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**KidWorks commemorates 30 years of unleashing**

**youth potential in central Santa Ana**

***Public celebration in Jerome Park set for June 1***

SANTA ANA, California, March 08, 2024 -- KidWorks, a Santa Ana-based 501(C) (3) nonprofit organization, will conclude its year-long commemoration of 30 years of providing academic, leadership and personal development programs for children and teens in under-resourced neighborhoods in central Santa Ana with a free public celebration on Saturday, June 1 from 11-2 PMin the city’s Jerome Park.  
The celebration will include live music, inspiring speakers and performances along with jumpers and carnival games and fun.

Since its inception, KidWorks has been investing in the lives of Santa Ana’s youngest residents and their families, firmly believing that a zip code should not determine a child’s future.

Founded in 1993 by Pastor Larry and Jayme Acosta, KidWorks began in a tiny, one-room apartment on Townsend Street as a summer program for children and youth. From the beginning, college students were recruited to live and work in the community and serve in their programs. KidWorks current executive director, David Benavides, was one of the original college interns.

Over the years, KidWorks has transformed into a vibrant community development non-profit that includes a fully licensed preschool, after-school programs, tutoring, mentoring, college preparation programs, and adult services in the areas of health, parenting classes, and support groups.

The ultimate outcome is to mold self-reliant young adults who are equipped to succeed in life and are motivated to give back. The story of KidWorks is reflected in their program statistics:

* 99% of KidWorks high school seniors have graduated on time and continued onto higher education for nearly a decade.
* 98% of KidWorks high school students believe they are equipped to solve challenges they face.
* 89% of KidWorks preschool graduates enter Kindergarten with the necessary skills and emotional readiness to thrive.
* 88% of KidWorks youth view themselves as leaders and serve in meaningful leadership roles.
* 75% of KidWorks college students persisted and are on track to graduate since our College and Career Success Initiative (CCSI) program launched

Says Benavides, “In partnership with all of our valued supporters and volunteers, we make an 18-year commitment to students and their families, fostering trusted relationships as we guide them towards life-changing opportunities and a brighter future.”

Going forward, he said KidWorks’ three-year vision for program expansion includes strengthening core programs, amplifying leadership opportunities, and growing the organization to serve more youth.

To learn more about KidWorks 30th anniversary celebration, please visit [www.kidworksoc.org](http://www.kidworksoc.org)/celebrate. To donate, contact Lisa Gels, KidWorks’ Associate Director of Development, at lisa.gels@kidworksoc.org or 714-269-9209.

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