First 5 LA Allocates $10 Million for Oral Health and Nutrition Projects

The First 5 LA Commission last Thursday allocated $10 million to enhance programs and policies that address oral health and nutrition for young children and their families in LA County.

The enhancement projects will be rolled out incrementally over the next three years and will focus on three strategies: access to direct services, policy and advocacy, and public education.

"By leveraging existing efforts and maximizing proven results, First 5 LA will draw from the knowledge and experience of those who have already invested in long-term solutions to addressing obesity and promoting oral health in children prenatal through 5 years old," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez.

The multi-strategy framework was developed following several months of research and analysis, which included convening expert panels on oral health and nutrition.

"Our investigation of the issues showed that these are highly complex concerns that must be addressed through partnerships with other organizations and through public education," Martinez added. "Because oral health and nutrition are so critical to children's development and ability to be ready for school, we will also address systems and related policies that underlie these issues."

Last month, First 5 LA launched a three-month multi-lingual health education media campaign with the theme, "They Do What You Do." Public service announcements in local newspapers, and on TV and radio will air through December. In addition, messages promoting oral health and nutrition will also appear on public bus benches and in buses.

For more information about the media campaign, visit www.healthykids.la.org.
October 28, 11 a.m.-11 p.m.: Festival de la Gente held on LA's Historic 6th Street Bridge, co-sponsored by the Offices of Councilmember 14th District, Jose Huizar and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Visit www.festivaldelagente.com.

October 28, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.: Sepulveda Recreation Center Community Health and Safety Fair at the Sepulveda Recreation Center, 8801 Kester Ave., Panorama City 91402. Call Marc Gross or Claude Theus at (818) 893-3700.

November 4, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.: A Place for Every Child: Inclusive Child Care Conference presented by the Special Needs Advisory Project (SNAP) at the Marriott LA Downtown, 333 S. Figueroa St, LA 90017. Call Evangelina Hurtado at (866) 355-SNAP, or visit www.snapla.org.

November 15, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: Proactive Breastfeeding Support and Management presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, St. Mary Medical Center, 1050 Linden Ave., Long Beach 90813. Call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org

Lanterman Regional Center to Offer Free Dental Fair for Children Ages 0-5

Families with children ages 0-5 years of age are invited to attend a free dental health fair at the Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. October 20.

Two dentists and four dental hygienists will volunteer their time to assess dental health of an expected 200 children, and help parents understand the importance of dental care in the first five years of life. Assistance will be available in Spanish and English at the fair, 3303 Wilshire Blvd., LA 90010.

"We are reaching out specifically to families with young children regarding oral health," said Leticia Reyes, a registered dental hygienist and the dental coordinator at the regional center. "Parent education is the key to preventive oral care so that the serious impact of early childhood caries can be minimized."

For information, contact the Koch-Young Resource Center at (213) 383-1300 x 730 or kyrc@lanterman.org.

First 5 LA Grantees to Learn How To Create a Communications Plan

Forty-five representatives of First 5 LA grantees will have an opportunity to learn how to use communications strategies to improve their organizations' public image and increase long-term sustainability.

First 5 LA will present a day-long training conference, "Creating a Communications Plan: A Roadmap to Success" on Oct. 30, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at The California Endowment's Center for Healthy Communities in downtown LA.

Open only to current First 5 LA grantees on a first-come-first-served basis, the conference will feature a series of workshops to equip non-profit staff with tools for creating a realistic communications plan that can be implemented by their organizations.

As the second in a series of communications events for First 5 LA grantees, this training comes three months after the workshop, "Telling Your Story: Communications as a Development Tool."

Complimentary parking, breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Reservations are required by October 19 to Katie Kurutz at kkurutz@first5la.org or call (213) 482-7556.
EVIE’S DESK
It’s Time for Young Children to Get Their Annual Flu Vaccinations

With flu season fast approaching, health officials are recommending that children between 6 months and 5 years of age receive their annual flu vaccinations now.

National data recently released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that only one in three children who are 6 months to age 2 are getting their flu vaccinations, which are given through shots or nasal sprays.

Many parents aren’t aware that medical experts now recommend that children up to age 5 be routinely vaccinated. Records for children ages 2 to 5 show that flu in this age group results in a higher rate of clinic and emergency room visits than do other illnesses.

Regardless of age, children who have such chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes are advised to get a flu shot. Worries of “getting sick” from the vaccine are a persistent myth, doctors say.

Health officials note that 100 million doses of the flu vaccine will be available nationally this winter—the most ever. So don’t wait—make sure your children are protected as soon as possible.

For information about free flu vaccine clinics in LA County, click here.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

CHAMPION PROFILE
John Kim of the Healthy City Project
Works for Community Development

Champion Profiles feature individuals who exemplify First 5 LA’s tagline, “Champions for Our Children.”

John Kim is director of the Healthy City Project, an all-in-one service referral and public policy website that partners with First 5 LA and others to provide county-wide data mapping and info-sharing to inform public policy decision-making.

He is also managing director of The Advancement Project LA, where he is responsible for project planning/management, partnership building, and organizational development.

Active in social justice and community issues in Oakland and Los Angeles for a decade, Kim mediated racial tensions among students of color and helped create an ethnic studies course in Oakland public schools.

As executive director of the Korean Community Center of the East Bay, Kim helped expand the agency’s financial base and programmatic capacity to address domestic abuse, community development, and technology programs.

In LA, he has worked as a consultant on program development and grantwriting for nonprofits. He earned his BA in interdisciplinary studies at UC Berkeley.

What makes you happy?
Spending time with my wife, friends, and family or playing music with friends.

What makes you angry?
People who reap the benefits of our society but don’t respect the responsibilities that we all have to one another.

Which historical figure do you most admire?
John Lennon.

What is your favorite way to spend time with an important child in your life?
Walking or playing games outdoors.

Which living person do you most admire and why?
My wife, Jung Hee Choi, who is much smarter than me (not saying very much), and is also the warmest, most caring person I know.