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San Antonio Dropout Prevention Program Expands to Chicago, Detroit, L.A., New York City & Sacramento

IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Grows with New Grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation

SAN ANTONIO, OCTOBER 3, 2013 – Schools in five U.S. cities will benefit from IDRA's highly-successful dropout prevention program, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, made possible by a new \$1 million grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation to IDRA. Through the grant, five school districts will be funded to implement the program for up to four years. Selected schools in **Chicago, Detroit, Los**



Angeles, Sacramento and New York City will be invited to participate. IDRA designed and developed the program and provides the full range of training, technical assistance, evaluation and support materials. With this grant, IDRA also will work with local community, state and federal sources to shape and sustain the program beyond the initial funding.

"The Coca-Cola Foundation believes that education is one of the keys to building sustainable communities," said Lori George Billingsley, Vice President, Community Relations, Coca-Cola North America Group. "Programs like the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program encourage young people to stay in school, develop leadership abilities and empower them to make positive contributions to their communities."

"In 2014, the Coca-Cola Foundation and IDRA will celebrate a 30-year partnership of implementing the Coca Cola Valued Youth Program nationally and internationally," stated Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO. "The program is based on the creed: All students are valuable, none is expendable. **South San Antonio ISD was a pioneer in adopting this program and has operated it since its beginning in 1984**, benefitting 1,200 students. The Coca Cola Valued Youth Program has maintained a less than 2 percent dropout rate, and is approved by the Texas State Board of Education as an innovative course eligible for elective credit at the high school level."

Created by the Intercultural Development Research Association, a non-profit research and training organization in San Antonio, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an award-winning cross-age tutoring program that has kept 98 percent of its tutors in school – more than 33,000 students, young people who were previously at risk of dropping out. The lives of more than 787,000 children, families and educators have been positively impacted by the program in cities across the United States and in Brazil, Puerto Rico and the United Kingdom.

This research-based dropout prevention program works by identifying middle school and high school students who are at-risk of dropping out and enlisting them as tutors for elementary school youngsters who are also struggling in school. Given this role of personal and academic responsibility, the Valued Youth tutors improve their literacy and thinking skills, bolster self-esteem and feel they belong to the school. Schools shift to the philosophy and practices of valuing

students considered at-risk. Results show that tutors stay in school, have increased academic performance, improved school attendance and advanced to higher education.

“The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program gives an opportunity for young people to see themselves and for others to see them as the valuable and important young people that they are... not limited by adult or school perceptions about them,” added Dr. Robledo Montecel.

Since 1990 when The Coca-Cola Foundation was established, it has provided IDRA with funding for materials and curriculum development, research, and expansion. Under this new grant, in addition to launching the five sites, IDRA will help identify partnering networks to sustain the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in their communities. IDRA also will expand outreach for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Alumni Fellows Network among tutors and their college-going peers in ways that inspire persistence, graduation and the view that they, too, can be college-bound.

Interested secondary schools can apply to become part of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program network by contacting IDRA to implement the program at their campuses. Districts and campuses use federal funds, such as Title I and Title II, Title III, and state compensatory and migrant funds to operate the program. Often schools form school business partnerships with local businesses and civic groups to secure funds.

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NOTE: “COCA-COLA VALUED YOUTH PROGRAM” IS THE OFFICIAL, LEGAL NAME OF THE PROGRAM. IT CAN, AT TIMES, BE ABBREVIATED AS “COCA-COLA VYP.”

Additional information is online at: <http://www.idra.org>

[About the Program](#)

[Video: See a quick overview of how the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program impacts students and schools. \(01:30\)](#)

[See essays by student participants.](#)

[Hear podcasts about the program.](#)

[Read Continuities – Lessons for the Future of Education from the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program](#)



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The **Intercultural Development Research Association** is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to realizing the right of every child to a quality education. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.

We are a small organization with a powerful mission: to create schools that work for *all* children.

IDRA

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