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BENO

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with more than 30 employees and Fortune 500 companies for clients.

The marketing company employs more than 200,000 volunteers who help market for clients that include Coca-Cola and Time Warner Cable.

Streetwise will send out an e-mail to the database of volunteers, to organize teams for the project.

The volunteers will market the company, promoting the a launch of a movie, video game or other products.

Usually, the teens hand out what is known as "swag" or promotional merchandise: T-shirts and CDs to kids in skate parks, high schools, and concerts.

In return, the volunteers receive gifts like backstage passes to a concert, downloads and other free products.

Benveniste has been profiled in *TIME*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *Billboard*, *Rolling Stone* to name a few. He frequently returns to his alma mater, USC, to lecture to students.

Now he is going back to his roots, Beverly Hills. He is returning to its schools that he says instilled in him traits that became lifelong attributes for success.

Beno grew up the middle child of a doctor in the City. He and his siblings, Bobby and Alexis, attended El Rodeo from kindergarten through eighth grade and naturally matriculated to the high school.

He remembers playing A.Y.S.O. soccer with friends, Steven Fenton, Michael Sutton, Adam Nathanson and Ari Soffer. Although they had "pseudo rivalries" going to different middle schools, they would eventually unite in high school to play football for Coach Carter Paysinger.

"There was such a sense of pride in (coming together for high school)," he says. "Beverly High was such an amazing school, there was such a sense of pride and dignity in everything from the academics, to athletics. It made a lasting impact."

For Benveniste, high school was a time of self-realization where he learned team building and leadership skills.



David Benveniste, CEO and founder of Velvet Hammer Music and Management Group and Streetwise Concepts & Culture

"Confidence was built on that field," he says.

The hardest lesson came Beno's senior year in 1988, when he decided to quit the football team.

"In retrospect it was painful, watching my best friends play, watching them lose during play-offs," he says. "But it was a huge lesson."

"It was a lesson to cherish what you have, to never be complacent and bring your best," he says.

Upon graduation, Beno did not stay involved in the City. Although he remained a resident, he dedicated life after high school to work; he became disconnected from the schools.

That was, until he got call from Kyle Rosen, his high school friend and former teammate.

"He told me he was going to start coaching freshman football (at Beverly High), my heart started racing. I wanted to start being involved."

How, asked Beno?

Rosen replied, let me put you in touch with Fenton so he can tell you about his Beverly Hills Athletic Alumni Association (BHAAA).

The two had lunch, met so he could learn more about BHAAA, the organization founded by Fenton in 2006 to reconnect alumni to Beverly High.

BHAAA raises money for high school athletic facilities and teams, in one year it raised close to \$1 million through donations from alumni.

"I was so blown away by Steven's ability and perspective to make a change," he said. "There is a charisma about him, when you watch him speak. I admire him so much for what he has done."

After Fenton took Beno back to his old locker to show the former cornerback a lot had changed since the '80s.

"When I played, the facilities were fantastic. We had great locker rooms, there was always plenty of facilities, it was pristine."

But, that's not the case anymore.

"The locker rooms had the same lockers, they were rusted, unheated, the showers were disgusting, it was less than mediocre."

The condition of the facilities is a metaphor for the pride of the student body and the City, said Beno. We were taught to take pride, to look at the school as a mother ship.

"But, how are kids supposed to have pride if the school is in shambles?" he asked.

Benveniste decided it was his time to give back. He joined BHAAA, picked up the phone and started making calls to rally an effort to support the schools.

"It is time to give back," says Benveniste. "We need to give back to help ensure success. My intention is to instill in kids a sense of pride and importance in your City and school."

Now that he is once again connected to the schools, the music manager said he is interested in creating a 'Future Leaders' program at the high school.

His idea is to take graduates from an array of different fields to speak to five representatives from the high school. The leaders would instill principals of ethics, teamwork and advice so the students could disseminate the information amongst the student body.

"My coaches taught me to look inward, don't point the finger," he says. "To grow the tree from the roots outward."

Other recent athletic alumni to join the Beverly Hills Athletic Alumni Association include: New members this year include: Bryan Dattilo ('89), Jay Gilbert ('73) Josh Humiston ('89) and Andrew Kirsch ('93).

Police Request Personal Safety Bubble For Celebrities, Public

By Chris Sieroty

A new law is being proposed to protect the public and Britney Spears from the paparazzi.

Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine recently introduced a motion that would create a "personal safety bubble" law to keep photographers away from celebrities and the general public on local streets.

In response to Zane's motion, Beverly Hills is currently crafting a similar motion to be brought before the city council later this year.

Beverly Hills police Lt. Mike

Hines said City Attorney Larry Weiner is in the process of reviewing a proposed ordinance before being it's brought before the Traffic and Parking Commission for initial hearings.

Hines told *The Courier* the department began pushing for an ordinance after a recent incident involving Lindsay Lohan and a group of photographers. He said a line of SUVs was following the actress down Rodeo Drive, and in an effort not to loose a potential photograph, the line of cars ran a

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Confidence Is Built On Nickoll Field, Music Guru David Benveniste Says

By Abbey Hood

One phone call would decide the rest of his life.

"Beno, there is a band I want you to check out." So at the advice of his friend, David Benveniste went to rehearsal.

"I knew there was something about them," said Benveniste, known to friends as "Beno."

"The sound they were producing was unequivocally original; it was real art."

At the time, Beno was an unknown. He was 25-years-old, just out of college. But he knew he wanted to manage System of the Down — at the time a no name group from Glendale.

Beno had no connections to the "biz," no experience, but he abided by honesty, dignity, passion, ethics and said he "was willing to work as hard as possible." The band was sold.

Working out of his father Richard's house in Beverly Hills, Benveniste used a dial-up modem to visit chat rooms to spread the word about System of the Down. He'd give people his home phone number, hold up a boom box to the receiver, let them listen and send them a demo tape. Free of charge.

System of the Down has since sold more than 20 million records. Benveniste no longer works from his father's house. Instead his music management group, Velvet Hammer, takes up an entire floor in an office building on Pico Boulevard.

His client list includes System of the Down, Cypress Hill, Alice in Chains, The Deftones, the list goes on. In less than 10 years, he turned his marketing concept into Streetwise Concepts & Culture, a marketing company

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