

Childbirth Connection Foundation Newsletter

November 2007

Lions, and Tigers, and Fish, OH MY!!!!

This past year, Childbirth Connection Foundation sponsored trips to the Los Angeles Zoo, Long Beach Aquarium, and Zuma Beach. In addition to organizing the events, the Foundation chartered buses to transport families. The Foundation also paid for admission tickets to the zoo and aquarium for all of the participants. These outings offer children not only a day of fun with their parents, but also expose children to the wonders of nature and inspire respect for the environment.

In April, Childbirth Connection Foundation took 32 parents and their children to the Los Angeles Zoo. Upon arriving, the participants were split up into groups and they toured the zoo with their Childbirth Connection Instructors. Some of the older children had an opportunity to exercise their leadership skills working as helpers with the younger kids. Amongst the highlights of the day at the zoo were watching the bird show and seeing a peacock in full bloom. Children also had an opportunity to see elephants, chimpanzees and giraffes. The day concluded with a visit to the petting zoo where the children brushed, fed and pet the goats and ponies. A good time was had by all.

The Foundation brought a bus full of parents and their children to the Long Beach Aquarium in July. For most of the participants, this was the first time they had visited an aquarium. The trip enabled the children who had seen marine life on film and in books, to experience the real thing. At the aquarium, the families had an opportunity to view sea otters, seals, sea horses, sea dragons and tons of fish. The children were also able to pet sharks, stingrays, and starfish in the tide pool shelf, as well as learn what they can do to protect our oceans. Reflecting on the trip to the aquarium, Nicholas D., 10 years old, said "I liked the sea otters. How do they swim with their eyes closed? I saw one that almost bumped into a wall." Jessica S. 11 years old, excitedly reported that she "loved petting the stingrays." Carol and Cassandra S. said, "We like to touch the turtles and the sharks, the bat rays and the stingrays. And we liked getting wet." The trip to the aquarium was a great success!

Our tenth annual trip to Zuma Beach was held in August. Most of the participants lack the means to travel to the beach on their own, so this trip is really treasured. The families built sand castles, dug for sand crabs, watched dolphins swim, played in the water, and picnicked on the beach. For some of the young participants, like Tony V., it was their first time seeing the ocean. Everyone is eager to return to Zuma beach next year!



Michelle, with her son Kyle who eagerly helped keep an eye on the younger children.



Angela having fun at the aquarium.



Shoma (left), along with her instructor Bettie (center) and family, enjoy a day at the LA Zoo.



Foundation President, Randi Levinson-Kuzmin, and Brian at Zuma.



Diana with her son Nicholas.



Maria (red) with her cousin Claudia and son Tony.

Check out our new website:
thechildbirthconnection.org
this coming December

Childbirth Connection Foundation Needs Your Help!

In 2007, Childbirth Connection Foundation used your donations to send several children to summer camp and swimming lessons. The Foundation also provided bus tokens, taxi scrip and food for families in need, clothing, school supplies and backpacks for children, baby items for infants, prescriptions not covered by insurance, paid for therapeutic horseback riding, sponsored individual family trips to museums and amusement parks, purchased mattresses and bed frames for an entire family, supported a family who lost their home in a fire, and supported children who have faced catastrophic losses.

There are several ways you can help Childbirth Connection Foundation continue to accomplish its mission! As the holidays approach, Childbirth Connection Foundation is preparing for our annual holiday party. Although the Foundation prefers tax deductible cash donations, we gladly accept donations of gift cards, as well as unwrapped new toys and books, grocery and taxi scrip, and van/driver services. We are also looking for people to adopt a family for the holidays. Please contact us at childbirthconnection@gmail.com to see how you can help us to provide for families in need throughout the year!

Childbirth Connection Foundation is seeking mentors and tutors. If you are able to volunteer your time at least once a month and are interested in making a difference in a child's life by serving as a mentor or tutor, contact the Foundation.

Childbirth Connection Foundation Welcomes Maira Vargas, our New Intern!

In August, Maira Vargas, a California State University Northridge (CSUN) student majoring in Social Welfare, began as our new intern. Maira has been working as both a mentor and a tutor. She assists children with homework and plays games with them to help them improve their self-esteem.

Maira first heard about the Childbirth Connection at an informal meeting at CSUN. Randi Levinson-Kuzmin, along with a few staff members, were present to introduce the Childbirth Connection to the students and faculty. Maira said, "Their commitment to serving people with developmental disabilities clearly came across that day and it immediately drew me to pursue a position as an intern at Childbirth Connection. I feel privileged to work with such supportive and knowledgeable individuals who are guiding me through this important period of my college education."

Currently, Maira is working towards completing her Bachelor's degree. Her educational goal is to obtain a Master's Degree in Social Work and work with families and children. Maira says, "Interning at Childbirth Connection has opened the door to work with a population whom I am interested to work with as a social worker. I am grateful to be a part of this organization."

Holiday Party is a Hit!

On December 18, 2006 Childbirth Connection Foundation held our annual holiday party. Over 100 people were in attendance. The Foundation rented a hall to hold the festivities. Prior to the event family members and volunteers decorated the hall in order to capture the holiday spirit. Santa Claus made an appearance and delivered gifts to all family members. Refreshments were served. Childbirth Connection Foundation wants to ensure that all of the children receive at least one holiday gift. The event also helped to ensure that every child has a positive holiday memory. Currently, we are busy planning this year's festivities.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 10/26/07: Pumpkin Patch
- 11/17-11/21/07: Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution
- 12/14/07: Holiday Party

Ronnie O. Gets a New Computer

Timothy T., the eighth grader highlighted in the last newsletter, was given a computer by his middle school. Therefore, Childbirth Connection Foundation has given the computer intended for Timothy to Ronnie O. Ronnie started middle school this fall. When asked if he was excited about getting a new computer, Ronnie said "It'll help me with my homework and I'll be able to play games and it'll help me a little with my math and my reading and my social studies." As a 6th grader, he will use the computer to conduct research for reports, as well as to type assignments. In addition to the computer, Childbirth Connection Foundation provided Ronnie with a printer and a year of dial-up service.



Ronnie (left) and his brother Ramon.

Help Childbirth Connection Foundation save trees, send us your email address at childbirthconnection@gmail.com