FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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From Youth Justice to Artistic Expression: LA Youth Design Their Future at Department of Youth Development "Built By Us" Summit

LOS ANGELES — Powered by sunny skies and incredible energy, hundreds of excited young people converged on The Beehive in South Los Angeles today for the Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development's (DYD) annual Youth Summit. Joined by families and community partners from across LA County, attendees celebrated an inspirational day of creativity, connection, and empowerment.

"This year's theme, 'Built By Us,' is about a simple truth: programs only work if they actually make sense for the young people we serve," said DYD Director David J. Carroll. "If we want stronger, more resilient communities, it starts with listening to and empowering youth. When we give young people real support and practical tools, they do better in school, feel more secure, and grow into successful adults."

Co-led by young people and local community partners, this free community event brought together nearly 800 youth and adults for live music, artistic creation, stage performances, and interactive hands-on workshops. Session topics included *Build Your Future: Turning Ideas Into Opportunity, Build Your Platform: Turn Your Content Into Your Brand, Build Through Art, Build in 3D: Intro to 3D Printing Design, and Building the Continuum: DYD's Care-First Approach to Youth Justice*—an overview of DYD's approach to supporting system-involved youth across the youth justice continuum, from arrest and detention through reentry. The summit featured an inspiring keynote address by Better Days Founder and Executive Director Jarrett Harper, a lunchtime DJ session provided by 93.5 KDAY, and live performances by Los Angeles-based artists Chef Boy and Kalan.FrFr.

Since its founding in 2022, DYD has empowered tens of thousands of young people by partnering with community organizations to provide prevention, diversion, and reentry programs—including mentorship, job training, and counseling—that keep youth out of the justice system and connected to education and opportunity.

The department's newly released 4 Years of DYD impact report highlights the scale of DYD's work, including more than 54,800 youth engagements through community-based programs, 1,200+ youth diverted this year from the legal system, and a 95% success rate of participants moving forward after completing diversion programs. DYD's Heart of Youth Justice Reimagined initiative has engaged over 1,900 youth leaders in building community and shaping policy. Collectively, these collaborations demonstrate how DYD's care-first approach—rooted in prevention, mentorship, healthy development and healing—has become a model for strengthening youth well-being across Los Angeles County.

Click here for photos and videos from the "Built By Us" 2026 Youth Summit.

About the Department of Youth Development (DYD)

The Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development leads a care-first approach to youth justice. In collaboration with public agencies and community partners, DYD connects young people and families to culturally responsive, trauma-informed support that reduces system involvement and strengthens well-being. DYD's work centers youth voices, values prevention, and builds safer communities through healing and opportunity.

To learn more, visit DYD.LA and follow @LACountyYouth on Instagram.

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