



Mission Statement

*The Al Wooten, Jr. Heritage Center is a neighborhood approach to the revitalization and empowerment of a community in crisis. We provide a safe nurturing environment committed to good citizenship and academic excellence.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WOOTEN CENTER FOUNDER FAYE RUMPH SELECTED AS FINALIST IN  
COOKIE MAGAZINE “EVERYDAY MOM” CONTEST**

*Los Angeles, CA-* Al Wooten Jr. Heritage Center’s founder Myrtle “Faye” Rumph has been chosen as one of five finalists in *Cookie Magazine’s* Annual Smart Cookie Awards “Everyday Mom” contest.

*Cookie* magazine—Condé Nast’s lifestyle magazine for moms—created the Smart Cookie Awards in 2006 to recognize, celebrate, and support mothers who are making a significant difference for women and children in the world. In addition to high-profile honorees from the fields of health, politics, science and social work, the award recognizes an everyday extraordinary mom, who is elected by the visitors of [Cookiemag.com](http://www.cookie.com), as the people’s choice. The online contest begins on January 9 and concludes at midnight on February 8. To vote, go to [www.cookie.com/go/smartcookie](http://www.cookie.com/go/smartcookie)

The winner will receive \$35,000 from Citi for a charity of her choice, attend a gala celebration in New York City hosted by 20/20 Correspondent Deborah Roberts and be featured in a portfolio in the May issue of *Cookie*.

In January 1989, **Alton “Dunnie” Wooten Jr.** was killed in a drive-by shooting near Adams and Crenshaw in South-Central Los Angeles. The murder of the 35-year-old black man was said to be the result of a gang initiation. Drive-by shootings were at a

height when Wooten was killed. Programs like “Taking Back Our Community” and “Mothers Against Gangs in Communities” were formulated out of a desperate attempt to stop the violence. “Gang sweeps” by police officers and tougher penalties for youth offenders also emerged. But Wooten’s mother felt that the solutions only angered already rebellious youth. “What they need is love and attention,” said Myrtle Faye Rumph, Wooten’s mother. “They need to stay busy. They need to have more confidence. They need to have their attitudes changed. If somebody had taken more time with the person who killed my son, maybe my son would still be alive.”

With that, Rumph set out on a journey that would bring her many more sons, as well as daughters. She decided to open a youth center. Over a year later, after taking groups of kids on field trips, attending various community meetings and consulting with directors of other non-profit groups, Faye rented a small storefront at 9115 South Western Avenue in Los Angeles, next door to her moving and storage business, and started the Al Wooten Jr. Heritage Center.

Today, the Wooten Center serves hundreds of at-risk youth in South Central Los Angeles each year with programs that include: tutoring, homework assistance, college preparation including SAT prep, gang/violence prevention with our Street Soldiers program and computer instruction.

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