April 16, 2007
To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Vivien Hao, public affairs officer, First 5 LA at vhao@first5la.org or (213) 482-7563.

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CALENDAR

April 18, 1-3 p.m.: Infant Mental Health: Addressing Families' Needs panel discussion presented by First 5 LA Fellowship Program at First 5 LA, 750 N. Alameda St., LA 90012. Free and includes lunch. RSVP by April 13 by contacting marcellshannon@mednet.ucla.edu.

April 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: Community Resource Fair, Celebrating 15 years of the Latino Family Preservation Program, sponsored by the LA County Department of Children and Family Services at Our Lady of Soledad Church, 4561 E. Cesar Chavez Ave., LA 90022. Call (323) 881-1437.

April 21, 9 a.m.-noon: Building Better Futures for Our Children Conference for Teachers sponsored by Cerritos College Child Development Department, Club Center at Cerritos College Health and Sciences Building-HS 102, 11110 Alondra Blvd., Norwalk 90650.

April 21, noon-4 p.m.: 7th Annual Raising Readers: A Literacy Festival sponsored by Connections for Children at Santa Monica Clock Tower Quad, 1900 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica 90405. Call Catherine Griffin (310) 452-3325 ext. 237.

African-American "Leading Ladies" Provide Outreach on School Readiness

First 5 California has launched a pilot program, tapping into the influence of "leading ladies"—female leaders in black churches—to deliver key messages about school readiness in the African American community.

"With only one in three African-American children attending preschool, and a stubbornly persistent achievement gap between black and white students, we are asking black faith leaders to help inspire parents and caregivers of young children to take a more active role in their development," said Michelle Burroughs of First 5 Riverside, which along with First 5 San Bernardino, is participating in a county-wide pilot this year.

Starting with identifying and recruiting influential women from more than a dozen churches in each county, Burroughs and her San Bernardino counterpart, Shirley Simmons, hosted "meet and greet" luncheons in March for church leaders.

In May, they are scheduling follow-up sessions, hoping to attract even more "leading ladies" to a second luncheon and workshop, where an outreach tool kit—complete with CD-ROM, and reproducible materials—will be introduced.

"Based on our early feedback, we believe that church leaders are the key to reaching parents and caregivers who haven’t yet heard the message of how important they are in preparing their children for kindergarten," said Simmons. "At the First 5’s, we are in a unique position to link information and services with churches and families who need them."

For information, contact Monique Brackett at (323) 525-0559 x237 or visit www.first5california.com.
April 23, 9-11 a.m.: **Prenatal Workshop** at Queen Anne Place Ready For School Center, 1212 Queen Anne Place, LA 90019. Contact **Nikki Dana** at ndana@lausd.k12.ca.us or (323) 936-8506.

April 23, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m: **Breastfeeding and Beyond** presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, Torrance Memorial Hospital, 3330 Lomita Blvd., Torrance. Call **Debbie Cowley** at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

April 24, 5-7:30 p.m.: **Protecting Our Children From Sexual Abuse; a Parent/Caregiver Workshop** at SPIRITT Family Services, 2000 South Tyler Ave., South El Monte 91733. A professional panel will speak in Spanish and English to parents/caregivers. Sponsored by CARÑO Partnerships for Families and the Eastside Child Abuse Prevention Council. Call **Elvia Torres** or **Angelica Romero** at (626) 442-1400.

April 26, 6:30-9:30 p.m.: "**The Science of Sake**" - sake and food tasting benefit for Little Tokyo Service Center at the California Science Center Exposition Park, 700 State Dr., LA 90037. $40 pre-sale, $45 at the door, $75 VIP pre-sale only. Call (213) 473-1608 or visit www.ltsc.org.

April 27, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: **Before, Between, & Beyond Pregnancy**, a community dialogue presented by Building Bridges to Optimum Health at the California Science Center, 700 State Dr., LA 90037. Contact: (323) 292-2002 or email.

April 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.: **Gardening and Health/Nutrition Day** for Month of the Young Child at Westside Children's Center, 12120 Wagner St., Culver City 90230. Call **Jenny Marshall** at (310) 846-4100 x6120.

April 27, 4:30-6 p.m: **Children’s Hands on Health Fair** at Cerritos College Health and Sciences Building - HS 102, 11110 Alondra Blvd., Norwalk 90650.

May 5, 9-11:50 a.m.: **Children’s Nature Institute’s Wonder Mobile** visits the Early Education Center in Canoga Park. Explore the world of animals and insects. Contact "The Village" Ready for School Center at (818) 716-1376 or thevillagerfs@lausd.net.

May 19, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.: **4th Annual Community Resource Fair**, at Rowen Avenue Elementary School 600 S. Rowen Ave., Los Angeles 90023. Call **Mari Flores** (323) 261-7191.
May 19, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.: Child Care Resource Center’s Annabelle’s Play Day at Los Angeles Valley College, 5800 Fulton Ave., Valley Glen 91401. Free family event with games, music, face painting, dancing, etc. Call (818)256-1035 or visit www.ccrcla.org.

May 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: The Natural Laws of Breastfeeding: New Paradigms and Teaching Tools presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, Northridge Hospital Medical Center, 18300 Roscoe Blvd., Northridge. Call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

June 7, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: PAC/LAC Annual Conference - Quality of Life for Families XI: Improving the Outcomes of Pregnancy at the Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank 91505. Visit www.paclac.org or contact (818) 788-6850 or info@paclac.org.

June 16, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: American Diabetes Association’s Diabetes Expo at the Long Beach Convention Center 300 East Ocean Blvd., Long Beach 90802. Free health screenings, entertainment and more. Visit www.diabetes.org/losangelesexpo.

"We believe that parents and teachers know their children best-- and that they have the ability to self-assess and develop their own methods for making their teaching more effective," said Liz Guerra, the network’s senior project director. "The network is here to provide them the tools and guidance to succeed."

According to Guerra, another factor that has prompted significant gains on the part of both parents and children in the programs is the sustained relationships between families and program staff due to First 5 LA’s refunding of the programs for five years.

"We often see parents who were shy, new to this country and non-English speaking blossom in two or three years into bilingual parent leaders who are assisting peers and solving problems on their own. Likewise, we've seen children graduate from the family literacy program and become teachers' helpers and avid readers in later grades," she said.

For more information about the Family Literacy Support Network, contact Guerra at (562) 922-8781 or guerra_liz@lacoe.edu.

GRANTEE PROFILE
Boyle Heights Family Among 500 too Benefit from Abuse Prevention Programs

Rosa, 34, and her four children lived in a one-bedroom apartment in Boyle Heights. The children's father, who had a history of unpredictable violent behavior, was living outside the home, but frequently visited and abused Rosa in front of the children.

Because of risks to herself and her children, Rosa agreed last December to join a Family Preservation Program offered by Para Los Ninos, which coordinates a family-strengthening network of 15 community organizations in the north-central part of Los Angeles County.

Para Los Ninos is one of eight lead agencies contracted by First 5 LA to collaborate with community groups in a groundbreaking effort to prevent child abuse and maltreatment. The five-year, $50 million Partnership for Families Initiative-- the first of its kind in the nation-- was launched last year, and has already served more than 500 families like Rosa's throughout Los Angeles County.

Through weekly in-home visits, parent training, and mental health counseling, Rosa has learned how to deal with threats of domestic violence, emotional distress, and homelessness.

In January, her outreach counselor helped Rosa move her children and herself to a domestic violence shelter, where they are now receiving temporary housing and other social services while they work toward self-sufficiency.

"If Rosa had not taken part in our program, it's likely that her children would have had to go into foster care, since witnessing abuse can be so emotionally traumatizing," said Lisa Marin, a clinical director at Para Los Ninos.
EVIE’S DESK
Child Advocates to Be Honored During Week of the Young Child

First 5 LA, Los Angeles Universal Preschool, and the Los Angeles City Commission for Children, Youth, and Their Families will be honoring 15 individuals next week who have been outstanding advocates for issues affecting young children and their families.

During the ceremonies, scheduled for April 24 at the City Hall Rotunda, First 5 LA will acknowledge the Week of the Young Child (April 22-28), which recognizes the importance of early learning, health, and safety as a cornerstone for improving our communities.

This is a time for us to join together to show our support and gratitude for all the teachers, administrators, social workers, child advocates, policy makers, and many others who work every day on behalf of young children and families.

Of course, we cannot forget the key role of parents and caregivers, who nurture and inspire children through their love and guidance.

In our fast-paced, ever-changing society, it’s evident that the care and attention children receive in the first five years are more critical than ever in building a strong foundation for the rest of their lives.

On behalf all of First 5 LA’s staff, commissioners, partners, and grantees, I salute all those who work to give our children the best possible start in life.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

"We are hopeful that with the assistance of community services that are already out there, and additional case management we provide, families like Graciela’s can move beyond crisis to become stable and productive," she added.

For more information, contact Marin at (213) 413-1466, ext. 42.

Clarification on Family Literacy Report
This is to correct an inaccurate statement in last week’s Monday Morning Report article on the Family Literacy Evaluation Report.

The statement by Heather Quick of the American Institute for Research should have read, "We found that parents showed a strong commitment to the program—attending an average of more than 40 hours per month of class sessions in ESL and parenting education while their children attended early childhood programs. This is in addition to an average of 11 hours of one-on-one time with their child during the required parent-child interactive literacy component."

For information on the full report, click here.