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Innovative Work Study Program in Watts Proves Successful

Verbum Dei High School was acknowledged at the Los Angeles City Council Meeting on November 19, 2003, by Councilwoman Janice Hahn for their tremendous work they are doing with inner city youth through their innovative Corporate Work Study Program.

An all male, Catholic, college preparatory high school located in Watts, Verbum Dei High School has implemented a Corporate Work Study Program whereas students work one day a week in entry level positions with local businesses to help fund their education and gain valuable work experience. Among the 56 corporations participating in this program include AON Insurance, Latham & Watkins, LLP, City National Bank, Payden & Rygel and IndyMac Bank. Touting the success of the program, Councilwoman Hahn highlights that, "Verbum Dei High School has been a part of the Watts community since 1962, providing the young men of our community with a quality education and a link to their future. Last year, 100 percent of the graduating class was accepted into college. A tremendous accomplishment for any school."

Along with Rev. Scott Santarosa, S.J., Vice President of Administration, 15 professionally dressed young men representing Verbum Dei High School accepted the honor from Councilwoman Hahn on behalf of the Corporate Work Study Program. Leading the audience in a story of inspiration, Rev. Santarosa relayed a recent incident while running through Watts at 6 am with the Cross Country team. "While running near Watts Towers a gentleman from across the street began yelling at our small yet determined runners. He was screaming that we were crazy to be running at such an early hour in the morning – that nobody in their right mind would do such a thing. I thought to myself, if it were easy, everyone would do it. We have an opportunity in this community to provide a quality, college preparatory education to the young men of South Los Angeles. It may not be easy, but we are committed to our mission."