



Department of Africana Studies • Division of World Cultural Studies • Phone: (310) 243-3040

September 15, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the work of Standing on Common Ground, a Los Angeles-based human relations organization that has been a committed partner and ally of The Institute for Global Intercultural Peace Building at California State University, Dominguez Hills on many projects over many years.

As a tenured associate professor at CSUDH, Chair of the Academic Senate and Director of The Institute for Global Intercultural Peace Building in the Division of World of Cultural Studies, it has always been a priority of mine and the Institute to reach out and connect with the surrounding community with the goal of including as many young people possible in our work here at Dominguez as we prepare them in advance for successful post-secondary experiences at CSUDH or elsewhere.

As a partner, SOCG has been tireless in its efforts to bring thousands of K-12 students to our campus to engage in the work of making their schools better and safer. In my opinion, without SOCG, the schools would not be the centers of transformation they are today.

Over the last three years, our partnership has expanded to include over 3,000 students from more than ten secondary schools through projects like the Transition Institutes. In that project alone, we served over 2,000 students who took part in week-long 9th grade human relations intensives that were necessary in the wake of several large-scale race-based riots that took place on Southland high school campuses over the past three years.

During the Transition Institutes, I saw the quality of facilitation and expertise exhibited by SOCG's staff and the difference it made in the students attitudes, behavior, and results back at school. The students were well behaved, respectful, and modeling the leadership provided by SOCG and our own University staff.

In addition to the Transition Institutes, SOCG also partnered with the Institute for Global Intercultural Peace Building at CSUDH on other activities that included:

- Parent trainings on "Understanding College"
- Days of Dialogue for neighboring secondary schools experiencing intergroup student and staff conflict
- Cutting-edge professional development for faculty of participating schools on topics such as Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Bully Prevention, and Conflict Resolution
- Offering university-level (3 units) classes and credits to high school students at their campus on "Alliance Building"

SO CG also facilitated the support and participation of several elected officials who took part in all of our projects. Among the highlights are town halls and symposia that included such notables as California State Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, U. S. Congressman Xavier Becerra, and Los

Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. The issues addressed were topical and the events completely organized and managed by students trained by SOCG.

SOCG is without question one of the leaders in the field of human relations and the results speak for themselves. I have never worked with a team of professionals that so efficiently handles not only the logistics of an event, but also the development of the content, delivery of the program, and administration of the follow up as well. They are, and always will be a valuable partner of the Institute for Global Intercultural Peace Building at CSU, Dominguez Hills.

Sincerely,



Munashe Furusa, PhD
Director, Institute for Global Intercultural Peace Building
Chair, Department of Africana Studies
Chair, Academic Senate
California State University, Dominguez Hills
