

# The Power of Two



Mothers' Club  
Family Learning Center

Issue 30

August 2016

## Mothers' Club Awarded CSPP Contract

We are happy to announce that Mothers' Club Family Learning Center has been awarded a very exciting contract with the **California State Preschool Program!** For nonprofits like Mothers' Club, securing significant and consistent funding is an ongoing challenge. The services we provide – early childhood education, parent education, mental health support – aren't always accessible to low-income, isolated families but provide real, tangible benefits to the community. Mothers' Club fills gaps in services for the most at-risk populations, but we largely survive because of the generosity of individuals, foundations, and local companies.

Mothers' Club strives to offer high quality programming free of charge to as many low-income parents and young children as possible. In addition to our diverse fundraising strategies, it's important that we have support from the government. This has continued to be a challenge as federal and state sources of funding for early childhood education change priorities, are defunded, or are scaled back to serve



*Somyung and Eunice develop social skills by working together*

only a very limited number of individuals in high-poverty areas.

For the past ten years, LAUP has provided thousands of free preschool seats in Los Angeles with funds from California's tobacco tax revenue. Mothers' Club has received \$158,000 of funding from LAUP annually. However, as tax revenue

*CSPP Contract continues on page 3*

## Self-Expression by Studying Flowers & Artists

A small Calla lily plant sits atop a shelf in the PreK classroom at Mothers' Club, serene and still amidst the bustle of students on a Friday afternoon in July. "We used that for our still life and to learn about the anatomy of flowers," comments teacher Sandra Mora, who is arranging small painted canvas tiles on a rack to dry. Children in the classroom painted the individual tiles which will be put together to create an interpretation of a work by Diego Rivera.

*Studying Flowers continues on page 6*



*Jacob paints his interpretation of Frida Kahlo's famous flower crown self portraits*

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Family Learning Center**  
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## Letter from the Executive Director



*Executive Director Hector LaFarga, Jr. awards Jonathan his diploma at PreK graduation.*

The summer months are a bit quieter at Mothers' Club Family Learning Center. Though we're a year-round program, we take it a little easier during the hottest days of the year and allow our families and teachers a respite. We've had ice cream socials, a trip to the beach, and fun days playing with water in the outdoor play yard. We happily take a relaxed approach to learning before we ramp up again, enthusiastic and eager to jump back into the school year.

The summer is also a chance for us to take care of some business. Before wrapping up our fiscal year on June 30th, we celebrated the accomplishments of last year and thanked our wonderful donors at our annual appreciation event for *Guardians* and special friends. Held at the gorgeous Blacker House owned by long-time supporters Ellen and Harvey Knell,



*Blanca and daughter Natalia enjoy the summer field trip to the beach.*

the festive evening featured artist and educator Jose Ramirez who displayed his beautiful, vibrant paintings and spoke about his life and experiences. We happily indulged in food from El Portal and ice cream from Choctál, both owned by Mothers' Club Board Members.

At the event, we thanked outgoing Board Members for their numerous contributions to our organization and welcomed five new members to the Board of Directors. We look forward to working with Jennifer Baloian, Sylvia Paz, Nelson Peralta, Andrea Perez, and George Wiley. Please take a moment to read about each new addition to our leadership below.

This summer we've also held PreK Graduation ceremonies for both

our morning and afternoon classes as well as two Parent Recognition Luncheons. Our children and parents have accomplished so much during their time at Mothers' Club, it is our honor to celebrate them and the bright futures that lay ahead. As the new school year begins on August 25th, some children and parents will move on to the elementary school system, ready to take on new and exciting challenges. Others will return to Mothers' Club to join their new classmates and buckle down for a year of learning, growing, and having fun. We can't wait!

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Hector LaFarga, Jr.

Hector LaFarga, Jr.  
Executive Director



*Artist and educator Jose Ramirez shares his story with donors and special guests at our Guardian event*

## Meet Our New Board Members!

**Jennifer Baloian** has over 15 years of experience in online strategy and marketing, and is an expert in developing online identity and brand awareness.

**Sylvia Paz, PhD, MS, Med** is a bilingual Spanish-English researcher at UCLA studying health disparities. She previously served a full term on Mothers' Club's Board of Directors and is now returning.

**Nelson Peralta** is the Tax Director at OpenX, which provides digital and mobile advertising technology. Nelson has over 12 years of expertise in taxation.

**Andrea Perez** is store manager, Assistant Vice President of the Wells Fargo Bank Pasadena Lake office. She is a former preschool teacher and has a passion for early childhood education.

**George Wiley** served over 40 years with the Pasadena Police Department and is now the President and founder of First Down Football Productions, which designs and manufactures quality safety football products. He previously served a full term on Mothers' Club's Board of Directors and is now returning.



### *CSPP Contract, continued from Page 1*

has declined, priorities have shifted towards advocacy and away from direct service. As of July 1, 2016, LAUP will no longer be receiving the tobacco tax revenue and has ended its contracts with direct service providers, including Mothers' Club.

We have been aware of the impending funding cut since November 2014 and worked actively to develop a multi-pronged strategy to counterbalance the loss of funding while sustaining programs and quality. We simultaneously pursued alternative sources of government funding, strengthened foundation partnerships, and grew individual relationships.

One of the most competitive sources of government funding for early childhood education is the California State Preschool Program (CSPP). In November 2015, CSPP announced that it would be accepting applications for a limited amount of funding to expand services for low-income three and four year olds within the state. Mothers' Club staff worked tirelessly to create and compile the necessary information for the thorough application process and hoped for the best.

Our ideal scenario has been achieved; Mothers' Club was one of just 13 non-school district organizations across California to be awarded a contract for part-day preschool. We will now be receiving **\$270,000 from**

**CSPP annually** to provide early childhood education to **64**

**three and four year olds** each year. The contract is renewable annually, dependent on the state budget. We view the award from CSPP as an affirmation of the high quality of our early childhood education program and the strength of our organization.

We are currently enrolling families that meet the age and income eligibility requirements. On August 25, 2016, 64 children will start their first day of school in our CSPP funded Preschool and PreK Classrooms. Though the CSPP contract does not nearly cover all of the expenses of our comprehensive two-generation learning programs, it goes a long way to ensuring our sustainability and allowing us to serve more families. All of us at Mothers' Club are very excited!

- Mara Leong-Nichols  
Development Director



*Emmanuel enjoying a STEM-inspired activity in our PreK Classroom*



*Teacher Judy studies insects and earth science with Jeffrey*

## Mothers' Club programs are funded in part by the following agencies:

Pacific Clinics, Early Head Start

California State Preschool Program

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and  
Adult Care Food Program

City of Pasadena, Community Development Block Grant

Pasadena City College Community Education Center

## Thank you to our foundation partners for our recent grant awards

Kathryne Beynon Foundation  
*in support of our Two-Generation Learning Program*

Pasadena Child Health Foundation  
*to fund the Healthy Parent and Child Program*

Los Angeles Times Family Fund  
*to provide Adult Education*

Charles & Henrietta Detoy Foundation  
*for core operating support*

Patron Saints Foundation  
*to fund our Mental Health Program*

Pasadena Community Foundation  
*to update our kitchen*

Pasadena Tournament of Roses® Foundation  
*for our Volunteer Program*

## Meet Sarah Kimbrough, Our New Volunteer Coordinator!

My name is Sarah Kimbrough and I am excited to be the new Volunteer Coordinator here at Mothers' Club Family Learning Center! I come from a development background, first in events and grant writing and then volunteer management. Outside of work, I play soccer in the Pasadena Adult Soccer League with my husband, and love to spend time with our one-year-old daughter, Toia.

I have just completed my first three months here and could not be more impressed with the warmth of the staff, the high-quality of our programs, and the immense love and dedication our volunteers bring. Whether it's the English as a Second Language tutors who come in every week to work with our parents or the incredible teens that engage with our young students, I have met all types of volunteers that share the same love for the work that Mothers' Club does.

Over the summer, we launched our annual Teen Summer Volunteer Program, which brings in nearly 80 local teens who have a passion for helping others and improving their community. Our teens provided support in our Early Childhood Education classrooms by playing games, reading, and assisting staff wherever needed. Our teen volunteers brought more than just hard work to Mothers' Club this summer – they went above and beyond and raised over \$1,500 for our Summer Program! One pair of volunteers even held a lemonade stand one weekend, raising \$55 on their own!

I was so moved by the initiative



*Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Kimbrough presents our Youth Advocates fundraising board*

and advocacy our teen volunteers showed because it tells me a lot about the amazing experience they have at Mothers' Club. When asked what her favorite thing about Mothers' Club is, volunteer Cleo had a hard time choosing: "Either the kids or how organized everything is. It's easy to be a volunteer here because of all the hard work everyone puts in." Our staff shares the same positive outlook as the volunteers. Celeste, a teacher in the PreK classroom says, "Volunteers bring such an incredible energy that the kids just love to be a part of."

I look forward to meeting all of our volunteers in the coming months, and am thrilled to issue a huge thank you and congratulations to our Mothers' Club Youth Advocates!

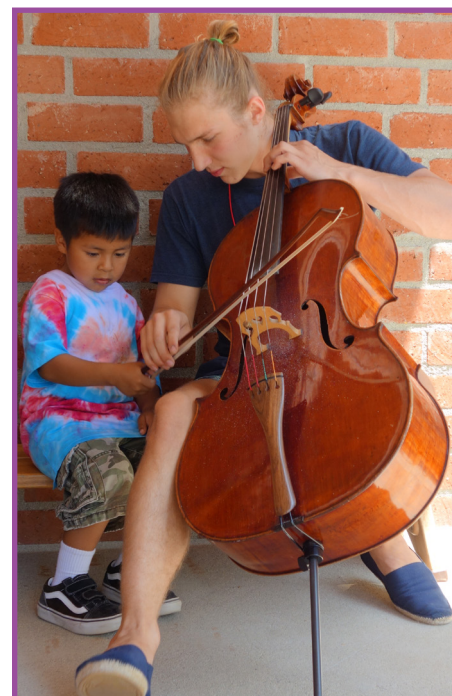
*- Sarah Kimbrough  
Volunteer Coordinator*



*Teen Volunteer Alina colors with Ariannah*



*Teen Volunteers from left to right: Maddy Kwei, Claire McCord, Ellie Chapman, Alex Lewis, Sofia Dragna*



*Jeffrey receives a cello lesson from Luke*



## Planning the 6th Annual Fall Food Fest

Planning is underway for our **6th Annual Fall Food Fest** benefitting Mothers' Club Family Learning Center! After five years of impressive growth, our fall tasting party has really come into its own. Bigger and better than ever, the festive event will be held on **Saturday, October 15th from 6-10 p.m.** at our center on North Fair Oaks Avenue.

Our robust Event Steering Committee, comprised of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, has been working hard to put together a night worthy of our fabulous organization and wonderful donors. This year we will be transitioning to a mobile bidding system for our silent auction. We look forward to implementing the interactive and dynamic auction platform in order to make it easier for attendees to bid on items while enjoying all that the night has to offer.

Of course, the highlight of the evening remains our wide variety of food and drink – all included in the ticket price! We are currently in the

process of inviting restaurants and businesses to participate. If you know someone that would enjoy promoting their restaurant or food business while giving back to the community, encourage them to join us! Please call **626.792.2687 ext.122** or email **mara@mothersclub.org**. We are also in need of gift certificates, items, or experiences to be donated to our live and silent auctions!

Tickets are on sale now to join in all the fun. Unlimited food, drink, and entertainment is included in the **early bird ticket price of \$100 per person**. Buy your tickets now – the price will rise to \$125 per person on October 1st! More information is available and tickets can be purchased online at **[www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org)**. We hope to see you there!

- Mara Leong-Nichols  
Development Director



From left to right: Kristin Bacon, Jennifer Dyer, Rosiris Paniagua, Ginger Mort, Tori Welch, Kelly Crowe, Tanya Reader, Anne Marie Pieczarka, Bobbi Hewins, and Carolyn Cota.  
Not Pictured: Nurit Kotick and Anna Meadows

# SAVE THE DATE

## MOTHERS' CLUB FAMILY LEARNING CENTER presents the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual

- Unlimited Food & Drink from Local Restaurants
- \* Wine \* Beer \* Cocktails
- \* Tequila Tasting
- \* Live Music \* Photo Booth
- \* Opportunity Drawing
- \* Live & Silent Auctions with Mobile Bidding
- \* Learn more about our work with families!



### FALL FOOD FEST

**Tickets: \$100 each**  
before October 1st  
**[www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org)**

**Saturday, October 15, 2016**  
**from 6:00-10:00 p.m.**

Mothers' Club  
Family Learning Center  
980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue  
Pasadena 91103





*Studying Flowers, continued from Page 1*

After dedicating the spring to learning about earth science, our five year old soon-to-be Mothers' Club alums spent the final weeks of their program year studying flowers through art – and some of the famous artists who painted them. From the layers of the earth to the inner workings of flowers, earth science sparked an artistic journey that has captivated students, parents, and teachers alike.

As a core tenant of the education philosophy at Mothers' Club, teachers observe which subjects interest the children most and use it as inspiration in guiding their learning experience. How do children communicate their interest in a topic? Mora describes how she watched a child in the PreK classroom pull a book of Georgia O'Keefe prints from the shelf, gather her art supplies, and begin painting flowers in reference to O'Keefe's famous work. Studying famous painters of flowers such as Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera have included lessons on the artists' lives, inspirations for their work, and interaction with the real-life flora in the paintings that the students learned about during the program year.

In addition to all this, our young minds are learning about the importance



*Painted by Angela*



*Painted by Emily*

of self-expression. Children in the PreK classroom are encouraged to journal, draw, and paint as a healthy response to sadness, fear, and frustration. Just as Frida Kahlo's paintings intoned her tormented internal life and Rivera's works were a response to social issues of the time, our PreK graduates will enter elementary school with their

own tools for communicating identity and processing feelings. And, without a doubt, there are some budding artists among them.

*- Berit Anderson  
Development Associate*



*Painted by Daniel*

## Other Ways to Support Mothers' Club

*Donations made with every purchase!*

**amazon**smile  
You shop. Amazon gives.

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com).
2. Select Mothers' Club Family Learning Center to receive donations from eligible purchases.
3. Shop as you usually do!
4. Visit [www.smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) every time you want to purchase something through Amazon. Mothers' Club will automatically be selected.

**Ralphs**

1. Register a Ralph's reward card online at [www.ralphs.com](https://www.ralphs.com) and click "Sign-In/Register."
3. Once you have an account, click the "Community Contribution Program" link on your account page.
4. Enter your personal information.
5. Select Mothers' Club by entering our code: 90748
6. Confirm your choice and know that you are helping families every time you buy groceries!

# Thank You to the Mothers' Club Guardians

The *Guardians* provide sustaining support for our programs and operations by donating \$1,000 or more to our annual fund.



Peggy Adams & Joel Edstrom  
 Maye Albanez & Tim Marty  
 Gwen & Guilford Babcock  
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## Leave a Legacy to Future Generations, Remember Mothers' Club in Your Will

All gifts to Mothers' Club give you the personal satisfaction of providing critical services to our community's most vulnerable children and families. Planned gifts can give you even more in return.

By including Mothers' Club in your will or living trust, you can ensure that Mothers' Club will remain a valuable resource for generations of families to come. We can refer you to professionals who will help you design a charitable gift plan that benefits Mothers' Club and enables you and your family to fulfill your personal financial goals.

If you would like to learn more, please contact our Development Office at (626)792-2687, ext. 122.

Thank you for partnering with us to meet the needs of future children and parents.

## Join Us for a Tour

The best way to learn about what happens at Mothers' Club is to visit our Center and take a guided tour with staff.

### Upcoming Tours:

Tuesday, September 6 - 9am  
 Thursday, September 15 - 11:30am  
 Tuesday, October 4 - 9am  
 Thursday, October 20 - 11:30am  
 Tuesday, November 1 - 9am  
 Thursday, November 17 - 11:30am

To RSVP or for more information call (626) 792-2687 ext. 122 or email [mara@mothersclub.org](mailto:mara@mothersclub.org).



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## Our Mission & Guiding Principles

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center prepares families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life through two-generation learning programs. Our programs are built on two guiding principles: in order for significant, long-term change to occur within a family, you must reach both parent and child and educate them together; and, the most critical time to reach a family is when children are proven to be most vulnerable and impressionable, between birth and 5 years-old.

## The Power of Two-Generation Learning

We fulfill our mission by providing FREE programs to disadvantaged families with children ages 0-5. Our two-generation learning model helps mothers and children gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they will need to break out of poverty. National research and our own evaluation results confirm that increasing the education levels of both a parent and their child is an irrefutable way to promote long-term, positive change within a family and a community.

**Donate Online & Learn More at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org)**

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### **Executive Director**

Hector LaFarga, Jr.

The Power of Two - August 2016

Editors: Mara Leong-Nichols and Berit Anderson

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501(c)3 non-profit organization.  
Tax ID 23-7275324