

# YOUTH ON FIRE

## THE POWER OF CHESS COMES TO SBC's JUVENILE HALL



San Benito County Juvenile Hall invited Connecting Principles back this spring and we were able to begin classes in early May. Our Art and Chess programs are designed to enhance creative and abstract thinking and provide opportunities for positive interaction with adult role models, a key component in the Development Asset framework that has identified what young people need to be happy, healthy, contributing members of society.



Chess King Corp is offered every Friday night at 6:30 pm. Minors are paired off and the challenge begins. First, basic rules and tactics are explained and an example of advanced tactical training is offered depending on the level of understanding from the group. Then semi-formal tournament style play begins. If you can call it

play. Minors are quickly learning that play is deadly, powerful and fun. No one wants to lose and play time is quickly turning into their new found abilities to move pieces and take the game. Chess is known to increase and develop important cognitive abilities such as visualization, emotional intelligence, problem solving, memory, reasoning, originality and etiquette. Sounds too good to be true. It is very rewarding as a program provider to see a positive change in their interest in the game; little do the kids know how much they are really learning as their involvement grows deeper.



Stay tuned for the first Chalk Art event at Hollister Juvenile Hall on June 20th. BBQ, spoken word, music and chalk art by guest artists and minors.

## Youth on Fire

Do not look for us in your buildings  
we are not there.

We are the long shadows and the feet  
running through the alleys.

We are the murmur in the streets, the  
whispered warning of sirens,  
and the loud and soft voices of youth  
crying out, unheard.

Do not look for us in your stores  
we are not there.

We are the presence at every street corner  
and on every sidewalk,  
the witness to the homeless and the forlorn  
and the silenced voice in every court.

Do not look for us in your clubs  
we are not there.

We are the music and the bodies  
moving in rhythm.

We are the pulse of the urban underground,  
underneath your radar screen  
and harmonious in our discord.

We are male and female,  
and we are every color, every race  
and every nationality.

Do not look for us in your programs  
we are not there.

We live and die in the boundary places,  
the cracks and crevasses

that your technology can never plug.

We are the gang members caught in a  
cycle of vengeance and rage,  
and we are the drug users and dealers  
consumed by a fire within that cannot  
express itself in any other way.

We are the dark face of a culture that has  
turned its back on us.

Do not look for us  
we are everywhere revealed.

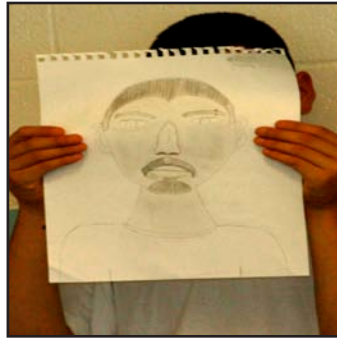
We are the skateboarders that streak by,  
marking rail and step as we go.

We are the angry tagging and the street art  
that tantalizes the eye.

We are the strange chaotic attractor  
that lives in the heart of chaos  
and the hidden wholeness  
at the center of your city.

We at the core of every creative act.  
We are youth on fire.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS PROGRAM develops creativity and self-exploration.



**Catalyst for Youth's** ([www.catalystforyouth.org](http://www.catalystforyouth.org)) Executive Director Joanne Hobbs is a seasoned digital media and expressive art teacher and works routinely with at risk youth in juvenile detention centers in the Bay area. This is her second year at the Hollister facility and she is delighted to be back. Art activity has been shown to enhance rehabilitation efforts. Findings from a study commissioned by Rethinking Crime & Punishment in 2002 showed that involvement in the arts is a "humanizing" experience. Its benefits include the creative activity itself as well as the by-products of engaging in art—like an increase in self confidence. The positive impact of art programs in the criminal justice system fall into the following categories: educational achievement (learning a skill), improved behavior and attitude, reduced rate of re-offending, better ways of relating to other people and artistic, personal and social development (self-expression, communication, problem-solving skills, leadership, teamwork, etc.)

**Chess King Corp** ([www.chesskingcorp.com](http://www.chesskingcorp.com)) Daniel D. Dupre is the President of Chess King Corp and is happy to be in Hollister. He believes that all kids can excel once they believe in themselves and that kids of all ages have fun and reap the rewards and benefits that the Chess King Corp program delivers. Chess is an art, a struggle, a science, and a war. Studies reveal that children who play chess show twice the improvement in reading and mathematics as their non chess equals as well as an acceleration and increase in IQ scores. Other studies show chess improves problem solving, develops discipline and critical thinking skills, increases concentration, teaches strategizing, improves communication and memory skills, teaches sportsmanship, confidence and facilitates character development. With all these benefits available it's no wonder Friday nights in JH have transformed into cauldrons of mental energy. It has been fun to watch the interest and skills grow. Stay tuned for our next update on this dynamic program.

**Connecting Principles** ([www.connectingprinciples.org](http://www.connectingprinciples.org)) offers programs and trainings based on the idea that health and wisdom reside within each person and that when someone is in touch with this core identity, insights arise to guide them through life's experiences. Connecting Principles was founded by Liz Alameda because she saw that people wanted happiness but did not know how to achieve it. She knew that providing youth and adults with an understanding of how and why perspectives change and how thoughts make up one's reality, would empower them to make better choices for themselves. Trainings and programs are designed to enhance self-exploration, knowledge and insights. Connecting Principles has been a service provider in the Hollister area since 2007.