



**Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.**

A PROMISE OF OPPORTUNITY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 3, 2011

**Community Paint Day Encourages Neighbors to  
“Start the Peace. Stop the Violence.”**  
*Acts of Violence Will No Longer Be Tolerated*

PHOENIX — Over the past year, Chicanos Por La Causa’s (CPLC) TRUCE Program has worked to reduce gun homicides in specific South Mountain neighborhoods. In fact, there have been 15 homicides and 842 violent crimes in the first 9 months of 2011, down 21% and 6% respectively from the same time period in 2010. In the Hermoso Park area, specifically, there have been 42 violent crimes in the first 9 months of 2011, down 11% from the same time period the previous year\*.

The TRUCE program, which started a little more than a year ago with federal funding, connects high risk individuals with outreach workers, mediates conflicts to reduce the chance for violence, and works with community residents to make violence unacceptable. Community Paint Day is a celebration and continuation of these violence reduction efforts. Over the past several months, project partners and community members have worked in conjunction with Tucson muralist Michael Schwartz to create a mural that reflects the spirit of the TRUCE message: “START THE PEACE. STOP THE VIOLENCE.”

Community members attended three meetings to input to the mural’s design and will now have an opportunity to contribute to the painting of the mural, which will decorate the exterior walls of the LE Green House for Youth owned by Progressive Church of God in Christ. The community is currently fundraising to convert this vacant building into a youth-rehabilitation facility. The mural will serve as a visual reminder of how at-risk individuals and communities can change and transform – and will symbolize peace, unity, hope and faith.

“Over the past year we have worked to develop relationships with individuals in the community with one goal in mind -- Start the Peace. Stop the Violence,” says Renato Ramos, Project Manager of TRUCE and Chicanos Por La Causa. “In addition, we have worked with the neighborhood to change the way the community at-large views gun violence — from ignoring shootings to standing and saying, ‘not in my community, not my family.’”

Chicanos Por La Causa, lead partner, is collaborating with Arizonans for Gun Safety, St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center and ASU Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety on this innovative violence reduction program. TRUCE is based on

public health approaches first used in Chicago to stop the shooting and killing. By changing the way people react to conflict, by mobilizing community responses to shootings, and working with faith-based and community leaders, violence is no longer acceptable.

A final component of the TRUCE program was recently implemented at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center. A TRUCE worker will now outreach to gunshot victims and their family members in the trauma center to help prevent retaliation shootings and the victim from returning to a lifestyle of violence.

The two-year grant program is now 65 percent complete.

"TRUCE is helping to transform the South Mountain community," says Arizona Guns for Safety president Hildy Saizow. "And, the community mural is a key step in the process to permanently start the peace and stop the violence."

**What: Community Paint Day | Help Paint the Community Mural and "Start the Peace. Stop the Violence."**

**Who: Everyone of all ages is welcome.**

**When: Saturday, November 5, 2011, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Where: Northeast corner of 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Broadway Road, in Phoenix**

*\*Source: Phoenix Police Department Crime Analysis and Research Unit*

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#### **About TRUCE**

*TRUCE is a comprehensive approach to eradicate gun violence from our community by focusing on those young people who are most at risk of initiating or being a victim of violence. Chicanos Por La Causa, lead partner, is collaborating with Arizonans for Gun Safety, St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center and ASU Center for Violence Prevention and Community Safety to implement this innovative program that connects high-risk individuals with outreach workers, mediates conflicts to reduce the chance for violence, and works with community residents to make violence unacceptable.*

#### **About Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.**

*Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. (CPLC) is a statewide community development corporation committed to building stronger, healthier communities as a lead advocate, coalition builder and direct service provider. The organization promotes positive change and self-sufficiency to enhance the quality of life for the benefit of those we serve. For more information, please visit [www.cplc.org](http://www.cplc.org).*

#### **About Arizonans for Gun Safety**

*Arizonans for Gun Safety (AzGS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries in Arizona communities.*

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