October 23, 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 vhao@first5la.org or (213) 482-7563.

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CALENDAR

October 26, 7:30 a.m.-5:15 p.m.: ICAN Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect at the Sheraton Universal, 333 Universal Hollywood Dr., Universal City 91608. To register, call (800) 858-7743 or visit www.cce.csus.edu/ican.

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 City 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.

Child Poverty Increases as Housing Costs Spiral, says Children's ScoreCard

More children in Los Angeles County are living in poverty, increasing 16 percent from 2000 to 2004, according to the 2006 Children's ScoreCard, released last week by the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council, a First 5 LA strategic partner.

Housing costs, which have spiraled in recent years, are largely to blame for struggles of the estimated three-quarters of the county's 1.2 million households with children whose family incomes are less than 300 percent of federal poverty level.

For example, the fair market rental of an average two-bedroom apartment in LA County required an income of $47,000 in 2005, compared to $31,000 in 2000. The median price of a single-family home rose from $241,370 to $529,000 in the same period.

First published in 1994, the Children's ScoreCard is updated every two years as it tracks a wide range of data about children's physical, emotional, and mental health, economic well-being, safety, and education.

The data confirms that children living in urban neighborhoods of Central and South Los Angeles continue to live in the toughest economic conditions, which contribute to higher rates of asthma and pre-term births as well as lower rates of school readiness.

A few positive trends were also highlighted, including an almost 50 percent decrease in teen pregnancies from 1991 to 2004, and a rise in children's insurance rates, from 81 percent in 1997 to 92 percent in 2005.

For more information, visit lapublichealth.org/childpc.

"Inclusive Child Care" Theme of Special Needs Advisory Project Conference

"A Place for Every Child: Inclusive Child Care," is the theme of the Special Needs Advisory Project's November 4 third annual educational conference for child care providers in Los Angeles and neighboring counties.

Multi-cultural musical educator Jose-Luis Orozco and his fans
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.

EVIE’S DESK

Nation’s 300 Millionth Person is Likely a Newborn in Los Angeles

The population of the United States broke the 300 million mark last Tuesday, the government said, highlighting a rapid rise fuelled heavily by Latin American immigrants and their children.

According to U.S. Census data, number 300 million was likely to have been a Latino child born at 4:46 a.m. October 17 in a Los Angeles area hospital. Today, one out five babies born in the U.S. is delivered in LA County, which reports about 150,000 live births annually.

As an organization and a community dedicated to improving the lives of children and families in LA County, First 5 LA takes very seriously our responsibilities toward making sure that the youngest and most vulnerable among us receive the best possible start in life.

As our country crosses this significant milestone, let’s renew our commitment to the important work that we do together with grantees, community partners, government agencies, parents, and caregivers.

A new person is added in the U.S. every 11 seconds—let’s work together to ensure that every one of these new Americans is healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

The event is set for 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

Co-sponsored by First 5 LA and KCET, the conference will feature nearly 30 workshops and a special appearance by multi-cultural educator and recording artist Jose-Luis Orozco, who performs for thousands of children each year in schools and concert halls. His 16 children’s books and CDs are used by parents and teachers to teach early literacy in Spanish and English.

Other workshops will cover caring for children with special needs, “messy” art, family math, and facilitating and enhancing play.

Alina Rosario, host of the First 5 LA-sponsored KCET daily Spanish program for parents and child care providers, “Los Ninos en Su Casa”, will serve as emcee. The luncheon keynote address will be given by Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Registration for the conference is $65 and includes breakfast and lunch. To register, call Pathways at (866) 355-SNAP or visit www.snapla.org.

GRANTEE PROFILE

Courthouse "Kids' Place" Becomes Model for Waiting Rooms Across County

When parents or caregivers have to go to court, kids are often dragged along when there are no safe, affordable alternatives for child care.

That problem has been solved for those who must report to court in six locations in LA County, thanks to a pilot program funded by First 5 LA more than three years ago, which created a children’s waiting room in the Long Beach Court.

Known as "Kids' Place," the free drop-in child care facility provides supervision, toys, games, books, and most importantly, a cheerful, welcoming environment for children from infants to age 13, many of whom come from challenging backgrounds.

Today, after the three-year start-up grant ended in June, "Kids' Place" continues to operate through a new county-wide assessment of $3 added to each court filing fee. Usage has steadily increased, and the facility, located on the first floor of the Long Beach courthouse, recently passed a major milestone—logging its 20,000th child visit.

The highly-successful concept has been replicated in five other Los Angeles County courthouses: Airport, Antelope Valley, Compton, Central, and Pomona.
"It's so important to prevent children from being re-traumatized by sitting in a courtroom where allegations are made about their parents or caregivers," said Deborah Andrews, a domestic violence court judge in Long Beach. "For many youngsters, 'Kids' Place' is one of the few places where they feel welcomed and cared for-- and some don't want to leave."

"Kids' Place" emphasizes literacy by not only offering a library of books for children of all ages, but also provides each child a free book to take home after every visit. The books are donated by the Molina Healthcare Book Buddies project and Book Relief, an initiative of the First Book National Book Bank.

For information, visit www.forthechild.org or call Denise Dahlhausen at For the Child at (562) 422-8472. For the Child is a Long Beach-based child abuse prevention and treatment agency that developed the original grant proposal and contracts with LA County to operate "Kids Place."

CHAMPION PROFILE
Ilda Rueda De Leon Promotes Prenatal to Five Mental Health

Champion Profiles features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA's tagline, "Champions for Our Children."

Ilda Rueda De Leon is a Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health prenatal to 5 program coordinator. She is responsible for community outreach, engagement and advocacy related to infant and early childhood mental health.

Rueda De Leon also coordinates the county-wide Infancy, Childhood and Relationship Enrichment (ICARE) Network, a collaboration of infant/early childhood mental health and early care/education experts.

Rueda De Leon holds a PhD in clinical psychology with an emphasis in multicultural community psychology from Alliant International University/California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles. She is a licensed clinical psychologist.

Which book has most influenced your life?
Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude by W. Clement Stone and Napoleon Hill, and the Tao Te Ching.

What makes you happy?
Music, singing, learning, and being around children and animals.

What makes you angry?
When people in positions of power oppress those with less power.
Which historical figure do you most admire?  
Mahatma Gandhi for the way he taught peace and non-violence by his daily example and Mother Teresa for her selfless love, kindness, and humility.

Which living person do you most admire?  
My mother, who can make the best out of every situation.

Who was your favorite teacher?  
My second grade teacher, Mrs. Claypool, who made me feel that I was valuable, lovable and important.

What's your favorite saying?  
"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."- Mahatma Gandhi