

March 21, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter in support of Pastor Sonny Lara and Firehouse Development Corporation. Pastor Sonny and his organization have been an extraordinary source of support for troubled and gang involved youth.

Pastor Sonny's values and passion emerge through his work. His tireless efforts, through educational and recreational programs, provide a safe environment for young people to develop their fullest potential without the threat and pressure of joining gangs. He is a well respected community leader who gains the confidence and esteem of the young people he helps guide away from a life of criminal behavior. Pastor Sonny and Firehouse Development Corporation create alliances with schools, community non-profit organizations, and local governments to provide workshops that promote self-esteem, community appreciation, and gang and drug awareness.

I have personally witnessed Firehouse at work in the Washington United Youth Center, in my own downtown district. I've talked with the kids, played basketball with them, and have gotten a clear sense of their differing motivations for participating in Firehouse's programs. What has become clear is that those young adults respond to Firehouse's--and Pastor Sonny's--approach. They trust his sincere interest in helping them find a fulfilling life outside of gangs, and they participate with a genuine conviction that Firehouse offers them a better way.

Firehouse Development Corporation provides our community with strong intervention and prevention services. I would strongly encourage any support you and your organization can provide Pastor Sonny in this very important endeavor.

Please feel free to contact me at (408) 535-4903 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Sam T. Liccardo
Councilmember, City of San Jose
District Three