



The Argonaut

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Venice: 27 in Youthbuild Program of Community Housing Corp. complete training

A local chapter of the Youthbuild Program, facilitated by the nonprofit Venice Community Housing Corporation, graduated 27 students in January.

The Youthbuild Program involves youths 17 to 24 years old who have grown up in poverty or under other difficult circumstances such as crime and drug problems.

"We work with most types of disenfranchised youths who apply for inclusion in our program," says Youthbuild spokeswoman Anne Murphy.

"Some of our program graduates had received their high school diplomas while in jail and need to get some job training when they get out," says Murphy. "We try to resolve any issue that may keep the youths from getting a job.

"We've helped individuals get their drivers' licenses, helped them to stop smoking pot, or get tattoos removed — whatever the individual's need may be."

The program offers participants an 18-month course that teaches basic construction work skills. The students are enrolled in a trade apprentice program and some are eventually placed in building trade union or advanced learning programs.

Some students receive assistance in enrolling in college or trade school.

Twenty-seven of the 33 youths who were enrolled in last year's program graduated from the program, Murphy says.

The Venice-based Youthbuild program began in 1998 as part of a larger national effort that had existed since the early '80s.

The program is jointly funded by the federal Housing and Urban Development Department, Youthbuild USA Capacity Building Initiative, the County of Los Angeles Probation Department and by State of California Employment Development funds.