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## Chouinard to boost education in the arts

The foundation will hold classes and bring in artists to underserved public recreation centers.

By SUZANNE MUCHNIC  
*Times Staff Writer*

Three months after closing its art school in South Pasadena, citing insufficient funds and student interest, the Chouinard Foundation has formed a partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks to provide art education for the city's youth. Under the terms of an agreement approved by department commissioners Thursday and expected to be endorsed by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the foundation will conduct classes and bring visiting artists to public recreation centers that have offered little or no art instruction.

No new city funds will be allocated to the program, said Kevin Regan, assistant general manager of the department. The city will provide space in

existing facilities, support staff and art materials, he said. The department and the foundation will work together to obtain private funding for classes and special projects.

"This will be free-form art education with drawing and painting as the base," said David Tourje, executive director of the foundation. The highlight, he said, will be visits from accomplished artists who will share their expertise and insight into processes of creative expression.

Regan said he conceived of the partnership after reading about the closure of the Chouinard School of Art, a modest reincarnation of a L.A. college that closed in 1972. Partially funded by Walt Disney, the original school eventually



**CITY ARTS:** Chouinard will hold classes in city recreation centers beginning with the Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Center.

morphed into CalArts in Valencia.

Last month, the foundation ran a pilot program -- organized by artist Doris Kouyias, with the help of other artists including Gilbert Lujan and Wei Lo -- at the Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Center. The first phase of the new program is expected to begin in late fall at the center, a multipurpose facility in a former swimming stadium. Belinda Jackson, executive director of the center, is facilitating grant applications.

Regan said that plans call for expanding the model into the department's Clean and Safe Spaces, or CLASS, program,

designed to help teenagers at risk in 47 centers throughout the city.

"We have dedicated teen clubs in these centers," he said. "Why not have Chouinard come in, teach the kids art techniques, maybe have them decorate their own clubs and go from there? If we save one kid from getting involved in gangs or turning their life to drugs, and if somebody who gets turned on in this program makes a good, life-changing decision, we have done a good thing."

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