

**Youth Empowered Solutions:
New Name and Focus!**

On Wednesday, April 23, at the Bradley Tower in Los Angeles City Hall, we held the first **Youth Empowered Solutions (YES!) Forum!** Nine high schools were invited: Addams, Cleveland, Cortines, Dorsey, Grant, Hamilton, Newmark, Thoreau and Venice.

This year we invited the current City Council, Board of Education members and staff, whose offices represent the attending schools. They talked about the issues in their communities and what they were doing to address them. Mayor Garcetti's arrival was exciting and his comments to the students were inspiring. He focused directly on civic engagement and service learning.

This year's forum was a learning experience. As students sat in mixed groups of 8-10 students, each from a different school, their facilitator guided them throughout the day. Students asked officials about issues in their community and what they were doing to address them. **This was a conversation rather than a presentation.**

The students' evaluation comments are now being compiled so that we can get a sense of the effect this experience had on them. The first flurry seems to confirm that students were excited about sitting down with people currently in office in their communities. They also learned that there are young people who are staff members of elected officials—and that there are opportunities for internships in their offices.

-Zhita Rea, Chair
Youth Outreach Committee