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Expansion of Soccer Complex

Posted: Apr 20, 2011 4:58 PM PDT

Updated: Apr 20, 2011 7:21 PM PDT

SALINAS, Calif- In an effort to keep kids off the streets, community organizations are coming together to expand the constitution soccer complex to give kids an alternative.

"I don't think any kid should go through belonging to a gang or the need for that sense of belonging or the need for the sense of love or family and getting it from a gang," Maricela Cruz knows the feeling first hand. At 14 she got involved in gangs because she wanted attention and said she didn't know any other way of getting it.

"I would have loved to belong to something else other than a gang. I wouldn't have had so many deaths around me. I wouldn't have seen so much violence, so many kids that became unattached to their surroundings," said Cruz.

When she saw a different path for her son, she took it, enrolling him in a Salinas soccer league.

Cruz also got involved, signing up to coach. Now she gets a first hand look at how the field can change a kid's life.

Right now eight soccer fields are set up but it's not enough for the 6,000 kids playing in the Salinas league. That's why the community wants to be able to go from here to here and turn this empty lot into eight more soccer fields.

But it won't be easy making the expansion. The Salinas regional soccer complex thinks it will need to raise 9 million dollars and a lot of community help.

They hope kids like Anthony Trejo get to play on the new fields because there's more to life than gangs.

"It kept me away from the streets because I was more focused in doing good in my school, my sport and not the bad influences," said Trejo.

Submitted by Lucero Benitez, Central Coast News



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