alumni and community leaders.
- Annual Alumni Summit to celebrate achievements, share stories, and plan future initiatives.

#### 5. **Resource Hub:**

- An online portal where alumni can access resources, find job listings, and connect with other alumni.
- Forums and discussion groups for sharing experiences, advice, and support.

### **Testimonials**

**Alonzo., Alumni Member:** *"The Alumni Network has been invaluable to me. After completing the program, I wanted to stay connected and continue my growth. Through the network, I've found job opportunities, met inspiring mentors, and stayed involved in my community. It's a great way to give back and stay on a positive path."*

**Lisa R., Alumni Member:** *"Being part of the Alumni Network has given me a sense of belonging and purpose. I've had the chance to mentor younger participants, which has been incredibly rewarding. The professional development workshops helped me land a job I love, and the community service projects keep me grounded and connected."*

**Elijah G., Alumni Member:** *"The support doesn't end when the program does. The Alumni Network has provided me with continuous mentorship and resources that have been crucial in my journey. I've also had the opportunity to help others, which reinforces my commitment to staying on the right path."*

**Rebecca., Alumni Member:** *"Through the Alumni Network, I've built lasting relationships and found numerous opportunities to grow and contribute. It's a powerful reminder that we're not alone and that our past doesn't define our future. The network is a community of support and empowerment."*

### **Conclusion**

The West Coast Credible Messengers Alumni Network exemplifies the lasting impact of the Credible Messengers Programs. By fostering continued growth, community engagement, and strong support networks, the Alumni Network ensures that the positive transformations experienced by program participants endure and multiply, benefiting not only the individuals involved but also their broader communities.

