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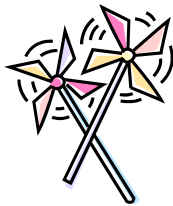
Toy Loan & Volunteer Services Newsletter

Michelle Callahan—Bureau Director
Nancy Diaz—Division Chief
Marcia Benitez—Director



Director's Corner: A Special Person

By Marcia Benitez



This issue is dedicated to a very special person that recently contacted me. Ms. Indira Tucker is a retired Toyrarian who dedicated herself to Toy Loan from 1986 to 2000. As a volunteer Toyrarian she selflessly gave her time and loving spirit to the children of Los Angeles. Ms. Tucker recently read an article in the Long Beach Press Telegram about Toy Loan and felt compelled to tell me her experience as a Toy Loan Pioneer. As I spoke with her, we reminisced over her vast Toy Loan memories that she recalls, spanning 15 years. Ms. Tucker is an inspiration to our current and future Toyrarians and provides a look into the impact of volunteerism. Not only did Ms. Tucker loan toys each week, but she used the opportunity to teach children about setting life goals and perseverance. As a native of Hawaii, Ms. Tucker taught the hula to her students and provided parenting classes. She is truly an inspiration to all of us. On behalf of Los Angeles County, I want to thank Indira Tucker for her dedication to Toy Loan and bringing joy to the children of Los Angeles County.

Boys & Girls Club Long Beach Grand Opening

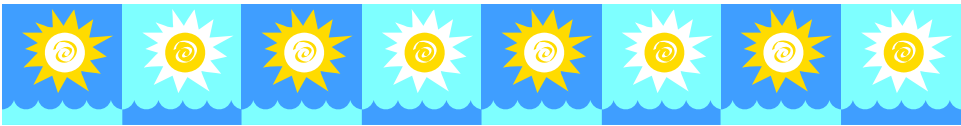
The Grand Opening of our 50th Toy Loan Center took place on Thursday, March 26, 2009 at the Boys & Girls Club in the city of Long Beach from 4:30 p.m. through 6:00 p.m. Shaquena Dorsey and Duncan Smith are the Head Toyrarians, Mr. Smith and his staff were very excited to have a Toy Loan Center in the City of Long Beach, as there were no open Toy Loan Centers in that city. Refreshments were served; over 50 children and parents attended. Information about the program as well as applications were distributed. Mr. Smith believes that the opening of a Toy Loan Center in this club will greatly benefit and motivate the children that participate in their after-school program and already receive tutoring, among other services at this facility. During the presentation, small giveaways were provided to the children. Boys & Girls Clubs of Long Beach Executive Director, Don Rodriguez also attended the event. Long Beach local press published an article about this Grand Opening on Monday, March 23, 2009, a photographer attended the event and photos were taken.



James Wood Community Center Grand Opening



On Tuesday, April 14, 2009, Toy Loan Staff: Marcia Blachman- Benitez, Director, Idalia Almeida, Toy Loan Coordinator, and LaTanya Gray, Volunteer, had the pleasure of attending our 51st Grand Opening at The 10th Street Ready For School Center which is located in the lobby of the beautiful and spacious James Wood Apartments at 1403 W. James Wood St. Los Angeles, CA in the Downtown District. 10th Street Ready for School Program Coordinator, Ana Mena also an employee for LAUSD and staff welcomed Toy Loan with open arms and a packed house of about 50 Adults and 60 Children ages 0-4yrs. Refreshments were served and introductions were done. Games were played, prizes were given and photos were taken. We were pleasantly surprised by the visit of an 8-ft. Cat in the Hat character, provided by CM School Supply. Ana Mena was so excited about opening this program which is targeted for low income participants. The center offers various services including childcare for parents that attend work studies.



Idalia Almeida, New Toy Loan Coordinator



Idalia Almeida started working for DPSS five years ago. She has been a volunteer for Toy Loan since 2004. She remembers seeing the flyers go up for all of the different volunteer opportunities as well as the rummage and food sales here at Toy Loan and wishing that one day she could be a part of all that magic. So she became a very active volunteer helping out with all the events that she possibly could. She would help out the Toy Loan Coordinator at the time, after work and on weekends. As soon as Idalia learned about the great Toy Loan Program, she became a fan and big supporter. She was so inspired, she would talk to her friends and family about the program and give out information to all who asked. To this day, the newest member of Toy Loan, Idalia still gets very excited about the program and puts her whole heart into everything she does. As our new Toy Loan Coordinator, she is ready to work and help you all with anything you need to better your Toy Loan Centers. Just ask!



Reminiscing

I was just compelled to send you a brief note to let you know about how important your work is. I just read your March-April 2009 Toy Loan Newsletter and it brought back so many memories! I grew up in East Los Angeles in the early 50's and clearly remember my little sister and I looking around the Toy Loan to check out something to play with for the week. We'd walk around with eyes wide -- so excited to browse all the great toys! In those days, all the toys were handmade, painted wood toys made by General Relief participants, such as rocking horses, wooden ducks we'd pull with a string, dolls, etc. We didn't look forward to returning what we'd borrowed, but were happy once we saw we could check out another, equally fun toy. When I really think about it, my memories were not only about the toys, but with the days spent we'd spend at Toy Loan together with my Mom and Dad -- sometimes we'd go to Lincoln Park afterward and make a day of it. I knew Toy Loan still existed, even after all these years, but until I read your Newsletter, I didn't remember the effect it had on me as a small child..... and the impact I believe it still has on children today.

-Irene Torres

XXIV Annual Los Angeles Marathon

Volunteer Opportunity



Monday, May 25, 2009

From 7:30 am to 2:30 pm

On-line registration for athletes and volunteers must be done at <http://lamarathon.com>.

Volunteer Group Name: LA County DPSS

Password: dpss

Volunteers **must register on-line** to receive goodie bags and t-shirts the day of the event.

Questions? Call Rafael Navaro, Volunteer Coordinator (213) 744-4344 or rafaelnavaro@dpss.lacounty.gov

See you at the race!

Your participation is strictly voluntary and greatly appreciated.



March 2009

75th Year Anniversary Celebration of the "The Wizard of Oz"



Los Angeles County DPSS - Toy Loan invites you to follow the yellow brick road and visit the "new" Emerald City

Where: **Norwalk Regional Library, 12350 Imperial Hwy, Norwalk, CA 90650**

When: **May 1st-May 31st 2009 Monday Through Saturday 10am to 5pm**

DPSS Toy Loan will proudly showcase Wizard of Oz Collectibles. Come meet Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, Toto, The Wizard, The Good Witch and last but not least... The Wicked Witch of the West!

"Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore"



"No, Dorothy we're @ The Norwalk Regional Library!"

Office Volunteer Liaison Training

On Tuesday, April 20, 2009 the Office Volunteer Liaisons met at the Arboretum in Arcadia for a mandatory training regarding the upcoming Toy Loan Annual Summer Fundraiser.



Upcoming Events

San Fernando Valley Boys & Girls Club Grand Opening	5/6/09
Tamale Sale at Toy Loan Headquarters	5/19/09
Remembering our Veteran's Event at Arcadia County Park	5/23/09
L.A. Marathon	5/25/09
TLAB Meeting	5/28/09

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