Monday Morning Report

May 8, 2006
To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Vivien Hao, Public Affairs officer, First 5 LA atvhao@first5la.org or (213) 482-7563.

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

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CALENDAR

May 17-18, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.: Looking Back, Moving Forward: California REACH 2010 Conference, to address inequality in health among racial and ethnic communities, Wilshire Grand Hotel, 930 Wilshire Blvd., LA 90017. To register, call Tamekia Mosley at (323) 757-7244 x281 or visit www.careach2010conference.org.

May 20-22, 7 a.m.-4 p.m.: Signs of Autism in Infants: Recognition & Early Intervention, presented by Child Development Media and the School of Infant Mental Health, London, UCLA, Covel Commons, 330 DeNeve Dr., LA 90095. For information, call Child Development Media at (800) 405-8942 or visit www.earlysignsofautism.com.

In this issue:

Initiative to Fund Health Care, Anti-Smoking Gathers a Million Signatures to Qualify

An initiative to raise California’s tobacco tax to fund smoking prevention and health care programs last week filed 1.1 million signatures to qualify the measure for the November 2006 ballot.

The measure proposes raising the state tobacco tax on a pack of cigarettes by $2.60. It would provide revenue of $2.1 billion annually, including $405 million for health insurance to cover children who are ineligible for other state-funded plans.

Such coverage is already provided by First 5 LA’s Healthy Kids insurance to children 5 and under in LA County. The ballot initiative, if passed, would extend coverage to all California children under 19 whose family income is no more than 300 percent of federal poverty level.

In addition, the new revenues would fund anti-smoking programs, disease research and treatment, emergency room care and nursing education.

The measure is sponsored by a broad coalition of children's and health care advocates, including the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association of California, American Heart Association, The California Children’s Partnership, Children Now, the California Hospital Association, and the California Primary Care Association.

For information, visit www.picocalifornia.org.

Evelyn V. Martinez to Receive Award for Reproductive Rights Advocacy

First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez will be honored Thursday with The Justice Award by the Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ) at its 33rd Anniversary Dinner at the Millennium Biltmore in downtown LA.

The LACLJ will also honor Gloria Molina, LA County supervisor; Antonia Hernandez, executive director of the California Community Foundation; and Olivia G. Rodriguez, domestic violence program director of the Chicana Service Action Center.
May 26, 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.: **Family Information Fair**, presented by Queen Anne Place Ready for School Center and Healthy Start, Queen Anne Place School Auditorium, 1212 Queen Anne Place, LA 90019. For information, contact **Nikki Dana** at (323) 936-8506 or ndana@lausd.k12.ca.us.

June 3, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.: **A Family Book Fair**, presented by LAUSD, City of LA, and Families in Schools at LA City Hall (outdoor steps). For information, contact info@familiesinschools.org or (213) 484-2870 x240.

June 21, 9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.: **Importance of Early Attachment: Relationships and Resilience in the Development of the Brain**, presented by the Intercommunity Child Guidance Center, Radisson Hotel Whittier, 7320 Greenleaf Ave., Whittier 90602. For information, call **Benny Garcia** at (562) 692-0383 or www.intercommunity.org.

**EVIE’S DESK**

**Raising Awareness for More Support of Foster Kids**

With more than 20,000 children in foster care, LA County has one of the largest foster care systems in the country. Yet, these youngsters, who have suffered abuse and neglect at a young age, are often overlooked in our community.

During the May 2006 Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign, a network of children’s advocacy organizations will be promoting ways to engage the community in creating a better future for these vulnerable youths.

**First 5 LA** recently allocated $50 million to create the nation’s largest and most comprehensive child abuse and neglect prevention initiative.

We are working with community-based organizations in every part of LA County to strengthen and coordinate support services for high-risk families.

For information about events taking place this month, call **Miriam Krinksy** of the Children’s Law Center at (213) 351-5886 or **Stuart Riskin** of the Department of Children and Family Services at (213) 351-5886.

As a first-year lawyer, Hernandez represented 11 Latinas in a 1975 landmark civil rights case, *Madrigal v. Quilligan*, which challenged the involuntary sterilization of women at USC-LA County Medical Center in Los Angeles.

Molina and Martinez were among the leaders of the Comision Feminil de Los Angeles, a Chicana feminist group, who rallied support from other women's and civil rights organizations for the case. Their advocacy efforts helped spur new federal and state legislation to safeguard women’s reproductive rights.

For information about the LACLJ, visit www.laclj.org.

**California Family Resource Association Links Groups for Family/Child Advocacy**

Representatives from organizations that serve families across the state, including **First 5 LA**, First 5 California, and 9 other First 5 county commissions, joined forces in Sacramento recently to learn how to be more effective policy advocates for families and child well-being.

The conference, held April 27-28, was sponsored by the California Family Resource Association (CFRA), a new statewide membership association of organizations and individuals that serve children and families. Its purpose is to advocate for programs, policies and resources that help families and communities thrive.

Workshop topics focused on helping families achieve economic success, strategic communications for service providers, and organizing communities to advocate for family-strengthening policies.

Highlights of the conference included powerful and sobering commentary on the state of families in California by **Manuel Pastor**, professor of Latin American and Latino Studies at UC Santa Cruz.

Also providing an overview of the current policy and political landscape were Sacramento “insiders” **Kim Belshé**, California Health and Human Services secretary, Assemblymember **Dave Jones**, and State Senator **Deborah Ortiz**.

For information about CFRA, visit www.californiafamilyresource.org or contact Executive Director **Leticia Alejandrez** at (916) 338-6633.

**First 5 LA Launches Partnership with KTTV Fox 11 at Fiesta Broadway**

Billed as the nation’s largest “Cinco de Mayo Block Party,” the 17th Annual AT&T Fiesta Broadway was the venue where **First 5 LA** and KTTV Fox 11 launched a new strategic partnership.
The April 30 event drew tens of thousands to hear music, play games, and buy from vendors along the 36-block downtown LA area along Broadway. Thousands of families with young children also had a chance to receive information and hear about services for youngsters aged 5 and under, including Healthy Kids insurance, First 5 LA 211 Connect parent warmline, and the Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

"We're delighted to partner with KTTV Fox 11 to better educate the public about the many programs and services available to young children and families in LA County," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez. "We see great value in media partnerships that will help us reach families, while increasing the visibility of outstanding programs and key issues in our community."

GRANTEE PROFILE

Multicultural Preschool Helps Bridge Language and Cultural Barriers

At age 6, Alejandra Medina is a bright and friendly kindergartner who speaks Spanish, English, and even some Korean. But her teachers say she was a different child two years ago.

"Due to domestic violence at home, Alejandra was withdrawn when she started preschool," said Eunice Kim, director of the Rainbow Child Development Center, a First 5 LA grantee. "She spoke only Spanish and didn't know how to play with other children or behave in a group."

But the shy preschooler slowly opened up to teachers and peers. "We noticed that she started smiling and participating when we introduced ballet and Korean folk dance into our curriculum," said Layla Barrera, Alejandra's kindergarten teacher.

Alejandra, like many of the more than three dozen 2-to-6-year-olds in the LA Koreatown child development center, is thriving in a unique multicultural preschool, kindergarten and child care environment designed to help families overcome language and cultural barriers.

"With a First 5 LA grant, we were able to introduce dance and English as a Second Language classes to every child," said Kim. "We also made facility upgrades to create an open classroom where children have easy access to multicultural toys, books and other tools for self-initiated learning."

According to Kim, many of the improvements at the Rainbow Center resulted from consultations she had over two years with Koreatown Youth and Community Center, a First 5 LA grantee that provided technical assistance to child care providers.

For information about the Rainbow Center, call Kim at (213) 389-1155.
CHAMPION PROFILE

Dr. Alice Kuo Promotes Educational Advocacy for Underserved Children

Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA’s tagline: "Champions for Our Children."

Dr. Alice Kuo is assistant professor in pediatrics at UCLA. Her academic interests are in early childhood education and school readiness, and she currently serves on the First 5 LA Universal Preschool Research Advisory Committee.

As the program director of the UCLA Community Health and Advocacy Training Program, Dr. Kuo has overseen the training of 24 pediatric residents in community health and child advocacy in the past five years.

She founded the School Function Program at the Venice Family Clinic, which provides educational advocacy for school-aged children with academic, behavioral, or mental health difficulties in school.

Dr. Kuo earned her BA from Harvard University, MD from the UCLA School of Medicine, and PhD in educational psychology from the UCLA Graduate School of Education.

Which book has influenced your life the most?
Enrique’s Journey by Sonia Nazario.

Which historical figure do you admire most?
Dorothy Day, whose sense of social justice led her to help the poor in Chicago in the 1930’s.

What is your favorite way to spend time with an important child or children in your life?
I consider it an achievement if I can keep my nieces and nephews from playing videogames by taking them out for a walk or getting them to read.

What is the greatest challenge the children and families of LA County face today?
Children and families, particularly poor children with single mothers, are not having their social service needs met.

Who was your favorite teacher?
Cathy Wilson, my elementary school art teacher, who always believed in me.

What is your motto?
"It is only through a conscious choice and deliberate policy that humanity can survive" -- John Paul II