



Central California
**REGIONAL OBESITY
PREVENTION PROGRAM**

Healthy Environments • Healthy Choices • Healthy People

PRESS RELEASE

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Youth inspire healthier, safer playground



*"Before" picture of the Stiern
Park playground*

Youth at the Cesar Chavez Leadership Program in Bakersfield have given back to their community in an enormous way. Their recent project is both heartwarming and inspirational- they helped to document the need for a healthier and safer playground at Stiern Park, wrote a grant and received funding for new playground equipment and are now celebrating a new playground that was built for young children and families to have a safe place to be active.

"We are doing this project for the community and making a plan for children to be safe at this park," explained Vivianna, a participant in the Cesar Chavez Leadership Program.

Cesar Chavez Leadership Program youth will be leading a **ribbon-cutting and community celebration event with free food and games on May 1, from 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., at Stiern Park** (located at 5400 Monitor St.). From 3:30 – 4:00 p.m., the youth will participate in a work day with the City of Bakersfield to help improve areas of the park. The new playground was made possible by a \$75,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente and in-kind contributions from Game Time and the City of Bakersfield Recreation and Parks Department.

"Kaiser Permanente is committed to creating healthy communities in Kern County by funding projects focused on championing healthy lifestyle choices," says Senior Community Benefit Specialist for Kaiser Permanente Kern County, Kristin Weirather. "By providing funding for safe playground structures, children have an opportunity for healthy outdoor play. Establishing these types of behaviors early in a child's development will help to ensure healthy physical activity through their teen and adult years.

The Stiern Park renovation project was a response to area needs, which were identified by the youth through the Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP). Under CCROPP, the youth developed a Photovoice Project that focused on the park facility and demonstrated the challenges to engaging in physical activity. Using disposable cameras and their own words, they were able to identify multiple environmental challenges and discovered ways to address them. Images and comments the youth recorded have been used to promote dialogue among community stakeholders and decisionmakers.

"We have core values that we follow in the Cesar Chavez group," said Lupita, president of the youth leadership program. "One of our core values is to help out the most-needy and right now Stiern Park needs our help," she added.

The new playground will help to create an inviting outdoor space for hundreds of children and families who frequent Stiern Park with a safe place to be physically active. University of California, Los

Angeles students will be conducting a survey on the day of the event to gauge how the new playground is affecting the use of the park for physical activity.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Lopez at (661) 205-3743 or by email: jelopez@kern.org. To obtain an English or Spanish copy of the playground celebration event flyer, visit www.ccropp.org.

Special note to reporters/editors: Spokespersons will be available for Spanish interviews. To request a copy of “before” photos of the Stiern Park playground, please contact Brandie Campbell at: 559.228.2144 or bcampbell@csufresno.edu.

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