Monday Morning Report

June 5, 2006
To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Vivien Hao, Public Affairs officer, First 5 LA at vha@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

June 17, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.: 2nd Annual Kindergarten Transition Symposium to feature Los Solecitos with educational workshops, giveaways, entertainment, and food. Presented by Pasitos, Tweedy Elementary School, 9724 Pinehurst Ave., South Gate 90280. Space is limited. To register, call Silvia Cervantes at (562) 806-5400 X173.

June 20, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.: Safely Surrendered Baby Law and Prevention of Infant Abandonment: Los Angeles County Hospital Training, presented by the Perinatal Advisory Council at St. Anne’s Maternity Home, 155 N. Occidental Blvd., LA 90026. For information, contact Andrea Hoberman at (818) 788-6850 or ahoberman@paclac.org.

KTTV Fox 11 Segments to Focus on How Healthy Choices Can Prevent Obesity

Healthy choices that will prevent childhood obesity is the topic of the second in a series of TV news segments to air this Thursday and Friday on KTTV Fox 11’s Good Day LA morning show. This week, "Good Beginnings," the new First 5 LA/KTTV series about the importance of the first five years of life, visits a First 5 LA-funded program at Monte Vista Early Learning Center in Highland Park.

Here, parents like Enrique and Lorena Carrillo, are learning how to "shop smart", using weekly supermarket sale fliers to do menu-planning to promote healthy options for family meals and snack time.

"I had no idea those Whoppers and tortilla chips I was eating had so many calories," said Enrique. "Since starting the class, I've cut way back on chips and soda, and try to play T-ball everyday with Joshua, who's 3-years-old."

"Our goal is to teach parents how to prevent obesity—not only to nourish their children, but also nurture them throughout their important stages of early development," said Hope Wills, the Childrens Hospital Los Angeles dietitian who teaches the Child Health Works classes.

For information, visit www.first5la.org or www.fox11.com/stories/goodbeginnings/.

Surrendered Baby is Reunited with Firefighters Who Accepted Her from Mom

One-year-old Tessa Leavitt and her adoptive parents, Rob and Donna Leavitt of Thousand Oaks, had their first opportunity last Wednesday to say thank you to the LA County firefighters who accepted the hours-old infant a year ago under California's Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

Mom Donna Leavitt, daughter Alia and baby Tessa are greeted by firefighters Scott Telsher and Bob Denton.
Given up by her birth mother and surrendered at LA County Fire Station 15 in Whittier, Tessa is one of 44 infants whose lives were saved in LA County since 2001, because of the law that permits parents and anyone they authorize to anonymously surrender a baby within 48 hours of birth without fear of prosecution (provided there is no evidence of neglect or abuse) to any hospital or county fire department.

"This is the happy ending that we all want to see," said LA County Supervisor Don Knabe, who has championed the issue locally. "Little Tessa has been given the chance to have a great life with a loving adoptive family, and we will continue to work until no child is ever abandoned in LA County again."

Of the 44 infants surrendered, all have been adopted, except for three who were reclaimed by their mothers within the 14-day window.

First 5 LA led a county-wide task force to create a $500,000 public information campaign in Spanish and English to educate county employees, community groups and the public about the Safely Surrendered Baby Law.

For information, visit [www.babysafela.org](http://www.babysafela.org) or call LA County's 24-hour hotline at 211.

Business Executive Gisselle Acevedo-Franco Named President of Para Los Ninos

Gisselle Acevedo-Franco, a local business executive, has been named president/CEO of Para Los Ninos, a nationally recognized LA-based children services agency with 320 staff and an annual operating budget in 2006 in excess of $16.5 million.

She is formerly president and general manager of the LA edition of Hoy, the Spanish language newspaper owned by Tribune Company, and has also served as vice president of public affairs at the Los Angeles Times and president of the Los Angeles Times Foundation.

She began her career as an elementary school teacher, and later graduated from law school and worked as an advocate for people with developmental disabilities and mental illness.

Acevedo-Franco has also served as executive director of corporate communications and public affairs for AT&T Broadband and as director of government relations and public affairs for the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Acevedo-Franco will be working closely with Para Los Ninos’ board and senior staff, including Hector Ramirez, who was recently promoted to the newly-created position of chief strategic officer, to assure the non-profit organization’s long-term success. Ramirez also serves as chair of the First 5 California Commission.

For information, visit [www.paralosninos.org](http://www.paralosninos.org).

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**EVIE'S DESK**

**Changing the World with Children’s Bureau**

Since First 5 LA was launched in 1999, we have partnered with more than 700 agencies and community-based organizations to improve the lives of young children and their families in LA County.

Among our strongest and most stable partners has been Children’s Bureau, considered Southern California’s preeminent child abuse prevention agency.

In fact, Children’s Bureau has been a key First 5 LA partner in several major initiatives, including school readiness, family literacy, and our new child abuse and neglect prevention initiative, Partnership for Families.

Later this month, Children’s Bureau, at its 102nd Annual Meeting of the board of directors and board of trustees, will honor First 5 LA with its "Changing the World of Children Award."

We’re humbled to be singled out for recognition by such a respected and long-standing community partner. For more than 100 years, Children’s Bureau has been a leader in strengthening families and promoting the welfare of our society’s most vulnerable members.

At First 5 LA, we’re proud to work alongside Children’s Center in our mutual quest to change the world, one child at a time.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA
GRANTEE PROFILE

Women in Motion Program Increases Health and Self-Esteem of Mothers

Since emigrating from Peru 15 years ago, Sonia Arevalo has adopted the unhealthy habits of many Americans, including doing little exercise, eating lots of breads, milk, and cheese, and drinking soda pop. “With the stress of working, getting married, and having a child, I forgot to take care of me,” she said. She remembers always feeling tired, and feared that she was setting a bad example for her 5-year-old son, Brandon Lopez.

But last January, Arevalo made some changes. She joined a parent/child healthy living program called Women in Motion at Brandon’s school, Norwood Street Elementary in South LA. Based on what she learned, she’s started to limit her caloric-intake, stopped drinking soda, reduced her stress level.

“Now, I eat less fat, plan healthy meals for my family, and do tai chi in my living room,” said Arevalo. “I even have enough energy to help my son with school and spend quality time with my husband.”

The Coalition for Community Health (CCH), a First 5 LA grantee, has helped more than 500 mothers like Arevalo since it launched Women in Motion in 2000. “We have seen amazing changes in the participants,” said Michael Ruble, executive director of the CCH. “After completing the 13-week program, 90 percent of our 500 graduates meet their personal weight goals.”

Children of participants also join the exercise classes, and are instructed in tae kwon do, yoga, folk dancing, and aerobics along with their mothers.

For information, call Ruble at (213) 748-7123.

CHAMPION PROFILE

Dianne Calvi Promotes Literacy For Children Around the World

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

Dianne Calvi, president of Bring Me a Book, a nonprofit early-literacy organization, is committed to bringing literacy to children around the world. Reaching more than 375,000 children and families, the organization promotes the importance of reading and provides access to books to parents and teachers in underserved communities.

Calvi is chair of the Read Aloud Collaborative of Silicon Valley and serves on the board for Shelter Network and United Way’s Partnership for School Readiness.
Formerly vice president of marketing and development for YouthNoise, a youth civic-engagement organization, she has also worked at Microsoft, Xerox, Montedison Corporation in Italy, and as an adjunct professor of international marketing for City University's MBA Program in Seattle.
Calvi holds a BA from Stanford University and an MBA from Bocconi University in Italy.

Which historical figure do you most admire?
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Which book has most influenced your life?
The Bible.

What is the greatest challenge faced by children and families of LA County?
Lack of equity in the educational system.

Which living person do you most admire?
Nelson Mandela, who suffered and sacrificed for social justice and still managed to retain a sense of humor and positive outlook on life.

What is your motto?
"Love generously, praise loudly, and live fully." --Elias Porter