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## EVENT PRESS RELEASE

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Photos courtesy of Community Outreach Ministry

### Students Recognized for Achievements During Difficult Times

Riverside County Superintendent Judy D. White, Ed.D. spoke at a March State of Education Address luncheon. White discussed the Riverside County Office of Education's "Year Of Our Youth" accomplishments. Those in attendance included educators, businesses, government, civic, faith-based and community leaders. Also excited to be there celebrating the student's achievements was Community Outreach Ministry, a non-profit organization focused on *giving at-risk kids a second chance to be winners and champions*. The group's mission is to help break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, drugs, violence, delinquency, gangs, and incarceration in at-risk youth affected by parental incarceration.

The "Year Of Our Youth" luncheon recognized both students and teachers along with other faculty members who were instrumental in guiding youth to prepare for the workforce and for college as well as deepen their understanding of the importance of civic responsibility. Community Outreach Ministry Co-founder Dr. Mona Davies, author of *Children's Liberation From Incarceration Breaking Cycles New Beginnings* recommends *Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration Model* that she developed through a social science research project using the personal stories of children, caregivers, and incarcerated parents as co-researchers.

At the luncheon students shared stories of achievement, determination, and inspiration. Their stories were also featured in the Riverside County Office of Education's 2020 Report to the

Community. The report highlighted successes of many students including Sophia Barranco, a Starlight Elementary School student.

“It feels like we are still in school,” Barranco said in a press release. “We still have the connection with our teachers to be able to ask questions,” she added, commenting on the COVID-19 pandemic that directed nationwide school closures and distance learning. “We are still learning, just in a new environment with social distancing.”

“I’m going to be able to share with my grandkids or kids [an explanation of] everything that happened during a pandemic,” Barranco said, “so that they can be grateful for the things they have. It helps me to be grateful and focus on things in the future.”

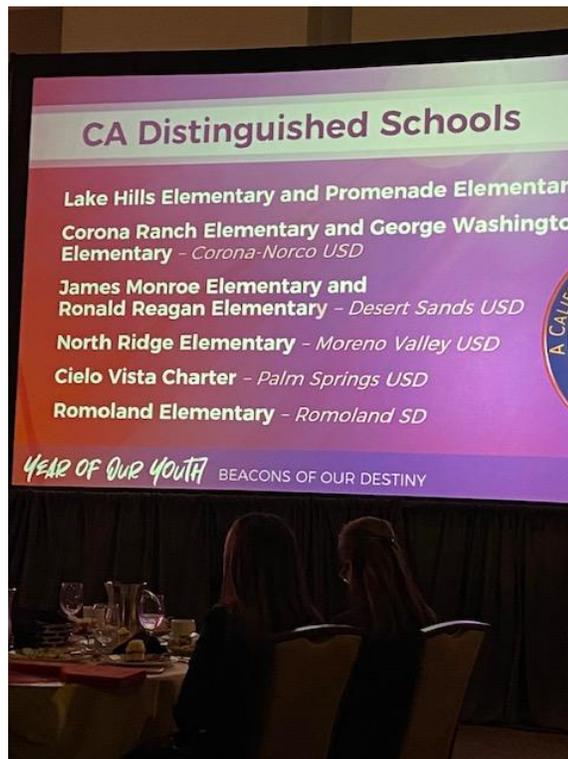
Community Outreach Ministry is involved in community events throughout the year and recently participated at the Lake Elsinore Unified School District (LEUSD) S.A.F. E. R. Programs Community Collaborative at Ortega High School in February. The non-profit organization serves students in the Riverside County School System offering practicums for hands-on workshops such as “Gearing Up For STEM” Mentor Protégé Workshops where protégé’s learn basic assembly of Robots with their mentors and “Children’s Creative Art” Mentor Protégé Workshops where children create art objects using recycled materials and Mod Podge taught by Cynthia K. Duran of Sewing Stories. The “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration” Mentor Protégé Workshops provides adults with resources to access comprehensive support services to meet their children’s needs for developing better outcomes at home, in school and in the community.

Year-round camping activities are also sponsored by the ministry and provide youth with social and life skills along with learning boundaries for safety. Children gain a sense of belonging and acceptance as they gain a sense of purpose and inspiration. At the ministry’s Annual Angel Tree Christmas Party, at-risk youth receive holiday gifts and engage with role models from The California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Officers and Firefighters do show and tell demonstrating safety and share about their explorer programs to inspire youth to consider future careers in law enforcement and firefighters.

Community Outreach Ministry welcomes, volunteers, sponsors, and champions to invest in at-risk kids to help lower their risk and raise their expectations for a brighter future through mentoring workshops, camping activities and Christmas gift scholarships. Donations may be given online at [communityoutreachministry.org](http://communityoutreachministry.org). Or, send text to DONATE CHAMPIONS to 609-212-0627. You will receive a text back with a link to a page where you can donate. For more information call 951-698-7650 or email [info@communityoutreachministry.org](mailto:info@communityoutreachministry.org).



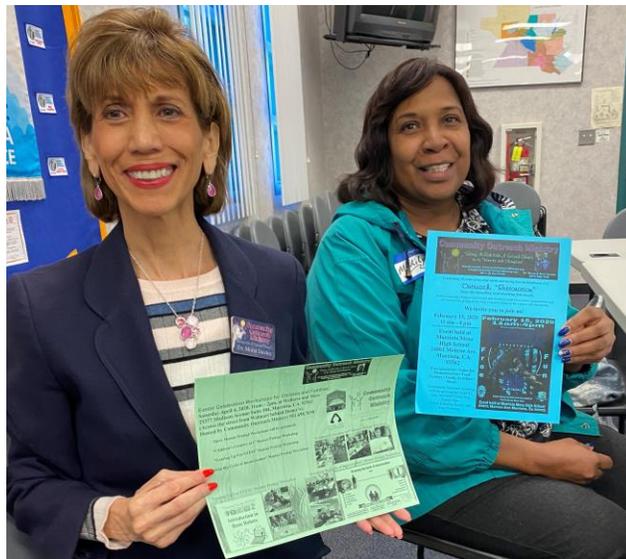
'Year of Our Youth' Community Outreach Ministry (L-R) Mr. Bob Davies Co-founder and President, Yolanda Burgess Treasurer, Dr. Mona Davies Co-founder and Director and Donna Barkley Coordinator



'Year of Our Youth' State of Education Address luncheon

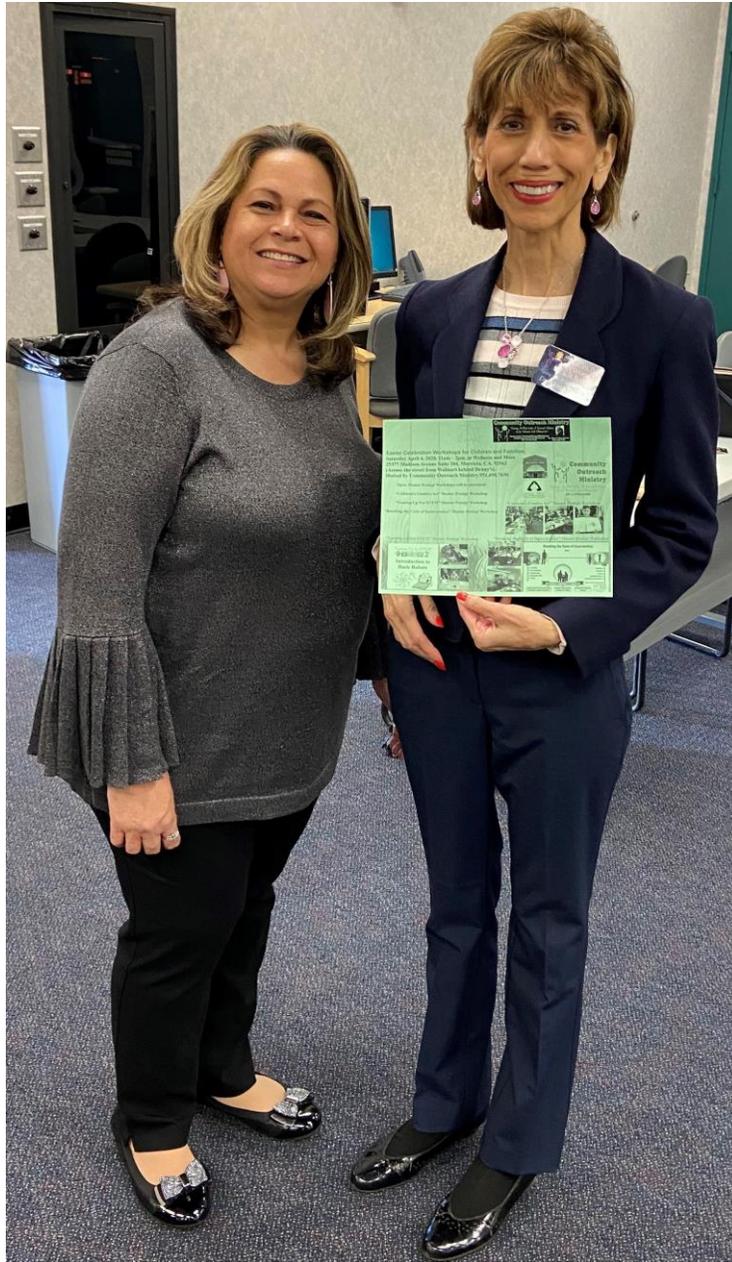


'Year of Our Youth' 'State of Education Address Luncheon



'S.A.F.E.R.' Programs Community Outreach Ministry (L-R) Dr. Mona Davies

Co-founder and Director and Marilyn Brown Board Member



S.A.F.E.R. Programs (L-R) Mary Martinez-Zayas (LEUSD) and Dr. Mona Davies Co-founder and Director Community Outreach Ministry