

South Gate AZTECS Youth Football & Cheer, Inc.

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SOUTH GATE YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Our 10th Year of CHALLENGES Continued...

2025: WE WILL CELEBRATE 37 YEARS IN THIS COMMUNITY AND UNFORTUNATELY 10 YEARS OF BEING HOMELESS, WITHOUT A BASE OF OPERATIONS TO CALL HOME. DEPENDENT ON WHATEVER IS AVAILABLE TO US AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS TOTEM POLE OF YOUTH SPORTS IN THE CITY OF SOUTH GATE!

Our existence for the past 10 years has been CHALLENGING!

- ✓ **CHALLENGING** because football registrations were 48% below 2024 with the same number of football teams (!). We were only able to retain 12% returning athletes due to poaching from coaches, and neighboring programs who left us in 2024-25 affecting a draw into all tackle teams in 2025. Outside factors: ICE raids within the community, we received calls from parents who were afraid to come out, local community events were under-attended: Street Fair, Park events, etc.
- ✓ **CHALLENGING** when we cannot provide a safe and applicable amount of practice space & time to prepare our student-athletes for a tough youth sports competition. Due to a lack of support from local high school Principals Gonzalez (SGHS) and Jaimes (SEHS), we were once again denied practice and games at our local high schools for unknown reasons? We continued to practice at Hollydale Regional Park, without lights in which we had to cut a regular season practice from 2-hours to 1-1/4 hours, thus not providing our new student-athletes with the adequate training time before we put them in pads to begin 3-weeks of tackle training. This continued for the first month of practice until we were finally offered practice at South Gate Park on diamonds 9-10 but were only offered 2-days instead of our required 3-days for the remainder of our season (September through mid-December). (BTW, we were not provided a 3rd day of practice, Thursday, because we were informed it was being used for games, yet there were no games being played and in total there were about 22-26 children of varying ages practicing



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softball/baseball; about 3-teams and their coaches). This contributed to our inability to effectively compete on game days, while disgruntled parents started dropping their kids from our program. The results were devastating to 3 of our 5 teams who were on the verge of forfeiting games, which cost us an \$865 fine per game, we had to pay this twice last season, and then we had to merge our 12U into our 14U team just to save the season.

- ✓ **CHALLENGING when we had to forfeit our first game, due to a lack of response from SOUTH GATE and SOUTH EAST HIGH SCHOOLS after filing for our permit request on May 1st.** Our first game, 9/6/2025 had to be forfeited because we were unable to secure a permit, even with the help and assistance of Vice Mayor, Joshua Barron, and the LAUSD East Region Office, Operations Coordinator, Gloria Buenrostro. I have a series of emails of communication between all of us to no avail! In the end no one gave us an answer as to **why such a delay?** Or more importantly, a lack of appropriate response from principals Gonzalez (SGHS) and Jaimes (SEHS)? Fortunately for us, **Vice Mayor Joshua Barron** was instrumental in helping us secure St. Matthias/St. Pius X Academy in Downey to allow us to host 4 of our remaining 5 games, a saving grace to our program!
- ✓ **CHALLENGING because football uniforms, football helmets & shoulder pad reconditioning as well as the purchase of EVERYTHING increased 5-7% due to imposed Tariffs from our MAGA POTUS.** EVERYTHING HAD COST US MORE IN A BUDGET WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO TAKE IN LESS! As such, our football uniforms came LATE---the first time in the history of our program! None of which was under our control, delays from all the vendors we used in 2025 were the theme this past year!
- ✓ **CHALLENGING because our parents decided they did not have to pay for their fees of registration and scheduled program fundraisers.** Everything we laid out during our registration process and which they signed in agreement of understanding and to fulfill this requirement of participation. **By the end of the season, we lost a potential income of \$17,072: \$8,667-from unpaid registrations and fundraisers, \$8,405 from players/cheerleaders who dropped after our first game 9/6 and who also had unpaid balances owed to the program.** Financially this proved to be very difficult and as a result we owe everyone...a little here, more there, and the worry of how we're going to pay our debt, this has been the stress that has wrapped me ever since.
 - 1) Concerning the lack of payments from our parents, it became quite impossible to enforce our written policies; (1) charge 10% late fees and (2) suspend players and cheerleaders who owed balances. The threat of losing more players to football meant severe financial stress to our budget with impending forfeit fees (which would also include payment of the officials of \$1,040) and drops of cheerleaders having to "eat" the cost of unpaid uniforms. IT WAS A DILEMMA!
 - 2) One of the more challenging consequences of this concerned our CHEERLEADER UNIFORMS, which is paid 100% by the parent. Basic Uniform deadline was 8/22/2025, Competition Uniform Deadline was 9/1/2025. Typically, the organization would have paid in advance of collecting the reimbursement from our parents to ensure a prompt return of the uniforms. THIS WAS NOT THE CASE THIS PAST YEAR. The organization could not afford to pre-pay for cheer uniforms, and we had to wait 3-4 months after the due dates to place the order and to be able to pay for it. However, concerning the Competition Uniform, we placed an order for everyone in late November 2025. But there was \$3,683 in unpaid competition uniform fees! The vendor could not release this uniform until we paid a balance of \$2,500.00. We ended up securing a personal loan from a family member and received the competition uniform the Thursday afternoon before our teams travelled to Las Vegas for the National Jamz Competition (Jan-23-24-25, 2026). In total there were 24-late Basic Uniform payments made sporadically after the due date: 8/22/2025 (a total of \$3,951.50) through 12/01/2025; likewise, there were 19-late Competition Uniform payments made sporadically after the due date: 9/1/2025 (a total of \$3,840.00) through 12/20/2025.

- 3) There were several complaints from CHEER PARENTS filed with JAMES MARKEL, SG Parks Recreation Manager. And, from what I know of, also with the city of South Gate Officials. We are not concerned, because all our registration materials and parent agreements and handbook specifically address the issue of late payments and where cheer uniforms are concerned, late payments after the due date will guarantee a late return of cheer uniforms to everyone! In total unpaid cheer uniform fees totaled \$7,791.50, an amount that simply could not be supported in our budget last year. WE ACT WITHIN THE RULES AND POLICIES WE PUT INTO PLACE, INTO WRITING AND WITH THE SIGNED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT FROM OUR PARENTS. There is no breach in what we say we will provide. Insofar as the parent's comprehension is concerned, they believe we are all paid volunteers, that uniforms come from a shelf in our container, that nonprofit means the same as a profit company. Nothing you can say or put into writing, or "one on one" confrontation with the disgruntled has made a difference in their opinion or what they feel they are "entitled" to.
- 4) Personally, I have had to use family funds up to \$15,000 in which the organization will have to pay back, somehow? Moving from one stress to another. And particularly my challenge in developing a new season/year for the South Gate Aztecs Youth Football & Cheer organization; we MUST have a program to move forward in the new year to pay back that which is owed. However, challenges with the city budget have also complicated things.

- ✓ **CHALLENGING because we are having to redesign our program for the future**, reduce our registration fees (20%) and push the uniform costs for both football and cheer onto the parents. We must make ourselves visible within the community for registrations, securing acceptable practice and home game field facility use is crucial to these plans. How to maintain good volunteers and fill open positions on our executive board of directors to help reduce exhaustion? How to recover football helmets and shoulder pads from players who dropped in 2025; 17 drops at an estimated equipment loss of \$6,239.00! Work smart, not so damn hard at everything, it's exhausting on volunteers without a real home, where we must carry supplies and equipment from place to place. Realizing that nothing was "typical" in 2025 and changes we had to put into place to complete the season was unusual; listing all that reflected negatively upon the organization because of the setback, the many adjustments...making plans to not repeat these mistakes moving forward. Due to the negative reaction from dropped players/cheerleaders this past season, many stating they would be going to the Downey program; it was devastating and we must make plans necessary to enhance our image and improve our programs. To do all this and more will require lots of time and energy from an already exhausted volunteer board of directors. Unfortunately, it will cost money to make some things possible. Thus, we must search new avenues within the community for raising funds.
- ✓ **CHALLENGING because we raised funds to help keep the cost to our parents as low as possible due to us being able to provide a snack bar service for all who attended our practices and games.** For the first 27 years we supplemented our budget with funds raised from a practice and game day snack bar, serving only our own people and guests who attended our home games. During this time, we did not have to implement fundraisers. This all changed with LAUSD in 2021 and combined with less cooperation from our high school principles. We now have to implement one organization fundraiser and a mandated ticket sales for homecoming in order to pay for it. In 2024, SGHS forbid us from selling anything on or outside their campus, even though LAUSD rules would allow us to sell pre-packaged foods. It was not only an embarrassment to our guests not to be able to sell a bottle of water during the heat of the summer season, but we lost the financial capability to pay our game officials and had to use other monies to pay for it, we carried almost \$10,000 debt into 2025, and we still have yet to pay \$4,600 of that debt to this day.

IN CLOSING...

Our organization has served the South Gate community for the past 37 years going into 2026. I myself have been leading this organization since 1995 and this will be my 32nd year. Fighting this battle to secure a home base of operations for the past 10 years, now going into our 11th year has been **UNFAIR, EXHAUSTING and UNEXCEPTABLE!** No city leadership willing to fight for our program against LAUSD...where we should have the right to claim as our home. We were organized in 1989 by the late and great city councilman, Henry C. Gonzalez, who fought LAUSD and its Board to ensure we could claim SGHS as our home without fees. WE ARE A COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION WORKING TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS WITH TALENTED ATHLETES FOR THEIR PROGRAMS. Where has that relationship gone? And where do you think our talent has gone too?

TIME COMMITMENT: On average we have worked with over 200 boys and girls every season/year, except for last year. Our sport is expensive, time-consuming, requires a special kind of volunteer who loves this sport and is willing to give back to the kids. We start in March and end in mid-December with the potential of football to go into outside competitions and national championships. Our Cheer Program's season is extended through February of the following year with their outside competition season. In total, we will dedicate the following time commitment to our youth participants (see also the projected time commitment vs. our registration fee breakdown report attached):

Football 2026: 44-Weeks, 133-Days, 399-Hours

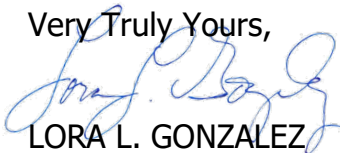
Cheer 2026-2027: 89-Weeks, 249-Days, 572-Hours*

**Cheer Competitions may require an excess of 5-6 hours at a single competition, so the estimated hours above do not include 10-competitions at 5-6 hours per event (50-60 plus hours).*

Attached to this HIGHLIGHT REPORT OF 2025, we have included the following documents:

- 1) State & Federal Status
- 2) 2025 Board List
- 3) 2025 Calendar (May 2025-February 2026)
- 4) Time Commitment Notice to Parents 2025 (Registration Materials)
- 5) Uniforms & Invoices: Flag, Tackle & Cheer
- 6) 2024 Income Graphs
- 7) 2025 Registration Analysis (Sent to Board)

Very Truly Yours,



LORA L. GONZALEZ

President

South Gate Aztecs

