



## History and Evolution of the Chino Boxing Club

Chino Youth Boxing Foundation

Neighborhood Activity Center  
5201 "D" Street  
Chino, CA 91710

August 2004

## Dedication

The history of the Chino Boxing Club is dedicated to all the youth who participated in the program over the years. Many of the young boxers passed through the program without gaining much acclaim or public attention, but each of them was a *winner* because they had the courage to face their fear and enter the “squared circle”. To go one-on-one with an opponent with the same desire to prevail. The outcome of boxing is what the *Wide World of Sports* once said was the “ecstasy of victory or agony of defeat,” but for all whom dare, their courage can never be questioned.

## History and Evolution of the Chino Boxing Club

The Chino Boxing Club began in the late 1960's and early 1970's, and during a period of Chino's history that many would prefer be forgotten. The demographic composition of the community represented many racial and ethnic groups, including Dutch dairy farmers, Portuguese immigrants, and a large number of Hispanics, including Mexican immigrants who had come to Chino in search of work and a better life for themselves and their families. In the Hispanic Community or barrio, there was a significant gang influence from a multiple-generational group called the Chino *Sinners* and by anyone's account, they were a bunch of hard-core gangsters, not just juvenile delinquents or youthful offenders. Their existence in Chino dates back as far as 1910. It was not uncommon on the mean streets of Chino, particularly under the cover of darkness, for murders to occur with frequency, many of which are still unsolved to this day. Intimidation and fear were as much a part of the scene as the small farms with acres of crops, including corn, alfalfa, strawberries, cattle ranches, dairy farms and plenty of open space.

For the youth of Chino, especially the Chicanos or Latinos, there was tremendous pressure from the *Sinners* to bring new recruits into the gang in their early teens and even earlier. After all, many of the youth grew up with the knowledge that their fathers, uncles, cousins and even grandfathers, had been in a gang, so why should they be any different. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, however, the gangs were violent and many would be savage in their treatment of rival gang members in Ontario and Pomona. Gang fights, drive-by shootings and

even executions were a common occurrence for the local police department that had to deal with 12 to 15 murders a year. Youngsters were drawn to gangs for protection, power and prestige, along with their need for affiliation, affirmation and acceptance. If you were not with the *Sinners*, you were seen to be against them, and that was not a comfortable or safe place for a youngster trying to grow up.

A young detective sergeant from the Chino Police Department, Louis Moreno, and a younger community member and amateur boxer, Bobby Sedillo, decided to dedicate themselves to offering the boys in the barrio with an alternative that would meet many of the needs that were being satisfied by the gang, and also provide self-esteem, self-respect, and a sense of pride. The idea was a boxing club to learn self-discipline and develop character. This was to be a community outreach and a delinquency prevention program, as envisioned by Louis Moreno and Bobby Sedillo. A boxing ring was set up behind the Fire Station on Central Avenue in Chino. The leaders believed they had to be proactive with the youth and not reactive after the fact, which was usually too late in many cases. A diversion from gang involvement was the concept, but selling the idea to the kids was not easy in light of significant distrust of police authority. There was even resistance from police officers patrolling the community because they thought the future delinquents were being coddled and pampered, rather than being roused, interrogated, cuffed, transported and booked, as many believed their behavior warranted. With the *Sinners* constantly putting on pressure for the adolescent boys to join the gang, the alternative would have to

something special and better than “throwing raids,” which was the gang expression from indiscriminate shootings and killings.

Louis Moreno, in his late 20's, and Bobby Sedillo, who was not yet 20, believed that the idea of starting a boxing club for the boys could bring about change. Mr. Sedillo had fought in the ring under the name of Smiling Bobby Sedillo, and at one time he turned professional with 10 fights, including one scheduled against Danny “Little Red” Lopez at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles. With Bobby Sedillo's boxing experience and Louis Moreno's connections with the City of Chino through the Chino police Department, the Chino boxing program was born in the late 1960's and took on some momentum in the early 1970's as a gang diversion operation. The first boxing show was held in 1965 and drew 300 spectators and many participants from boxing programs throughout Southern California.

There was no budget from the program and in the early days the workouts for the boys would be in an empty garage, and the equipment would be whatever could be scrounged up, donated, borrowed and purchased from money out of the pockets of the few founders of the program. Eventually, the boys started to show an interest in boxing as a way of proving themselves rather than doing so on the Chino streets, which remained mean for many kids who were trying to do the right thing. Bobby Sedillo became a street counselor and a liaison for the boxing club, and Louis Moreno was the club's advocate and ardent supporter with the Chino Police Department. The boxing club was located in many locations, including the basement of the police department, the Redwood Street Arena, the

old plumbers building on the south side of Monte Vista Park, and a radiator shop on 6<sup>th</sup> street.

The late John Ingroa, Senior, a former Chino Police Officer, got involved with the boxing club in the late 1970's. He was a local contractor he volunteered one of his garages as a boxing gym for the club. Mr. Ingroa was a former fighter and he wanted to promote young fighters with talent to see if they could make it in the professional ranks. He was responsible for bringing in professional fighters to train in the gym used by the boxing club. While Mr. Ingroa was interested in promoting talent for professional boxing, the boxing club remained focused on its primary purpose, which was to provide an alternative to joining the gang and getting involved in crimes that often led to incarceration or death.

During the early days of the boxing program, according to Lou Moreno, one of the co-founders of the boxing club, Mexicans came into the community in search of work and they often brought their families. The Mexican-American kids were not always welcoming to their Hispanic brother. While many of the Mexican workers were being exploited economically in the workforce, their sons were being recruited for gang membership. The boxing program became even more important for these youngsters that had very little going for them in their adopted country. When some of the Mexican fathers attempted to fight back against the Chino *Sinners* in defense of their kids, one of them was shot and killed. Sadly, other community killings continued; two occurred at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on 1976. Alice Cortez and Bobby Padillo were brutally murdered by unknown assailants that were thought to be drug dealers and/or members of the

local street gang, the *Sinners*. There was also a killing in the local graveyard, and it was after incidents of this sort that money was being made available for community outreach programs and gang diversion. Bobby Sedillo continued to be involved in the community as the Special Project Coordinator for Chino Youth Services through the City of Chino. In the late 1970's, organizations such as the YTS Civic Crew and the CIM Prison Preventers, an organization associated with the California Institution for Men, provided assistance in detouring youth from going toward the gangs by offering alternatives in Chino's "squared circle."

As the boxing club was struggling for survival, help also came from Frank Salter, a local owner of a meat packing company who also had a boxing background and a desire to make a difference within the community. At this time, the Chino Boxing Club began to gain recognition as a model gang diversion program, but it continued to have financial difficulties. Frank Salter was generous in his support to the boxing club financially. John Ingroa continued to be a promoter, Bobby Sedillo worked along with Lou Moreno, and countless kids found their way to the gym rather than to the waiting arms of the *Sinners* and a life of lawlessness.

Tony Linza was a captain in the Chino Police Department, and he too became a supporter of the boxing club, as did many others over the years. Between the efforts of Captain Linza and eventually Captain Moreno, the police began to be more supportive of the effort to offer kids an alternative through boxing competitively in the gym. After moving a number of times, the boxing club set up operations in a building located at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and D Street in Chino, right

next to the old bank building. The rent was always a challenge, but at that time a booster club was formed to help meet operating expenses. This building was home to the boxing program for nearly 20 years. It was during this time that Ray Mendoza, another gang diversion street counselor who was a gang member as a youth, became involved and for many years there was a cessation to the gang violence in the community, but it was not without the hard work of community leaders and advocated of diversion programs such as amateur boxing.

The boxing program continued with the active involvement of Moreno, Sedillo, Ingroa, Salter and Linza, and the support from the City of Chino also grew. Bob Fast, the Chino City Manager and Frank Meehan, Chief of Police, also supported the organization for a number of years. Other police chiefs have also supported the club, including Jerry Doyle, Jim Anthony, Pat Connelly, Richard Sill and Gene Hernandez, the current Chief of Police who is also the current President of the Chino Youth Boxing Foundation. The success of the club has been attributed to many dedicated volunteers over the years, but few were more committed than the late Roy Agee, a steadfast boxing club supporter and advocate for youth. Mr. Agee would do anything that needed to be done, but his greatest success was in promoting the boxing events and encouraging city and school district officials to support the activities of the club. Over the years, there have been numerous school principals involved in the boxing program, particularly Richard Meyer, the Principal of Boys Republic High School, Jon Sweat, Principal of Buena Vista High School, Al Carr former Principal of Chino High School, Mike Hunkins, and the former Assistant Principal of Ayala High



School. In addition to the City of Chino, and the Chino Valley Unified School District, there was also support from the local municipal judges such as Holly Graham, Fred Heene and still today, Ray Youngquist, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

As for bringing the club to where it is today in terms of a business operation, the efforts of Reva Salter must be recognized. When her husband, Frank Salter, became involved, Mrs. Salter began to offer her help in getting the club recognized and eventually through the assistance and support of the Chino Soroptimists, the boxing program received its non-profit status and Articles of Incorporation in 1980 and is now supported by the Chino Community Services Department of the City of Chino. Assisting Reva Salter in her efforts to keep the Chino Youth Boxing Foundation in financial order has been her daughter, Sandra Rose, another long time ardent supporter and co-treasurer of the program for many years.

Over 5,000 kids have visited the Chino Boxing Club over the years and many have stayed involved for long periods of time. There have been both boys and girls involved and everyone is welcome. Many professional boxers have been in Chino's "squared circle," including legendary ring announcer Jimmy Lennon and fighters such as Ken Norton, Mike Weaver, Albert Davilla, Richard Sandoval, Mike Evans, Bobby Francis, Mike Sedillo, Mando Muniz, Mike and Jerry Quarry, Hedgeman Lewis, Cisco Andrade, Wayne Kindred, Rodolfo "Gato" Gonzales, Indian "Little Red" Lopez, Oscar "Shotgun" and many others. Current trainers involved with the Chino Boxing Club include former champions in both

the amateur and professional ranks, as well as former participants of the program. The list of supporters from the community over the years is a virtual list of “whose who,” with names like Howard Cattle, Bob McLeod, Dan Bruno, State Senator Ruben Ayala, former Chino Mayor and San Bernardino County Supervisor, Fred Aguilar, Bob Townsend, Eva Wiesbrod, Augustine Tapia, Lee Alves, Larry Walker, Ignacio and Lupe Pando, Martin Salgado, Ann Harris, Jerald Lytle, Helen Orr, Iilitza Runjavac, Hal McWilliams, Al McCombs, owner and publisher of the *Chino Champion* and countless others.

The current Board of Directors for the Chino Youth Boxing Foundation includes Gene Hernandez, President; Josie Garro, Vice President; Reva Salter and Sandra Rose, Co-Treasurers; Michel Agee, Secretary. The Foundation also has Board Members, including Richard Meyers, Mike Garcia, Louis Moreno, Bill Morales, Irene Hensley, David Delgado, Lynda Flathers, George Khatcherian, Jackie Rodriguez, Mike Rossi, Mike Santana, Alice Youngquist, and Yolanda Holguin. While the notorious Chino *Sinners* are not the powerful gang they once were in Chino, the attraction of gang like behavior, drug-involvement, delinquency and so forth is still present in the community. For that reason, the Chino Youth Boxing Foundation is stronger today than ever, and boys and girls come to the Neighborhood Activity Center to train with former boxers who want to share the sport and make a difference in the lives of kids. While gang diversion needs many have declined over the decades, there is still the temptation for kids to get into the wrong things and the boxing program continues to provide an alternative, one that builds self-esteem, character and a sense of pride. The

purpose of the Chino Youth Boxing Foundation is to foster in the youth of the community the ideas of responsibility, good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for others so that they may be stronger both physically and emotionally, and grow into productive and caring community members,