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Homeboy Industries

Homeboy Industries is a [youth program](#) founded in 1992^[1] by Father [Greg Boyle, S.J.](#) following the work of the [Christian base communities](#) at Dolores Mission Church. The program is intended to assist at-risk youth and [gang](#) members in a variety of services, such as [counseling](#), [tutoring](#), and [employment](#). The most distinctive feature of Homeboy Industries^[2] is its small businesses, which gives hard-to-place individuals an opportunity to be employed in transitional jobs in a safe, supportive environment where they can learn both concrete and soft job skills. Among the businesses^[3] are the Homeboy Bakery, Homegirl Café^[4] & Catering, Homeboy Merchandise, Homeboy Press and Homeboy Silkscreen & Embroidery.



Laura Bush talks with members during a discussion at Homeboy Industries in [Los Angeles](#).

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History

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Homeboy Industries began in 1988 as a job training program (called Jobs for a Future)^[1] out of Dolores Mission Parish in [Boyle Heights](#), [Los Angeles](#), [California](#), USA. It was created by then-pastor [Greg Boyle, S.J.](#) to offer an alternative to gang life for at-risk youth, who were living in the area with the highest concentration of gang activity in the country.^[5] In those early days, Boyle found sympathetic businesses that agreed to hire recovering gang members.

In 1992, an abandoned warehouse was converted into the first business, Homeboy Bakery, to create more opportunities for employment. The Bakery started off producing tortillas and eventually received a contract for baking bread.^[6] Eventually more businesses were added, and in 2001, Homeboy Industries became an independent non-profit.

Dolores Mission Alternative School^[7] was created to offer high school drop outs a chance for a diploma. In 2010, Learning Works became the new high school. There are currently 35 students enrolled, with plans to add another 35 as soon as funding becomes available.

In October 2007, Homeboy Industries opened a new \$8.5 million headquarters at the Fran and Ray Stark building, in a gang-neutral downtown location.^[3]

In addition to jobs, Homeboy Industries offers curriculum on [anger management](#), domestic violence, yoga, spiritual development, parenting, substance abuse, budgeting, art and other self development

programs.^[3] In addition, they offer free counseling, tattoo removal, legal services, job development and case management.

One of Homeboy's most successful programs is free [tattoo](#)^[3] removal. Young people who find that tattoos inhibit their ability to secure employment can receive treatments on site at Homeboy's center in Downtown [Los Angeles, California](#), USA. Though tattoo removal by laser is known to be painful and takes an average of eight to ten treatments per tattoo, and in some cases up to 1 year to complete, patient retention is virtually 100%. The clinic completes about 250 treatments per month.

On May 13, 2010, Homeboy Industries announced^[8] the economy had forced a layoff of the majority of its work force, leaving a bare-bones crew of 100 employees and trainees to staff the businesses.^[9] Counseling and tattoo removal will still be offered by volunteers. Financially hammered with declining donations because of the current economy,^[10] Father Boyle is determined to keep Homeboy Industries afloat. Boyle's faith in giving gang members a new start remains steadfast, with the hopes of mass producing Homeboy's salsa, and perhaps the chance at opening a branch of Homegirl Café^[4] at the [Los Angeles International Airport](#). The title of his new memoir *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion* ^[11] reflects Father Boyle's unwavering focus in helping gang members walk a new path.

Recognition and Awards

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A documentary titled *Father G. and the Homeboys*^[12] was released in 2007.

Homeboy Industries made its first foray into the mainstream market^[13] with its salsa being sold at Ralphs Supermarket.

Father Boyle and Homeboy Industries were awarded in the humanitarian category by of the 10th Annual [Bon Appétit Awards](#) in September, 2007.^[14]

Members of Homeboy Industries were also shown in the music video for Daughtry's "What About Now"^[15] in July 2008.

Criticism

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Boyle^[16] and Homeboy Industries has received criticism, especially from law enforcement in Los Angeles. Accusations of glorifying gang life and harboring criminals have been made in the past.

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External links

[edit]

- Official website
- El padre y los homies an audio documentary about Father Boyle and Homeboy Industries

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