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@first5.org or (213) 482-7563.

Don't miss the next Monday Morning Report. If this was forwarded to you, sign up now!

IN THIS ISSUE

Children on Skid Row
Communications Awards
Toy Loan Program
Wendy Slusser Champion Profile
Infant Immunizations

CALENDAR

April 19, 8:30 a.m.-10 a.m.: 
1st Annual Inner City Autism Awareness Breakfast in recognition of national autism awareness month, presented by the St. John's Well Child & Family Center and The Help Group, 5701 Hoover St., LA 90037. To RSVP, contact Sonya Muniz at smuniz@wellchild.org or (213) 742-0759 x4001.

April 19, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: 
Task Force Seminar: Applying New Evidence-Based Research to Lactation Care: From the Breast to the Baby or the Pump--A Day with Peter Hartman, presented by the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles, Housseals Forum, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, 2801 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach 90806. For information, call Karen Peters at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

April 21, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: 
HousingRightsCenter Presents: 7th Annual Housing Rights Summit with Keynote Speaker Jackie Goldberg, California State Assembly, 45th District, 202 W. First St., LA 90012. To register, call (213) 387-8400 x26.

First 5 LA Convenes Roundtables On Skid Row Families with Children

How can we make sure that services are adequately coordinated for homeless families with children living on Los Angeles’ skid row?

That’s the question more than 45 representatives of 10 LA City and County departments and agencies tried to answer during two policy roundtable meetings convened by First 5 LA in January and March.

In response to a motion made by LA County Supervisor Gloria Molina in December, the group submitted several key recommendations to close service gaps, increase housing options, facilitate inter-agency coordination of services, reduce administrative barriers to service expansion and integration, and develop a triage approach to responding to high-need families.

The group strongly advocated a regionalized approach to addressing homelessness and to strengthening the partnership among public, private and faith-based organizations.

"First 5 LA created the opportunity for information sharing, dialogue, and problem solving among the many agencies charged with ensuring the health and safety of homeless families," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez. "We hope we have opened the door to further collaborations that will enable us to reconnect families, and especially children, with services they need."

Among key agencies at the table were LA City, LA Homeless Services Authority, and County Departments of Health Services, Children and Family Services, Social Services, Mental Health, and the Chief Administrative Office (CAO).

In addition, USC researchers, and representatives from Public Counsel and Beyond Shelter shared their experiences in working with homeless families.

Earlier this month, the LA County Board of Supervisors approved a $100 million plan to create five stabilization centers where homeless families will be able to secure emergency and transitional housing, as well as other services.
April 22, 8:00 a.m.: 5K Annual Gift For Life Walk-A-Thon and Health Expo, presented by One Child Our Village Foundation Inc., 1335 E. 103rd St., LA 90002. To RSVP, contact Daisy Jefferson at (323) 756-8434.

April 22, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.: Nurses Guild Wellness, Literacy, and Job Fair, 2nd Zion Travelers Missionary Baptist Church, 11867 S. Main St., LA 90061. For information, call (323) 759-7515.

April 22, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: 3rd Annual School Readiness Fair Spring Break Extravaganza, Salvation Army, 7651 South Central Ave., LA 90001. For information, call Elvia De La Torre at (213) 622-5237 x282.

April 22 & 23, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: Earth Day Expo 2006, presented by K-Earth 101 FM, Los Angeles Zoo, 5333 Zoo Dr., LA. For information, call Patricia Flores at (323) 930-5252.

April 25, 9 a.m.-noon: Awakening the Advocate Within: Influencing Public Policy and Legislation, 2930 W. Imperial Hwy., 4th floor, Inglewood 90303. For information, call Karen Peters at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

April 26, 8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.: Pre-Natal Workshop, presented by T.H.E. Clinic, Queen Anne Place Ready For School Center, 1212 Queen Anne Place, LA 90019. For information and registration, contact Nikki Dana at ndana@lausd.k12.ca.us or (323) 936-8506.

April 28, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.: Kindergarten Discovery, for parents with children entering kindergarten, sponsored by Wilmington Ready for School, Wilmington Park Elementary School, 1140 Mahar Ave., Wilmington 90744. For information, call Verle English at (310) 513-9908.

April 29, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.: Passport to Adventure, Health & Safety, presented by United Way Success by 6, Banning High School, 161 W. Williams St., Banning 92220. To register by April 14, call Lupe Lopez at (310) 834-7266.

April 29, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.: Health Fair during National Infant Immunization Week, WIC Office, 4101 S. Figueroa St., LA 90037. For information, call (323) 757-7244 x231.

April 29, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.: International Kids Day Fair, presented by Yorkdale Neighborhood Leadership Group and LA Councilmember Jose Huizar, Yorkdale Elementary School, 5657 Meridian St., LA 90032. For information, call (323) 254-5295.

April 29, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.: Family Health Fiesta, presented by LA’s Best Afterschool Enrichment Program, Gates Street Elementary School, 3333 Manitou Ave., LA 90031. For information, email Edith Balesteros at edith@labest.lausd.net.

For information about the roundtables, contact First 5 LA’s Jennifer Claar at jclaar@first5la.org or (213) 247-9387. For information about the recommendations, contact LA County CAO Service Integration Branch’s Kathy House at khouse@cao.co.la.ca.us or (213) 974-4129 and Lari Sheehan at lsheehan@cao.co.la.ca.us or (213) 893-2477.

First 5 LA Annual Report, Poster, and Newsletter Win Communicator Awards

First 5 LA’s 2005 Annual Report, promotion poster, and Monday Morning Report e-newsletter were honored recently with The Communicator Awards, an international competition that recognizes outstanding work in the communications field.

The 2006 print competition received more than 5,000 entries from the United States and several foreign countries.

Entries are judged by industry professionals who look for organizations and individuals whose work serves as a benchmark for the industry.

First 5 LA’s 2005 Annual Report, which received the highest honor, an Award of Excellence, was project-managed by Public Affairs Officer Robert Ennis.

An Award of Distinction, the second highest honor, was given to the "We are Champions for Our Children Poster," designed by Margaret Black.

An Honorable Mention was given to Monday Morning Report, edited by Public Affairs Officer Vivien Hao. The e-newsletter is distributed weekly to more than 2,000 key stakeholders, policy makers, and grantees of First 5 LA.

For other winners, visit www.communicator-awards.com.

GRANTEE PROFILE
Toy Loan Program Promotes Early Learning, Responsibility in Preschoolers

Four-year-old Christopher Hernandez’s eyes light up when he enters the room full of toys, books, and videos, where he can have his pick of items to take home without his mother paying a penny.

He and scores of other young children in the Hyde Park Elementary School neighborhood are taking advantage of a new toy-lending library, funded by the LA County Board of Supervisors and the LA County Department of Public Social Services.

Hyde Park Family Center’s Adela Hernandez (left) helps 4-year-old Christopher Hernandez and his mom, Vilma Meza, choose a toy to borrow.
The library-- filled with educational toys selected to meet developmental needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers-- is being integrated into the center's Ready for School program funded by First 5 LA.

Located in the Hyde Park Family Center in southwest Los Angeles, the program offers a comprehensive menu of parent education, counseling, and support for early literacy to children and families in the low-income neighborhood.

“We believe we must reach the whole child, and the toy-loan program offers opportunities for working with children and parents to build responsibility, self-esteem, early literacy and motor skills,” said Deborah Hayes, program coordinator.

With more than 100 toys and 150 books, videos and DVDs, the library has a “toyrarian,” who engages parents and young borrowers in selecting appropriate items and strategizing the best way to use them as learning tools and to increase family bonding.

For information, call Hayes or Jay Lynn at (323) 753-4551.

CHAMPION PROFILE

Dr. Wendy Slusser Promotes Fitness, Breastfeeding, Obesity Prevention

Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA's tagline: “Champions for Our Children.”

Wendy Slusser is assistant clinical professor of Pediatrics at UCLA Mattel’s Children Hospital and founder and director of the UCLA Breastfeeding Resource Program.

With more than 16 years of maternal and child health experience, Dr. Slusser is also founder and codirector of the Community Health and Advocacy Pediatric Residency Training Program and is a pediatrician at Venice Family Clinic, where she oversees the obesity intervention program.

In 1998, she and her UCLA colleagues conducted a landmark study that revealed alarming rates of childhood obesity in the Los Angeles Unified School District. These findings have helped attract $30 million to support programs that combat the obesity epidemic, and have triggered the introduction of salad bars in the second largest school district in the nation.

Dr. Slusser earned her MS and MD degrees from Columbia University and BS from Princeton University.

What book has influenced your life the most? Mountains Beyond Mountains, about a physician, Paul Farmer, who developed programs to help and empower the poorest of the poor.

What makes you happy? Angry?

I am happiest when my children are happy and I can help other mothers to keep their children physically and mentally healthy. I get angry when I see or read about injustices toward hard-working, honest people.
May 19-21, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Training, location of workshop will be given at time of registration. To register by April 28, call the Pasadena Health Department Black Infant Health Program at (626) 744-6093.

EVIE'S DESK
Infant Immunizations Help Protect Children and Community
With National Infant Immunization Week coming up, April 22-29, I want to take this opportunity to remind health care providers, child and health advocates, and community leaders that we all have an important role in raising awareness about the importance of early childhood immunizations.

With advances in medical science, we can prevent more diseases than ever before. Yet, despite recent gains in childhood immunization coverage, more than 20 percent of our nation’s 2-year-olds still miss one or more of the recommended immunizations.

Each day, 11,000 babies are born who will need to be immunized against 11 diseases before age 2. Low immunization coverage is an issue that impacts the entire community.

A decision to vaccinate a child is a decision to not only protect that individual child, but to protect the community as well by reducing the spread of disease to those who have not been vaccinated either by choice or because of medical reasons, such as children with leukemia.

To ensure that babies in LA County can get immunized, First 5 LA offers Healthy Kids insurance, which provide free and low-cost health, dental, and vision coverage for children 5 years and younger. For information and enrollment, call (888) First5-LA.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

Which historical figure do you admire most?
Mahatma Gandhi because he was an effective leader for peace and didn't succumb to corruption.

What is the greatest challenge the children and families of LA County face today?
The stress of long commutes and the little time for exercise or spending time with children, and the poor educational opportunities in crowded, unhealthy school environments.

Who was your favorite teacher?
Miss Stanford in third grade because she allowed me to choose what I wanted to study after finishing my math and reading lessons. I wrote scripts, pursued higher math, learned cooking, and played imaginary games.

What is your motto?
"Always do your best."