

Los Angeles ~ Homeboy

Film: [7 minutes](#)



*Homeboy Industries is bringing hope to some of L.A.'s toughest neighborhoods by providing ways for at-risk youth and former gang members to meaningfully contribute to their communities. Under the leadership of the inspiring Father Greg Boyle, and with the motto *Nothing Stops a Bullet like a Job*, they guide more than 1,000 young people a month away from gang life.*

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Grades 9 – 12

Civics

Civics - Standard 11. Understand the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society

- Know conflicts that are caused by diversity (e.g., unfair discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and gender; alienation of one group from another; efforts to impose beliefs and customs on others)
- Know examples of conflicts stemming from diversity, and understands how some conflicts have been managed and why some of them have not yet been successfully resolved

Civics - Standard 27. Understand how certain character traits enhance citizens' ability to fulfill personal and civic responsibilities

- Understand the importance for individuals and society of commonly held personal responsibilities such as taking care of one's self, supporting one's family, accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, adhering to moral principles, considering the rights and interests of others, and behaving in a civil manner
- Understand the importance of dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity such as compassion and respect for the rights and choices of individuals

Resource - [McREL Content Knowledge – Standards & Benchmarks](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ☞ *Father Greg Boyle says that kids join gangs because they are running **from** something, not **to** something. What does he mean by this?*
- ☞ *Once in a gang, why is it so hard to get out? What kinds of things do gangs do to keep people in? What is appealing about being in a gang?*
- ☞ *Do you agree that everyone should be given a second, third, and fourth chance? When were you given another chance? Did you deserve it? Did you deliver?*
- ☞ *“No matter whatness.” What does Father Greg mean by this term? Why might this be a hard thing to do? Why do you think Father Greg does what he does?*

ACTIVITY

“Jobs not Jails”

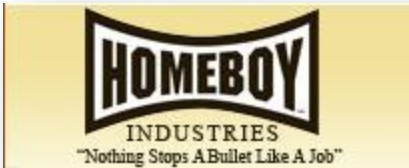
“Nothing Stops a Bullet like a Job”

Create a slogan or inspirational message for people trying to quit a gang and live a responsible life.

Illustrate your message.

- ☞ *Many of the gang members have tattoos. Homeboy Industries pays for the removal of these tattoos. Why do you think people have a hard time getting hired because they have tattoos? Do you agree with this viewpoint?*
- ☞ *If a person makes good money stealing or being a drug dealer, why quit? How would you convince someone to quit?*
- ☞ *How does a job stop a bullet?*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Excerpts from [Homeboy Industries Website](#)

Homeboy History

Homeboy Industries traces its roots to “Jobs For A Future” (JFF), a program created in 1988 by Father Gregory Boyle while he was serving as pastor of Dolores Mission parish in Boyle Heights. Begun as a jobs program in 1988, offering alternatives to gang violence in one of the toughest neighborhoods in the city, the program soon grew beyond the parish.

With the addition of a small bakery in a run-down warehouse across the street from Dolores Mission, JFF had its own business, one where it could hire the most challenging, difficult to place young people in a safe environment. The hope was that they could learn both concrete and soft job skills, to make them stronger, better prepared candidates for permanent employment. A tortilla stand in Grand Central Market downtown solidified the evolution of JFF into Homeboy Industries.

In only a few years, Homeboy Industries has had an important impact on the Los Angeles gang problem, with young people from over half of the region’s 1,100 known gangs seeking a way out through Homeboy. Thousands of young people have walked through the doors of Homeboy Industries looking for a second chance, and finding community. Gang affiliations are left outside as these young people work together, side by side, learning the mutual respect that comes from shared tasks and challenges.

Homeboy became an independent nonprofit in August of 2001, and has since grown into a national model. This year, we will celebrate our 20th anniversary as an organization in our new headquarters located in downtown Los Angeles, just two blocks from Union Station. Homeboy serves as a beacon of hope and opportunity for those seeking to leave gang life, for whom the barriers and challenges are great, and for whom there is virtually no other avenue to enter the mainstream.

In addition to providing job training and placement assistance and other free programs, a distinctive feature of Homeboy Industries continues to be its small businesses, where the most difficult to place individuals are hired in transitional jobs, thus giving them a safe, supportive environment in which to learn both concrete and soft job skills, while simultaneously building their resume and work experience. Former rivals find themselves working side by side, finding true community and friendship in place of the limited community of gang life. Homeboy’s businesses now include the Homeboy Bakery, newly re-opened in our new Headquarters downtown, Homeboy Silkscreen, which prints logos on apparel and provides embroidery services; Homeboy Maintenance, which provides landscaping and maintenance services; Homeboy Merchandise, which sells t-shirts, mugs, tote bags, and mouse pads with the Homeboy logo, now with a retail storefront in the new Headquarters, as well as online ordering; Homegirl Café, newly expanded in the new building with 86 seats, plus a dedicated Catering kitchen provides a training ground dedicated to female clients in all aspects of the restaurant and service industry. A pilot program, Homeboy Press, will publish a literary magazine in late 2008.