

# Outreach Teen Programs

provide a path of hope.



1949 Heavyweight boxing champion Joe Lewis visits Kalihi HI-Y Teens

Since 1962, the Kalihi Y has provided an outreach program for at-risk teens. It changes the trajectory of many from a life of substance abuse, violence and incarceration to one of hope, promise and a future. Today, more than 40 counselors help upwards of 1,000 teens each year. One of them was Angelina.



Early Kalihi Outreach Workers engaged youth on the street



"My Y counselor always had his door open — he heard me, valued me and empowered me to make better choices."

— Angelina

Angelina's first memories of her mother were of her behind bars for using illegal drugs. Fortunately, their hanai grandmother raised Angelina and her seven siblings.

Then, grandma died. Mom started abusing drugs again. And 10-year-old Angelina and her siblings were on their own.

"I was angry, aggressive and joined a gang. I was very lost. But in 7th grade, while looking for a place to be lost — I found the Y."

Although Angelina never used drugs, her friends did, so she lied and said she was using— "just so I could get into the Y substance abuse treatment program onsite at my school. My Y counselor always had his door open — he heard me, valued me and empowered me to make better choices."

Those choices included earning top honors in high school, an undergraduate degree, and acceptance to graduate school. But first, Angelina's taking a year off to work as a Y substance abuse treatment counselor.

"These teens have the ability to choose — as I did — a better path and with that a better life," she says of the students she counsels. "A Y counselor did that for me when I was their age — I'm now doing that for them."