

The Power of Two



Issue 23

September 2013

We Are Now Serving More Families!



Afternoon PreK students Tony and Cassidy build a block tower

Mothers' Club is extremely excited to announce the expansion of our afternoon program to now include a Pre-Kindergarten class for four-year-olds! Through an extension of our partnership with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), we will now be able to serve 16 more families each day.

Since moving into our permanent home in 2007, it has been our goal to make full use of all the space and flexibility our facility provides. In addition to [More Families](#), [Continues Page 5](#)

Mothers' Club Library Strikes Gold

The Mothers' Club library has entered the modern era thanks to the lure of a super hero and a Girl Scout Gold Award project. Hannah Guevara, a 15-year-old sophomore from Polytechnic School, has served as a dedicated classroom volunteer at Mothers' Club for three years. This summer, a child in our Twos classroom wanted to draw Spider-Man. Hannah considered taking him to our library to find visual inspiration, but knew that the late afternoon hour meant there was little time to search our shelves before it was time to go home. This conundrum got her thinking: Why couldn't users search the library collection via an online catalog?



Hannah Guevara displaying books from our library

[Diploma](#), [Continues on Page 5](#)

In This Issue...

From the Director & Board President.....Page 2

Tour Dates.....Page 2

Fall Food & Wine Festival.....Page 3

Thank You to Our Foundation Partners.....Page 3

School Is Back in Session.....Page 4

Volunteers Needed...Page 4

Now Serving More Families.....Page 5

Library Strikes Gold..Page 5

Welcomes New Board Leadership.....Page 6

Thank You to Our Partners and *Guardians*.....Page 7

Receive more news and updates: Sign up for our E-Newsletter online at www.mothersclub.org.

Mothers' Club
Family Learning Center
980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91103
626.792.2687 Office
626.793.1832 Fax

www.mothersclub.org

A Letter from the Executive Director and Board President

As we launch into the 2013-2014 program year, we can't help but feel like we're turning over a new leaf here at Mothers' Club Family Learning Center. With new leadership, new families, new staff and expanded programs, we have a lot to look forward to as our families return and programs begin.

In July, we thanked our outgoing Board members for their dedication and support over the years and welcomed six new members to join the Board of Directors. We look forward to the fresh ideas, perspec-



Norma and her son Cesar comprise one of the 28 new families at Mothers' Club

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, Oct. 1 - 9am
Thursday, Oct. 17 - 11:30am
Tuesday, Nov. 5 - 9am
Thursday, Nov. 21 - 11:30am
Tuesday, Dec. 3 - 9am
Thursday, Dec. 19 - 11:30am

To RSVP or for more information call
(626) 792-2687 ext. 122 or
email mar@mothersclub.org



Afternoon PreK teachers Celeste and Saharai lead new students during Circle Time

tives and contributions they will bring to Board conversations. You can read more about each new member on Page 6.

As the Executive Director and Board President, we plan to work collaboratively to lead Mothers' Club at an exciting time of growth and expansion that will enable us to serve even more families in need. The Board provides valuable strategic perspectives for the future and brings an essential dimension as ambassadors to the larger community. Traditionally, boards provide "time, talent and treasure" on behalf of the organizations they serve, and the Mothers' Club Board more than fulfills those important responsibilities.

This year we have welcomed 28 new families to Mothers' Club. Each brings their own needs, expectations, experiences and skills. As Mothers' Club strives to create lasting change for these families, each family impacts Mothers' Club as well. We embrace the flexibility of our programs to shape to whatever our families need most.

The most exciting development at Mothers' Club is the extension of our partnership with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)! We are now able to serve a total of 112 families each day with the addition of an afternoon classroom for 16 four year olds. You can read more about the new classroom and our expanded services on Page 1.

In order to serve all of the new families, we have hired additional staff members to join our team, and we continue to invest in our staff by offering a multitude of opportunities for their professional and personal development. With an enthusiastic and highly trained staff, Mothers' Club is able to deliver the best possible services to our families each and every day.

Thank you for partnering with us to propel Mothers' Club into the next chapter of our organization. We invite you to visit us for a program tour and see our new classroom in action!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Hector LaFarga, Jr."

Hector LaFarga, Jr.
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Fran Norris Scoble."

Fran Norris Scoble
Board President



You are invited to our...

Fall Food & Wine Festival

Mothers' Club
Family Learning Center

Saturday,
October 19 at 7pm

Join the fun at
Mothers' Club Family Learning Center
980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91103

Participants Include:



Wine Sponsor:



Tickets: \$60 each
Purchase at www.mothersclub.org or
mail payment to Mothers' Club at
980 N. Fair Oaks, Pasadena 91103.

For questions or tickets by phone:
call 626.792.2687 ext.112



Featuring Celebrity
Chef LaLa

* Food Tastings from Local Restaurants *

* Wine & Beer Included *

* Live Music * Photo Booth *

* Silent Auction *

* Live Cooking Demo by Chef LaLa *

* All proceeds benefit Mothers' Club's
two-generation learning programs for
low-income families! *



Master of Ceremonies:
Lian Dolan, Author of
Helen of Pasadena

Thank You to Our Foundation Partners for Their Recent Grant Awards

California Community Foundation *for Core Support*

Carl & Roberta Deutsch Foundation *for Early Childhood Education*

Goodwin Family Memorial Trust *to fund Physical Activity Programming*

Los Angeles Times Family Fund, a McCormick Foundation Fund,
to support Adult Education

Patron Saints Foundation *in support of Mental Health Services*

RGK Foundation *to fund our Family Literacy Program*

Schow Foundation *for Core Support*

Zell Family Foundation *to fund our Family Literacy Program*

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Go to
[www.facebook.com/
MothersClubFLC](http://www.facebook.com/MothersClubFLC)
or search
"Mothers' Club Family
Learning Center"

School Is Back in Session

It's that time of year again! Despite the persistent heat, school is back in session at Mothers' Club Family Learning Center. Though we are a year-round program, our families did have a short break during August to enjoy the summer sunshine before coming back to school on August 26th.



Two-year-old Ivana practices writing her name with her mom Elda

The center echoes with the sounds of chatter and laughter as both parents and children greet their friends and get acquainted with new participants. With the inclusion of our new Afternoon PreK classroom, we are now serving 112 children and their parents each day.

Toddler teacher Marina Bendy tells us that some of the little ones had a hard time adjusting to life

in the classroom, especially when their mothers left to attend their own classes in the front of the center. However, by the second week of school they became used to the routine and now look forward to the chance to play with their peers and interact with the fun teachers.

Our morning PreK students

have jumped right into their new role as head-honchos of the center. As Volunteer Program Coordinator Sarah Hilbert describes, "they're just like seniors in high school!"

Already old pros in the classroom, they greet their teachers in the morning with a hug or a high-five and

gather for circle time in an orderly fashion. After a year with our three highly skilled PreK teachers, these kids will be ready to take on the challenges of Kindergarten and beyond.

As for our class of 2013 graduates who are now in Kindergarten, Director of Education Julie Espinoza says they are adjusting wonderfully to their new surroundings, receiving praise from their teachers



Teacher Saharai greets PreK student Marilyn and her mom Andrea

and making new friends. She concedes, however, that a few children have told their parents that they miss Mothers' Club and want to go back to see their favorite teachers. Lucky for them, everyone at Mothers' Club will welcome them back with open arms and a big smile, eager to hear all about their adventures in Kindergarten.

Our 2013-2014 program year has gotten off to a great start. We look forward to keeping you up to date about the highlights and happenings at Mothers' Club throughout the year!

- Mara Leong-Nichols
Development Manager

Our Early Readers' Book Club Needs Volunteer Readers!



The Saturday morning program, held once a month, is a lively and fun opportunity for our families to practice hearing and speaking English via storybooks aimed at our preschoolers. If children's books and literacy are your passion, we would love your help!

**Contact our Volunteer Program Coordinator,
Sarah Hilbert, at
volunteer@mothersclub.org.**

Upcoming dates:

September 28
November 2
December 7

More Families, Cont. from Page 1

two adult education classrooms, a library, quiet room and teaching kitchen, our facility includes five early childhood education classrooms. In 2008, we were able to establish our first-ever afternoon program with three classrooms serving 24 children ages 0-3. Unfortunately, up to this point we have not had the funding needed to fill our two remaining classrooms during the afternoon.

Late in the summer, LAUP let us know that it would be able to provide funding for us to serve 16 more at-risk four year olds during the afternoon. In just three weeks, we were able to recruit 16 new families who have committed to coming to Mothers' Club each day.

While their children are in the care of our nurturing early childhood education teachers, parents will participate in their own intensive curriculum, which will include parent education, health and nutrition workshops and mental health support. In

addition, parents will spend one day a week volunteering in the classroom so they can learn from our highly qualified teachers. The additional slots have allowed us to open the afternoon classrooms to a more diverse client base.

Lead teacher Saharai Alvarez is very excited about the new class. Now in the classroom full-time, she looks forward to the opportunity to influence the lives of even more children and help prepare them for Kindergarten and beyond. "The afternoon program lets us help many different kinds of families. The new moms are very involved. They want to know what's going on, they want to help and be a part of the classroom," explains Saharai.

However, the partnership with LAUP only serves four year olds, leaving a gap in our services. Our three-year-old classroom remains empty for this program year. Mothers' Club Executive Director, Hector LaFarga, Jr., has made it his personal goal to secure funding to open our three-year-old classroom as soon



Nathaly reads a book to her daughter, Valerie, in a quiet corner

as possible. We look forward to a future when Mothers' Club is operating to our full capacity, when every area of our facility is maximized to its full potential and when we are able to address the needs of even more at-risk families.

- Mara Leong-Nichols
Development Manager

Strikes Gold, Continued from Page 1

It just so happens that Hannah is also a Senior Girl Scout and was ready to embark on the demanding Gold Award, a required community-building project that entails 80 hours of research, fundraising, project implementation, and public outreach. Hannah's intimate knowledge of Mothers' Club clientele and



Hannah hard at work cataloging books

its teachers solidified her decision to digitize our library for her Gold Award and make it even more accessible to our families and teachers. "I've seen firsthand the confidence and self-esteem that emerges from the children as their literacy skills improve. I also liked the idea of introducing the children and moms to a 'real life' library and giving them hands-on practice in how to use a digital library catalog."

Hannah sold homemade dog biscuits to family and friends, raising enough funds to purchase a downloadable application called Bookpedia that enables users to input and track books and search by title, keyword, and subject. Her proceeds also covered a Tech Era USB Automatic Barcode Scanner to borrow/return books quickly. Hannah spent a good portion of August inputting each book, title by title; she expects to complete the project by mid-fall.

Paula Hurwitz, our volunteer librarian, has embraced the project

enthusiastically and provided critical guidance in the project implementation. Now, when a teacher or mother approaches Paula for a storybook about a certain animal or setting, she can find it immediately, thanks to the software's keyword search. "Before, if a mother wanted a storybook with, for example, a lead character that was a cat, we had no real way of finding that unless we remembered a specific title. Now, we can enter the word "cat" in the search field and find every book related to felines. It's incredibly helpful!" From an administrative standpoint, staff can also track book donations and pull reports on certain facets of library usage.

Now, thanks to Hannah's help, our library will have an even more integral role in helping our children and parents gain critical literacy skills. Thank you, Hannah!

- Sarah Hilbert
Volunteer Program Coordinator

Mothers' Club Welcomes New Board Leadership



Left to Right: Executive Director Hector LaFarga, Jr. with new Board members Vanessa Lee, Renu Bhat-Hansen, Peggy Adams, Elsa Macias, Jean Milbrandt and Heather Stern.

July marked the beginning of a new fiscal year here at Mothers' Club—a time when we pay tribute to the outgoing Board members and welcome new members to the Board and new leadership to its helm. After two years as Board President, Norah Morley has passed the torch to Fran Norris Scoble, who will be serving alongside Vice President Judy Brown, Treasurer Gretchen Reed, and Secretary Kelly McCord.

We have also welcomed six new members onto our Board of Directors, all of whom share an enthusiasm for our mission and will offer their professional skills and expertise while advocating for Mothers' Club in the community.

Peggy Adams received her BA in Psychology from Stanford University and her J.D. from Duke Law School. After years working as an attorney, Peggy shifted her attention to her volunteer efforts. She has become a member of many distinguished organizations throughout the years, including the Pasadena Festival of Women Authors, the Alliance for the National History Museum of Los Angeles County, and the Claremont School of Theology.

Renu Bhat-Hansen joins

the Board to offer her expertise as an Early Childhood Education Specialist. The daughter of a diplomat, Renu spent her childhood living in various countries around the world and earned her Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Delhi. She dedicated 25 years to working in early childhood education and as an elementary school teacher.

Vanessa Lee began her time at Mothers' Club as one of our enthusiastic volunteers. She earned her BA in History from Scripps College and her J.D. from Loyola Law School. She now works as an Administrative Law Judge in California's Department of Social Services. Vanessa was recognized in 2009 as a "Rising Star" in *Super Lawyers Magazine* and was a recipient of the Scripps Outstanding Recent Alumna Award in 2011.

Elsa Macias currently consults on research projects that are focused on education, science education and information technology. She has years of experience in K-16 education, including conducting an evaluation of the Head Start program's impact on K-2 children. Elsa received her Bachelor's degree from UC San Diego, her Master's degree in Chemistry from Cal State LA and

a Ph.D. in Public Administration from Arizona State University.

Jean Milbrandt is the Director of the Finance and Contract Management Division at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. Jean specializes in the management of finance, accounting and contracts. After moving from Boston to Southern California, she earned her B.S. in Computer Information Systems at Cal State Polytechnic University, Pomona and received her MBA from USC.

Heather Stern is a Partner in the Pasadena-based law firm Kralik & Jacobs LLP. Her areas of focus are real estate and business disputes. In addition, Heather is a very active volunteer with the Pasadena Rotary Club and is a board member of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles.

We are very excited to have these six influential and impressive women join the Board of Directors at Mothers' Club. Under the strong leadership of Fran Norris Scoble, we look forward to an exciting year.

- Lara Nassar
Development Assistant

Thank You to the Mothers' Club Guardians

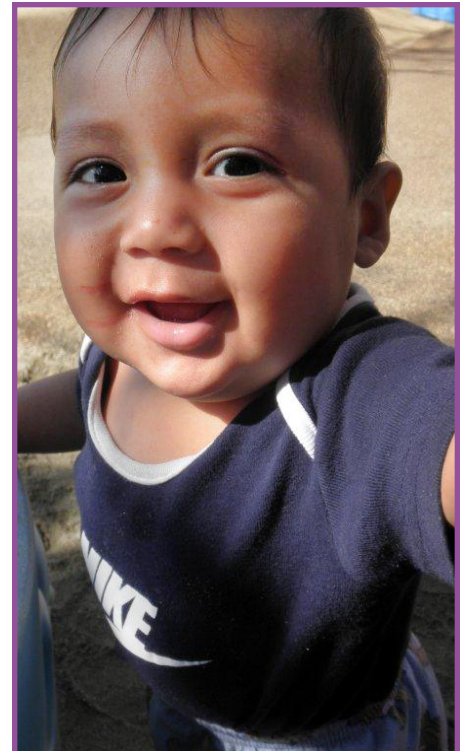
The *Guardians* provide sustaining support for our programs and operations by donating \$1,000 or more to our annual fund.



Peggy Adams & Joel Edstrom
Maye Albanez & Tim Marty
Gwen & Guilford Babcock
Jennifer & Jacob Baloian
Ann & Olin Barrett
Cindy & Robert Beart
Renu Bhat-Hansen &
Alex Hansen
Warren Bleeker &
Teri Richardson
Claire & Bill Bogaard
Clara & Emily Lanzas-
Bogaard
Judy & David Brown
Marie Campbell
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Judith & John Whiting
Cindy & George Wiley
Judy & Randy Wilson



Leave a Legacy to Future Generations, Remember Mothers' Club in Your Will

All gifts to Mothers' Club provide you with 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 can 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.

Thank You to Our Program Partners

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

Pacific Clinics Early Head Start

Los Angeles Universal Preschool

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



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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

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Executive Director
Hector LaFarga, Jr.

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Editor: Mara Leong-Nichols

Mothers' Club is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
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Save the Dates!

Fall Food & Wine Festival
Saturday, October 19, 2013

Power of Two Gala
Sunday, May 18, 2014