

**Letters to the Editor**  
**January 28, 2010**

## **Don't Undermine Program that Helps Kids**

The California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce and CHCC Foundation have hosted scholarship students from around the state at our annual convention every year for the past six years. We reach out to tens of thousands of college students from throughout the state.

Our program is called the California Academy of Professional Students and has awarded and funded 75 scholarships with nearly \$200,000 for scholarship recipients, most of whom have already graduated from universities around the state. The graduation success rate has been 100 percent. Some are now attending medical school, master's degree programs and law school.

Our goal is to provide a vehicle to assist Hispanic students and create opportunities they may have limited access to. We receive praise and support from corporations and elected officials including the governor.

Personally I have received over 20 awards from congressmen, senators, assemblymen and women and mayors from throughout the Inland Empire, for promoting education and literacy, including the Celebrate Literacy Award, a statewide honor.

I find the letter by San Bernardino Councilman Rikke Van Johnson (expressing objections to the fact that the Redlands Boys & Girls Club is operating a site at Waterman Gardens in San Bernardino) to be socially irresponsible and can only undermine the efforts of the Boys & Girls Club. It undermines the future socioeconomic opportunities of our children. Furthermore, it undermines the future of a quality workforce in the region.

We are experiencing the most tragic loss to our education system with the recent budget cuts. Our children were already at a disadvantage with the last wave of cuts. Programs like the Boys & Girls Club help to fill a very significant gap in the education system.

In San Bernardino County, foreclosures continue rise, businesses are shuttered and unemployment is nearing catastrophic levels. Councilman Van Johnson wants to take away one of the most fundamental rights our disadvantaged children have.

I think we ought to consider the agenda of Councilman Van Johnson. In his scathing criticism, he offers no intelligent solution and no alternatives. As an elected official, his primary focus should be to serve the people. Councilman Van Johnson, what have you done to help the disadvantaged children of your ward? I challenge you to do a better job. Isn't that why the people elected you in the first place?

Gabriel Ramirez, chairman  
California Academy of Professional Students  
Redlands