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Toy Loan & Volunteer Services Newsletter

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Director's Corner

It has been a whirlwind of activity since my arrival on May 19, 2008. Over the past 3 months I have been focused on increasing Toy Loan visibility in the community. I am especially interested in increasing Toy Loan Centers in areas of the County with the fewest centers. In addition, it is important that we promote donations to increase funding and increase our inventory. We have been busy reaching out to the Inland Empire, San Fernando Valley and the South Bay. We anticipate several grand openings in these areas by the end of the year. I am pleased to announce a monthly ad in the Daisy Chain Parent Newsletter, School News, Craigs List and the backpage.com web site. Our non-profit agency is now listed on Goodsearch.com. By registering Goodsearch as your primary search engine, you are able to donate .01 cent for each search conducted. Visibility will be increased with our colorful new truck decal. Several of the local Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions Clubs are interested in sponsoring a family through the Adopt-a-Family Program. We are determined to increase the number of family sponsorships and bring holiday cheer to the children in our community. I feel like Toy Loan is the "icing on the cake", when it comes to services provided by DPSS. I am very excited to be a part of this amazing program. My staff are a terrific group of creative individuals dedicated to making a difference in the lives of children. They have a true passion for what they do each day at Toy Loan. I am very fortunate to be with a great crew. Many thanks to my staff and the Toy Loan Advisory Board for making me feel very welcome.



Crenshaw Family YMCA Grand Opening



Crenshaw Family YMCA held its Grand Opening on a beautiful summer afternoon, Wednesday, July 30, 2008. Ms. Tomeka Adams, Coordinator and Toy-rarian put together a large Grand Opening with children from the community center, parents and staff. All the children enjoyed their time with good friends and of course, the most important part, good toys! Ms. Adams welcomed the Toy Loan Staff, Richard Amiel and Breaune Franks to the Opening, as well as staff from DPSS Media Services who videotaped the event. There were approximately 40 children in attendance. Each one individually showed their excitement when they entered the room and saw all the toys on display. There were a few parents that arrived during the time of the event and signed the application for membership for their children to participate in the program. The event was such a success that it resulted in non-stop footage for the Media Services crew. During a recorded interview, Ivonne Mendoza of Media Services approached a little girl and asked how she liked the program. She replied "It's the best thing that's happened to me!"



Lotus Festival 2008

Toy Loan & Volunteer Services staff attended the 31st Annual Lotus Festival on Saturday July 12, 2008, in Echo Park. Hundreds of children from all over Los Angeles stopped by the Toy Loan booth to receive small toy giveaways and obtain more information about local Toy Loan Centers. Parents were encouraged to use the free Toy Loan Centers available to them in their local communities. The children were thrilled to choose from over 3,000 books, dinosaurs and dolls. Toy Loan staff also provided community volunteer information to the public.



Miramonte Community Fair



The 1st Annual Miramonte Community Fair was held on the grounds of the Miramonte Elementary School on Saturday, June 21, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This positive community event was organized with the support of First 5 L.A. and the United Way. The weather was perfect for this outdoor event allowing everyone to fully explore and enjoy all the fair had to offer. Toy Loan & Volunteer Services was there representing the Department of Public Social Services with small toy giveaways, children's books, informational brochures and, most importantly, a smile to all who stopped by our booth. Richard Amiel and Alex Ruiz were there talking to parents and providing small toy giveaways. Some of the entertainment that was showcased included: DJ Jovan from Tribe Productions and traditional Aztecs Dancers. There was even a food court that was free of charge to all those in attendance. Many other community based organizations were exhibiting their own programs such as: Shields for Families, which helps pregnant teens and mothers; Children's Home Society of California, helps children with special needs; and El Nido Family Centers offers counseling and education services for children and families. This was a successful event for Toy Loan & Volunteer Services which was evident by the number of children in attendance. TL&VS is looking forward to participating again next year to brighten the day of so many of our youngest participants.



2008 Adopt-A-Family Program

Lend a Helping Hand.

Would you like to sponsor a family this holiday season? We identify those that are undergoing a hardship this Holiday Season. As a sponsor, you are provided with the family's *Wish List* of clothing and shoe sizes, favorite colors and gift wishes. Sponsors then make arrangements to personally deliver the gifts.

This is a Fulfilling Experience!

You can be creative with the multitude of nice things that can be done for these families. It is with great anticipation that the families wait for the gifts from the sponsors.

If you or a group of friends and co-workers are looking to make a difference it's easy to get started. Simply call Rafael Navarro at (213) 744-4348 and he will match you with a family in need.



Toy Loan Truck Makeover

The Toy Loan truck used to roll down the streets of Los Angeles and very few people would take notice of our truck. However, now everyone will be able to easily recognize the Toy Loan truck thanks to a recent makeover. No, the makeover was not on Alex Ruiz, our truck driver, but on the Toy Loan truck. The truck was recently taken into the shop for a few days, cleaned and re-vamped for a whole new look that will be turning heads. The Toy Loan logo, phone number and website have been added to both sides of the truck for easy recognition as well as more visibility for the program. We hope that with this new look, Toy Loan will get more exposure in the public eye and generate more donations as well as interest from the parents to bring their children to the nearest Toy Loan Center.



Halloween Tips



- Carefully examine any toys or novelty items received by trick-or-treaters under three years of age. Do not allow young children to have any items that are small enough to present a choking hazard or that have small parts or components that could separate during use and present a choking hazard.
- Help your child pick out a costume that will be safe—make sure it is fire resistant, the eye holes should be large enough for good peripheral vision.
- Treating your kids to a spooky, but well balanced, Halloween dinner will make them less likely to eat the candy they collect before you have a chance to check it.



Upcoming Events

L.A. County Fair		9/7/08
FUN-Mania		9/20/08
TLAB		9/25/08

We Want To Hear From You!

If you have topics of interest for publication in this newsletter, please contact us at (213) 744-4344 or via email at toyloan@dpss.lacounty.gov