Featuring a Special Presentation, “Toy Tips: Ideas & Options for Children with Special Needs”

On December 10, 2010, the Family Resource Center held its annual Holiday Resource and Information Fair at Lynwood’s Bateman Hall for children and families involved in SCLARC’s Early Start program. While offering many opportunities for fun and festivities, this event connected parents with many social service agencies in our communities that provide early intervention support to families caring for young children. The event also allowed parents of children with special needs to bond and share their stories with each other.

The event featured a special presentation by Rita Meza from Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK) called “Toy Tips: Ideas and Options for Children with Special Needs.” The workshop, presented in English and Spanish, gave parents information on which toys work best for children with developmental delays or disabilities. Parents also received info on how to adapt everyday toys such as books, puzzles and crayons to help their children access and play with them. Parents attending the training received a toy for their child to take home.

Agencies participating in the holiday event included:
- L.A. Early Head Start Programs
- Crystal Stairs
- Colgate’s Bright Smiles, Bright Future Mobile Dental Unit
- LA Care Health Plan
- Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy
- The John Tracy Clinic

The families participated in entertaining and fun activities that allowed parents and children to interact and enjoy their time together. Silly Sally the Clown, also entertained families with her amazing balloon art, fantastic magic show and creative face painting. SCLARC’s Early Start staff members happily volunteered and worked with guests at the arts and crafts tables. But it was Santa Claus who truly held the spotlight, capturing the attention of young and old alike.

It was a really special day where memories were made and smiles spread across the children’s faces. One parent said, “My child can finally take a picture with Santa Claus and not be looked down upon because he doesn’t behave like the other children.” The Perinatal Unit worked as Santa’s helpers assisting Santa with greeting the children, but they printed out pictures for each family to take home as a keepsake of their special day. Being able to provide an opportunity for our families to spend time with Santa was truly priceless.

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Meet SCLARC’s Newest Family Members

1) James Michael Hynes  
Arrival Date: August 7, 2010  
Proud Parents: Jim and Kimi Hynes

2) Daniel Alexander Robles  
Arrival Date: September 11, 2010  
Proud Parents: Edna and Hector Robles

3) Josiah Efaraimo Moananu Campbell  
Arrival Date: November 4, 2010  
Proud Parents: Robert & Fa’avela Campbell

4) Rhiley R. Scott  
Arrival Date: December 13, 2010  
Proud Parents: Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Scott

New Down Syndrome Training

The Family Resource Center presented a 3-session Down Syndrome Training series in September and October featuring Regional Center clinicians covering topics that included:

- “Overview of Down Syndrome” (Genetic Consultant Dr. Shirley Korula)
- “Common Nutrition Related Concerns for Young Children with Down Syndrome” (Nutrition Consultant Ida Dacus)
- “Picky Eating vs. Sensory & Low Tone Issues” (Occupational Therapy Consultant Endenee Dupree)
- “Early Language and Communication Issues In Young Children with Down Syndrome” (Speech & Language Consultant Robin Houston)

The sessions were also attended by WIC staff members from local area offices as a cross training opportunity so that in the future, they can provide feeding advice and guidance to their clients whose children have been diagnosed with Down Syndrome.

Who is Hely Chan?

Those who have had the opportunity to work with Hely would all say she is one of the sweetest and nicest people you’d ever hope to meet. But did you know Hely was born and raised in Brazil by her Taiwanese parents before moving to the United States? Hely says her father likes to say he brought his budding family here “with only $17 dollars in my pocket.”

Ms. Chan is trilingual—speaking Portuguese, Spanish, and English. She earned a Bachelors of Arts degree in Management Information Systems and Masters degrees in both Marketing and Psychology while living in California. After her second Masters, Hely pursued her dream of working with children with developmental disabilities which is her passion.

She began her tenure at South Central Los Angeles Regional Center in 1992 in the Residential Unit and later transferred to the Early Start Unit. Hely left the regional center in 2000 to raise her beautiful daughter Stephanie. After a 10 year absence from the workforce, Hely returned to SCLARC. She says the best part of her job is having the connection with the families and the children.

“There are no words to describe the feeling you get seeing the progress the children make,” says the dedicated service coordinator.

In her spare time, Hely enjoys spending time with her kids Stephanie, 10 and William, 6. Family time consists of game night and going to visit local museums.

--By MARIA FIGUEROA
California’s New Governor

No stranger to the job, California Governor Jerry Brown took office for his third non-consecutive term on January 3, 2011. Brown served as Governor of California from 1975-1983 and is most recently our state’s former Attorney General. He has been elected to a number of state and local offices including Secretary of the State of California (1971-1975) and Mayor of Oakland 1999 - 2007.

During his first two terms as Governor, he significantly reduced taxes and built the largest budget surplus in the history of the state. He appointed more women, African Americans, Latinos, and Asians to prominent governmental posts than any other Governor in the state’s history. Through budget management under his watch, the State was able to invest more into our education system with increases in both K-12 and higher education. He also established the country’s first energy efficiency standards and made California the leader in solar and alternative energy.

Many would argue that the veteran governor has inherited a state where all is not sunshine. In fact, it is rather gloomy. But his proponents believe that his extensive list of accomplishments as a California Governor have prepared him to combat the State’s continuing budget crisis. This will not be an easy task. California has had growing deficits every year since 2001, and faces a staggering projected state budget shortfall of more than $25 billion. The Legislative Analyst’s Office predicts an ongoing deficit of over $20 billion each year through at least 2016 unless permanent action is taken. So with that said, all eyes are on Sacramento, the Legislature and our new Governor.

Stretch into a New Year with Yoga
BY MARSSIA CHUTAN-AREVALO
Contributing Writer

What are your New Year’s resolutions? Let me guess: lose weight, exercise more and be more health conscious, right? Well, yoga is a great way to meet all of those goals. By practicing the art of yoga, you’ll alter your metabolism while transforming and sculpting your body.

Although it has been glamorized by Hollywood celebrities, appears to be difficult and only for the fitness elites, yoga is practical and easy. Anyone can join a class, play a DVD at home or read a book on how to do the postures. However, yoga does require discipline and determination. While a DVD and/or book will be more specific, many find that the best yoga experience is through a class. To find one, do a quick search for the nearest yoga studio. Make sure the facility is clean and offers a variety of classes to accommodate your work-schedule and exercise abilities.

What you’ll need:
1. Yoga mat
2. Water
3. Workout clothes
4. Eagerness and a yoga partner if possible.

The benefits of yoga in most cases are beyond what beginners would expect. You’ll feel more energetic and in tune with your inner self. You’ll learn to meditate and relax. And the best part of each class will be looking forward to the next. Experts agree the benefits to doing yoga are:

1. Increasing flexibility
2. Increasing lubrication of the joints, ligaments and tendons
3. Massaging of ALL organs of the body
4. Complete detoxification
5. Excellent toning of the muscles

Before you start or decide that yoga is for you, consult your primary care physician. The exercises and stretches might seem difficult and above your limitations, but as with any exercise regimen yoga can be tailored to suit your abilities. No one will challenge you, except yourself. Take the fitness challenge and incorporate yoga into your life.

As we start 2011, make yoga one of your resolutions. This way you won’t feel guilty about buying a new workout ensemble since its all part of your plan to stay and look fit. Remember yoga is more than a word, it’s a way of life that can change your outlook on life. It’s changed mine and I hope it can change yours as well.
This year, 50 South Central Los Angeles Regional Center families received Ralphs gift cards to enjoy over the Holiday Season. This holiday day cheer was made possible from a generous donation made by Friends of SCLARC, Inc., The Drifters Inc., Los Angeles Chapter, and Missionaries for Christ Baptist Church. During this time of year, such contributions are greatly appreciated because they allow our families, who are faced with many challenges, to create loving memories that will last for years to come.

Along with the gift cards that were distributed to our families on December 11, 2010, SCLARC partnered with La Curacao Foundation to provide 140 of our consumers with toys and tickets to attend Disney on Ice at the Staples Center. SCLARC’s staff was on hand at the event to witness the fun that was had by all as our consumers met Santa Claus and received gifts.

South Central Los Angeles Regional Center takes pride in creating partnerships that assist this agency in adding to the quality of life that consumers and their families enjoy. With continued budget cuts, the support we receive enables us to provide more than just services. Our partnerships allow our families to create great memories which is truly the greatest gift of all during difficult times.