



# SOUTH CENTRAL YOUTH EMPOWERED THROUGH ACTION

## BACKSTORY

In the early 1990s, as the War on Drugs was in full swing, mainstream media were referring to Black & Brown youth as the “Lost Generation” and the term “super predator” had become etched into the nation’s consciousness. Our youth’s futures were placed on a track from underfunded schools to prison cells due to the draconian incarceration policies implemented at national and local levels.

In 1991, Community Coalition first established South Central Youth Empowered thru Action (SCYEA) to organize against these trends and provide Black & Brown youth with a different path forward. Through SCYEA, our youth-led campaigns ever since have aimed to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and win critical funding for high-need schools in South LA.

Our youth’s leadership development is a central component of SCYEA. It’s a regular occurrence to watch a shy ninth grader morph into a fierce, outspoken, driven activist with plans to dedicate their lives to fighting for racial justice by the time of graduation.



## COCO'S SCYEA PROGRAM

SCYEA organizes Black & Brown students across several South LA high school campuses, including Crenshaw, Manual Arts, Washington Prep, Augustus Hawkins, and others.

The core leadership group of 60 leaders help facilitate weekly high school organizing committees and lunch club meetings with approximately 500 students and approximately 100 active cohort students.

This core leadership group also receives additional political education, leadership development, and direct college prep services at CoCo’s headquarters.



## SUCCESSES



*Annetta Wells was SCYEA Class of 1997 and currently serves as the Deputy Political Director for SEIU 2015, California’s largest long term care union representing over 325,000 workers.*



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**Elmer Roldan**  
SCYEA Class of 1997 and is currently  
the *Executive Director at Communities in  
Schools*.



**Terrick Gutierrez**  
SCYEA Class of 2013 Fremont High  
*Morehouse College Psychology*  
NYU Grad Student *Interactive Telecomm.*



**Catherine Hernandez**  
SCYEA Class of 2009  
*John F. Kennedy High*  
*Otis College of Art & Design*  
*Architecture*  
Architect, Designer of *CoCo Renovation*

## PREVIOUS CAMPAIGNS

**1995**

### ANTI-TOBACCO BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN

SCYEA members exposed an illegal over concentration of alcohol & tobacco ads, forcing a city ordinance into place that disallowed ads to be within a certain distance from schools & parks.

**1997**

### PROPOSITION BETTER BUILDINGS (BB)

SCYEA leaders took disposable cameras into their schools to expose the dilapidated conditions. Due to their public pressure campaign, South LA schools were given \$153 million to address these conditions.

**2005**

### A-G FOR ALL

SCYEA leaders launched a five-year effort to make A-G courses the default curriculum throughout the district so that all students had equal access to college. This policy has dramatically improved educational outcomes as graduation rates went from 64% in 2005 to 80% in 2017.

**2011**

### FREEDOM SCHOOLS

The Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools is a national literacy enrichment program aimed at ending the cradle-to-prison pipeline. CoCo's CDF Freedom School has expanded to serve over 150 scholars each summer.

**2013**

### SCHOOL CLIMATE BILL OF RIGHTS

SCYEA leaders worked with the Brothers, Sons, Selves (BSS) Coalition to win the passage of The School Climate Bill of Rights, which prevents schools from suspending or expelling students for "willful defiance", a catch-all for behavior conflicts. There are now more Restorative Justice approaches to address student misbehavior.

**2014**

### EQUITY IS JUSTICE

SCYEA youth and parents launched Equity is Justice to get LAUSD to adopt the Student Equity Needs Index, a data-driven comprehensive tool to identify the schools most in need. This formula ensures that schools with the highest needs often times in South LA, receive an equitable share of resources.

**2017**

Over \$150 million is allocated to the 50 highest-need schools in the district using the Student Equity Needs Index as a guide.

**2019**

The Student Equity Needs Index 2.0 was used to allocate \$282 million for the fiscal year 2020-2021 to high and highest needs schools.

**2021**

Students and parents organize to get the LAUSD Board to allocate \$700 million for the high and highest needs schools in LAUSD, a historic victory.



/CoCoSouthLA