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**DAREDEVIL:** Members of Free Arts for Abused Children from Santa Monica nonprofit organizations Upward Bound and St. Joseph's Center gathered on the Santa Monica Pier Tuesday to learn how to be trapeze artists. Above, Kiara Terveer looks down as she soars through the air.

## A swinging good time for at-risk youth

BY ALEXANDRA BISSONNETTE

Special to the Daily Press

**SM PIER** For at-risk youth life is not easy and a fun day at the beach is not always a possibility, but the kids of Santa Monica-based organizations Upward Bound and St. Joseph's Center got to fly high into the air here with the help of Trapeze School New York.

The kids were all involved with Free Arts for Abused Children, an organization that works with local non-profit organizations to integrate the healing power of the arts into the lives of youth who have been abused, are homeless, or are considered at-risk. A staff of six manages the more than 400 volunteers working with Free Arts for Abused Children.

"What makes today so fun is that it's about physical creative expression," said Karrah Lompa, executive director of Free Arts for Abused Children. "The kids have this glow in their eyes."

Upon arriving at the pier, the kids made circus hats and costumes with supplies provided by the event's sponsor, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. No one looked particularly apprehensive about their impending flight.

"It's been so fun to watch them," Lompa said. "They have been super excited and there has been a lot of big talk, but when it comes time to go, the whole story changes. But then they do it anyway."

Before the kids could fly, they watched trapeze artists from "The Flying Caceres,"

one of the world's premier aerial acts. After the performance they participated in a short training session with a staff member from the Trapeze School New York, which only recently opened up shop on the pier.

"We started in New York City, but we have had our eyes on the West Coast," said Jonathon Conant, president and co-founder of Trapeze School New York. "We are really glad to be here today. It's all a dream come true."

Once the kids had been properly instructed on basic techniques and safety measures, they were harnessed up.

"I feel like I'm wearing a big cement belt," said Kiara Terveer, an 11-year-old member

SEE TRAPEZE PAGE 11

# Guerrilla gardening takes root

BY LAURA E. DAVIS  
Associated Press Writer

**LOS ANGELES** More than a dozen people, some wearing orange protective gear, pulled rakes and shovels from a dingy shopping cart and started working on a parched patch of land along a busy off-ramp of the Hollywood Freeway.

It was a Saturday night and drivers whooshed past on their way to the Sunset Strip club scene.

But the crew was undeterred, and by the wee hours, they had transformed the blight into bloom with green bushes and an array of colorful flowers.

City workers on overtime? Nope, no budget for that. These were "guerrilla gardeners," a global movement of the grass-roots variety where people seek to beautify empty or overgrown public space, usually under the cover of darkness and without the permission of municipal officials.

"What we're fighting is neglect," said guerrilla gardening guru Richard Reynolds of London, founder of the website [guerrillagardening.org](http://guerrillagardening.org).

Getting approval to beautify public property can be cumbersome, so guerrilla gardeners in cities worldwide take matters into their own dirt-caked hands.

"We try not to let bureaucracy stand in the way," said accountant Steven Coker, who maintains an unsanctioned garden across from his house near an exit of the Santa Monica Freeway in West Los Angeles.

After starting his garden about 12 years ago, Coker has tried several times to officially take over its upkeep but to no avail.

Los Angeles Councilman Tom LaBonge said he supports guerrilla gardening as long as people don't present a safety hazard or impede traffic.

"I'm a guerrilla gardener, but I'm mostly just a maintenance guy," LaBonge said. "I pull weeds when I'm out walking. Everyone is welcome to do it. The city needs help."

Scott Bunnell, who has maintained a guerrilla garden on a median in Long Beach for about 10 years, said he wants to demonstrate that low-maintenance gardens are possible in southern California's arid climate.



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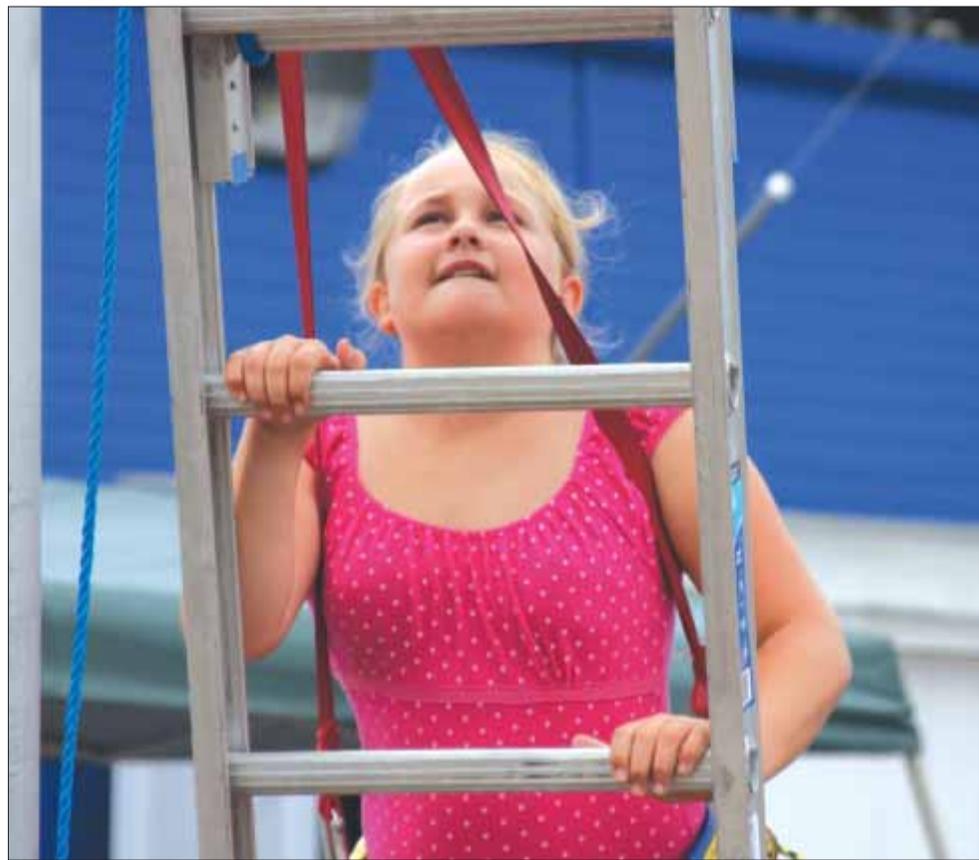
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**GOING UP:** Members of Free Arts for Abused Children from Santa Monica nonprofit organizations Upward Bound and St. Joseph's Center gathered on the Santa Monica Pier Tuesday to learn how to be trapeze artists. Above, Kiara Terveer anxiously climbs the ladder to the trapeze.

# At-risk youth become real-life trapeze artists

FROM TRAPEZE PAGE 3

of the transitional housing program Upward Bound. She was recently placed in a home under Section 8 — a federal housing program providing assistance to low-income renters — with the help of the nonprofit.

Terveer was particularly excited to have her try on the trapeze. She wanted to be the first to swing high over the pier.

Although she nervously bit her nails before the climb up the ladder, Terveer had no trouble once she began.

"You feel really freaked out at first, but

when you're on and you're ready, they push you off and it's just like swinging on a swing," Terveer told her friends in an attempt to calm their nerves. "Do we get a second try?"

As each child rolled off of the net that hung below the trapeze, it was easy to see the pride of their accomplishment in their faces.

"At the end of the day, it's about the pride, excitement and opportunities that we can give the kids," Lompa said. "That's what this organization is about."

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# Tenant harassment settlement funds educational programs

FROM SETTLEMENT PAGE 1

ment in the building, claiming that the unit would be owner-occupied. Goodman, who declined to be interviewed, had lived in the unit since 1982 and was paying \$529 a month in rent.

Doug Graham, Goodman's attorney, said that after relocating to Simi Valley, Goodman kept in touch with some neighbors and discovered that the landlords had not moved in after all. Shortly after Goodman left, the owners had rented her apartment to a new tenant for \$2,400 a month. Santa Monica law prohibits landlords from using "fraud, intimidation, or coercion" to make rent-controlled tenants vacate their homes.

"She didn't believe that she had some of the rights she did have," Graham said of Goodman, who still lives in Simi Valley.

The settlement disbursed \$40,000 to City Hall and \$160,000 to Goodman. The \$40,000 is to be added to the Consumer Protection fund to educate housing

providers and tenants about their rights and responsibilities. The fund pays for programs including an annual outreach program on fair housing held each April at Santa Monica public schools and educational seminars for landlords and tenants at the public library as well as the Ken Edwards Center.

Radinsky said that tenant harassment cases such as Goodman's are rare in the City Attorney's office these days.

"It's gotten less common over the years as knowledge about the law has spread," he said.

Still, Radinsky used this case as a valuable lesson for the city's large tenant population; encouraging renters to contact the City Attorney's office with any questions or complaints regarding their housing situation.

"It's also a cautionary tale to tenants," he said. "We encourage our local tenants to educate themselves as much as possible about their rights."

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