

Young Men's Empowerment Organization Comes to Palisades Area

By DAYNA DRUM
Reporter

One of the nation's most exclusive young men's organizations is coming to the Palisades next month.

The National League of Young Men is opening a local chapter at the beginning of September to expand the organization's goal of "empowering young men" to the Palisades, Brentwood, Malibu and Santa Monica.

When Palisadian and NLYM chapter president-elect **Leslie Johnson** heard of the program through her godson, she knew that she wanted the same for her young sons—so she made it happen.

The organization was founded in 2007 by two moms in Newport Beach who wanted to strengthen their relationships with their sons and create a productive avenue for the boys to grow into men. Now the initiative has grown into 11 chapters across three states, and it has expanded at such a quick rate that the organization has put a temporary halt on new chapters.

The four-year program starts with high school in the ninth grade and has four key components—leadership, service, culture and protocol.

Each year in the program focuses on a different emphasis. The freshman members may focus on etiquette, while the sophomores may visit museums to learn about culture.

"It's a great avenue for boys to come together for leadership opportunities," Johnson told the *Palisadian-Post*.

The program also has a large



NLYM Palisades chapter leadership, from left: Staci Rubin, Leslie Johnson and Carolyn Rodeno

Photo courtesy of Leslie Johnson

emphasis on the mother-son relationship. Ordinarily, fathers take the role of teaching their sons masculine traits, Johnson explained, and often mothers don't get to spend as much time with them. NLYM provides an outlet for mothers to be involved with what their sons are a part of.

The Palisades chapter is starting with a "rising eighth-graders" class, involving only the mothers this year, as well as a ninth and tenth-grade class.

The chapter is completely run on a volunteer basis and has an almost all Palisadian founding board, including chapter president **Jackie Hassett**.

"It's been a lot of work, but I see a lot of benefits it provides," Johnson said.

Now 10 months after the process started, the board members are all "very excited" to get started, Johnson said. Each class is capped at 30 mothers and sons, but the group is looking to fill a

few more spots both ninth and tenth grade classes.

The chapter in Newport Beach has reached a coveted status with a long waiting list and many applicants. Eventually, the chapter founders aim to reach the same status.

Interested applicants can contact Carolyn Rodeno at crodeno@me.com and must be considered and accepted before the first meeting in early September.