



## Grant funds anti-gang programs at San Lorenzo High School

San Lorenzo program helping 50 youths

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The Daily Review

Posted: 03/07/2009 03:13:36 PM PST

Updated: 03/07/2009 09:03:15 PM PST

SAN LORENZO — A \$220,000 grant from the California Corrections Standards Authority is funding a program at San Lorenzo High School that attempts to intervene before students fall into gang life.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office applied for the grant to help address community concerns about youth violence in the unincorporated areas of Alameda County, particularly in San Lorenzo, Ashland and Cherryland.

"Our pitch was that we wanted to collaboratively ameliorate the situation with kids and families who have limited resources," said Andrea Starn, supervisor of the county's Youth and Family Services Bureau.

The grant was awarded to the Sheriff's Office on Jan. 2. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors officially accepted the money last week. The intervention program began at the high school immediately.

"School staff and parents that we work with are saying we need some help here," Starn said. "In middle schools and high schools, kids are being asked every day, 'Who do you claim? Who do you roll with?' There's pressure to align with one of the various factions that exist, whether it's Norteno or

Sureno, or the smaller ethnic or neighborhood gangs."

Fifty "at-risk" students at San Lorenzo High are now participating in anti-gang counseling during the school day. Most of the students are on probation or have been identified by school staff and the probation department as being at risk for committing crimes associated with gangs.

Five therapists are providing the students with individual and group counseling. Parents can also receive counseling and attend events facilitated by experts. In addition, the grant funds monthly forums during which the at-risk students will be exposed to a variety of resources that cover job training, drug and alcohol treatment, social services, academic assistance and recreation.

The grant is federal money administered by the state Correction Standards Authority Department and is being implemented by the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, in partnership with the San Lorenzo Unified School District, the Alameda County Probation Department, the Deputy Sheriff Activities League and the Associated Community Action Program.

The money provides funding from Jan. 2 to June 30 for the intensive intervention of at-risk students, Starn said. "We're going to be looking for creative ways to find more funding to continue the most effective kind of services we can to kids who are at risk."

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