July 30, 2007

To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Katie Kurutz, public affairs officer, First 5 LA at kkurutz@first5la.org or (213) 482-5902.

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CALENDAR

August 3, 9am - 4pm: “Critical Updates for the Lactation Professional” is presented by the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles at Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles’ Saban Building Auditorium, 4661 Sunset Blvd., L.A. 90027. For more information call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit http://www.breastfeedla.org/ and go to upcoming seminars.

August 6, 1:30pm & 8pm: LA CityView Channel 35’s “LA Roundtable” will feature KCAL’s Dave Bryan’s interview with new members of the LAUSD Board of Education. The show will discuss the district’s future and where the new board might be headed.

August 7, 8:30am-9:00pm: "First Step to a Healthy Life" Breastfeeding Walk is sponsored by the Memorial Care Center for Women at Miller Children’s Hospital, Long Beach Memorial 2801 Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach, 90806. A reception with guest speakers to follow. For more information contact Bonnie Henson at (562) 933-2772.

Collaborative Partnerships Among School Readiness Programs

At First 5 LA, we know that collaboration is critical to sustaining programs that meet the needs of children and families. Our overall aim is to help collaborative partnerships mature in order to increase and improve service delivery for families and kids, and eventually drive policy in their communities.

As legislation on kindergarten readiness programs gets underway in Sacramento, First 5 LA aims to better understand just how well its school readiness grantees work collaboratively to serve children prenatal through five and their families. First 5 LA recently launched an exploratory study about collaboration among school readiness grantees, examining seven programs currently engaged in collaborative ventures.

The study looked at various developmental frameworks and themes, such as leadership, decision-making and parent involvement that could influence the success of collaborative partnerships. According to the study, while there are general elements of successful collaborations, such as frequent communication and shared resources and information, each program is individualized to meet the needs of its surrounding community.

Some agencies focus on increased staff involvement, regularly scheduled meetings, parent involvement, shared leadership and decision making. Others emphasize service provisions and subcontracting relationships that serve as a primary focus of their efforts.

In the last four years, First 5 LA and First 5 California have contributed more than $134 million toward school readiness. Currently, 42 agencies located throughout L.A. County receive school readiness funding.

For more information about the School Readiness Collaboration Exploratory Study contact Bill Gould, Research Analyst, at (213) 482-7550.

Calling all Grantees and Champions!

Monday Morning Report is on the hunt for interesting stories about people helping kids and would like your help. If you are a First 5 LA grantee or contractor and have not been featured in the Monday Morning Report – or have been featured but have a new and interesting story to share – please contact us! We would like to interview you and an individual who has benefited from your services, and get a photo depicting your program.
August 9, 6pm-9pm: All for the Love of Kids "Hope & Dreams" Family Fundraiser and Awards Dinner sponsored by Fifth District Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich and the Department of Children and Family Services, is being held at Edwards Renaissance 14 Theatres, 1 East Main Street, Alhambra, CA 91801. Adults $35, children 12 and under $12.50. Contact Michael Wrice at wricem@dcs.lacounty.gov or call (213) 739-6202.

August 11-12: "Annual NBC4/Telemundo 52 Health and Fitness Expo" is being held at the Los Angeles Convention Center, South Hall K, 1201 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 90015. The expo is free to the public and offers free seminars, samples, screenings, and activities. For more information please contact Jessica Ostrowski at (857) 991-1701 or email jostrowski@networkevents.tv.

August 25, 10am-8pm: Back to School Fair and Community Celebration is sponsored by the Office of L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe, at Adventure Park in South Whittier. For more information call Joseph Matthews at (562) 807-7350.

August 26-28: 17th Annual CityMatCH Maternal and Child Health Leadership Conference "Building the Best Environments for Families and Children" is sponsored by CityMatCH at the Denver Marriott Tech Center, 4900 S. Syracuse, Denver, CO 80237. For registration fees and/or information call (402) 561-7500 or visit http://citymatch.org/apps/conf_index.php.

September 7-8, all day: "LAUP Conference and Education Expo" is being held at the Los Angeles Convention Center, West Wing - Petree Hall, Exhibit Hall C & D - 1201 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 90015. For information visit http://www.laup.net/ or call (866) 581-LAUP (5287).

September 14-16, 9am-6pm: Certified Infant Massage Instructor Training is being held at The Heart Touch Project, 3400 Airport Ave. #42, Santa Monica 90405. Registration is $650. For more information contact Jennifer at (310) 391-2558 x5 or jennifer@hearttouch.org.

September 14, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm: Secure Attachment and Successful Breastfeeding: Evidence Based Practices presented by the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles at Valley Presbyterian Medical Center, 1107 Van Owen St. Van Nuys, 91405. For more information all Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit http://www.breastfeedla.org/ and go to upcoming seminars.

Also, if you would like to nominate yourself or someone you know to be featured in our Champion Profile section, let us know. A First 5 LA Champion can be anyone who has changed the lives of children in L.A. County through dedication and service. This may include parent leaders, social workers, teachers, academics, researchers, or anyone in the field who is making or has made a positive impact for children and families.

The Monday Morning Report goes out to more than 2,000 stakeholders in L.A. County and our circulation is growing! MMR is a great way to tell the community about who you are and what you do to make the next generation of young children healthy, safe, and ready to learn. Please submit your story ideas to Katie Kurutz at kkurutz@first5la.org, or call at 213-482-7556 today.

CHAMPION PROFILE
A Full Career:
Happy Retirement Joan Davis!

Joan Davis, Director of the Lawndale Elementary School’s First 5 LA-funded School Readiness Program, will be retiring next month after 11 years at Lawndale and a lifetime of service to children and families. She has been with the School Readiness Program since its inception in 2002.

Joan wrote the First 5 LA grant while studying at the UCLA Anderson School of Business, Price Center for Entrepreneurial Studies in a management development program for early childhood educators. A student of nationally renowned child development expert Dr. Karen Hill Scott, she also participated in L.A. County’s universal preschool task force during the same period.

A self-proclaimed “late bloomer”, Joan began her college career at Northeastern Illinois University only after she and her husband raised their five children. During her summers as a student at NIU, Joan and her family lived in Guadalajara, Mexico where she attended an exchange program at the University of Guadalajara for more intensive studies in Spanish. She graduated from NIU in 1975 with a double major in Sociology and Spanish and a minor in Psychology.

Joan went on to become a Spanish-English bilingual teacher in the Chicago and then Los Angeles school systems until she received her Masters in Education Administration from Cal State L.A. in 1989. She then held administrative posts in the Glendale, Culver City and San Ysidro School Districts before settling in Lawndale.

In retirement Joan plans to spend more time with her husband Ralph, her five children – whose careers range from middle-school principal to Augustinian brother – and her seven grandchildren, whose homes span from Los Angeles to the Midwest, to Mexico. Happy trails Joan!

Which book has influenced your life most and why?

Psycho-Cybernetics by Maxwell Maltz because of his idea that self-image sets the boundaries of individuals accomplishments and defines what you can and cannot do.
With modern science backing up the benefits of breast milk, few can dispute that breastfeeding is the best way to nourish a baby. This Wednesday marks the first day of World Breastfeeding Awareness Week, a time set aside to support mothers who choose to breastfeed and to reach out and encourage pregnant women who are thinking about it.

Why do we need an entire week dedicated to this practice? Well, to put the question in historical context, breastfeeding has not always been supported socially. In the early 1900’s, using infant formula was believed by health professionals to have the same benefits as breast milk. Based on this belief, the infant formula industry grew. By the early 1970’s, over 75 percent of babies were formula fed.

About the same time, however, a grassroots movement started by mothers began to promote breastfeeding. Organizations like La Leche League formed to support mothers who chose to breastfeed. Scientists also began to uncover the unique benefits of breastfeeding for mother and child, adding to the movement’s credibility.

Breastfeeding a baby is not always easy, and women – especially working mothers – can experience many obstacles when trying to stay on a tight feeding schedule. Social support for women who choose to breastfeed can really make a difference in keeping this healthy practice alive.

For the next several weeks, the Monday Morning Report will run a series on breastfeeding that highlights how to find support and what different communities are doing to promote the practice. I would like to thank in advance grantees and partners who contribute to the series.

What is your favorite way to spend time with an important child or children in your life?
I love to do creative activities with my grandson Eóin. Together we will draw a town with markers on a plastic shower curtain and he will drive his trucks around our community.

Which living person do you admire most and why?
Nelson Mandela, for his courage and determination

Who was your favorite teacher and why?
Dr. Angelina Pedroso, my Spanish teacher at NIU. She made sure every student was supported academically and emotionally.

What is your motto?
Si, se puede! Yes, you can!

GRANTEE PROFILE
Congratulations School Readiness Graduates!
Several First 5 LA School Readiness Programs hold graduation ceremonies for their students who are ready to move onto Kindergarten. We would like to congratulate those students and their families, and share a few snapshots of their celebrations.

A student from Westside Children’s Center in Culver City beams after receiving her diploma.

Graduates from Paramount Unified’s Ready by 5 program celebrate the end of their year by showing off their swing dancing skills.

Families participating in the Children’s Bureau program in L.A. display their family art projects. The octopus you see here was made by Blanca Martinez and her 4-year-old daughter, Genesis Lizarraga.

Norwalk-La Mirada graduates shake their sparklers to celebrate the end of the year.

Lennox Unified School District families compete in a potato sack race.
Nathan Hernandez, age five, graduates from the Pasitos program in San Miguel. He is excited about Kindergarten!

Graduates from the Hope Street Early Childhood Center rock out to 50’s music.