

The Power of Two



Issue 25

September 2014

Healing Arts at Mothers' Club

In recent years, art has taken on a new role and importance within the mental health component of Mothers' Club. Two years ago, the mothers in our Afternoon Program were suffering from especially high levels of stress and anxiety. To help them cope with those issues, we introduced our first **Healing Arts** workshop.

Healing Arts classes have become a staple of our Afternoon Program, taking place every Tuesday

and Thursday for a semester. The artistic approach offers mothers an alternative outlet to both express and escape their hardships. Now, in addition to providing counseling and support groups, we offer a creative and safe avenue for mothers to communicate their goals, fears, pain and love. If a mother is unable to directly discuss the difficult circumstances she faces, Healing Arts allows her to release her feelings, let go of them,

Healing Arts continues on page 4



Mothers' Club moms Leticia, Maria, and Taylor at the Healing Arts Exhibit

The Fathers' Support Group

Since our inception in 1961, Mothers' Club has focused on mothers. There's a reason for that – traditionally, women have played the role of primary caretaker. **Mothers are a child's first and most important teacher.** They stay at home with young children, read to them, teach them lessons, feed them, and provide care when they are sick. Furthermore, research has proven that mothers' educational attainment and neighborhood poverty are the two social factors most strongly associated with a child's school readiness.



Raul reads to his son Fernando

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Get Your Tickets Now!
Fall Food & Wine Festival
October 18, 2014

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

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www.mothersclub.org

A Letter from the Executive Director



Hector with PreK graduate Melina

A new school year has begun at Mothers' Club Family Learning Center! We are especially excited this year because, for the first time in Mothers' Club history, all five of our Early Childhood Education classrooms will be filled during both our Morning and Afternoon Programs. **That means there will be 123**

children and their parents at our center every day. We are thrilled to achieve this milestone – a significant part of our strategic vision. Thank you so much for your support along the way!

Our 2014 PreK graduates have started their first day of Kindergarten. We are positive that they have entered their new classrooms engaged, prepared, and excited to learn. We know this because we monitor their development and track their progress the whole time they are enrolled at Mothers' Club. Last year, **97% of our PreK students** who are now entering kindergarten showed significant developmental gains as measured by the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP). This exceeded the standard benchmark of 70%.

We also know that our parents are ready to support and advocate for their child's education. Last year, **92% of parents** took on a leadership role at Mothers' Club by chairing or serving on a committee. In addition, **95% of parents** reported

reading to their children three or more times per week, **100% of parents** visited the library at least once a month to check out books, and **75%** maintained a home library consisting of a minimum of 25 children's books.

Our parents are amazing. They overcome isolation, depression, language barriers, and domestic violence. They work odd jobs, raise children, care for family members, start businesses, and still make time to further their own education because they know it is the key to their children's success. **Because of their hard work and dedication, their families are able to not only survive, but also to thrive.**

Here's to another year of serving families in Northwest Pasadena!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hector'.

Hector LaFarga, Jr.
Executive Director

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:

Thursday, Sept 18 - 11:30am
Tuesday, Oct 7 - 9am
Thursday, Oct 16 - 11:30am
Tuesday, Nov 4 - 9am
Thursday, Nov 13 - 11:30am
Tuesday, Dec 2 - 9am
Thursday, Dec 18 - 11:30am

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

Thank You to Our Partners

Thank you to our foundation partners for their recent grant awards:

Ahmanson Foundation
to expand our Afternoon Program to serve 16 more children

Green Foundation
in support of our Two-Generation Learning Program

Zell Family Foundation
for our Family Literacy Program

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



Mothers' Club
Family Learning Center

Fall Food & Wine Festival

Saturday,
October 18 at 7pm

Join us for a fun and festive night at
Mothers' Club Family Learning Center
980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91103

Participants Include:



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Opportunities are Available

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626.792.2687 ext.112

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* Live Music * Photo Booth *

* Silent Auction *

Summer Time Means Teen Time

Each summer, we anticipate visits from some very special guests – **our teen volunteers**. This year, we hosted **75 students** ranging in age from 14-18, who served as **Classroom Assistants** in the Early Childhood Education program. Teens commit to a full week of volunteering during the morning or afternoon sessions. Their playfulness and happy smiles bring a whole new energy to our center!

Because of our mission's focus on education and literacy, we create opportunities for the students

to serve as **nurturing and supportive role models** in our classrooms. The teens demonstrate for our clients the power of learning, reading, and attending school. They also serve our teachers by providing better opportunities for one-on-one or small group activities in the classrooms and by speaking in English and Spanish with the children to bolster language development. In turn, volunteers learn about the importance of providing preschool education for at-risk populations and see firsthand how social issues impact our local



Preschooler Emmanuel with volunteer Ava

community.

Our volunteers may be known as "Classroom Assistants" but in the process of their service, they become beloved playmates for our young children and fabulous assistants to our teachers. **Summer at Mothers' Club wouldn't be the same without them!**

- Sarah Hilbert

Volunteer Program Coordinator



Volunteer Emma reads to a group of students in the PreK classroom

Sign-ups for the summer volunteer program begin in early April, 2015. If you have a teen interested in volunteering, send an email to volunteer@mothersclub.org to be placed on the sign-up notification list.

Healing Arts, continued from page 1



and also share them with others when reporting on her project.

Healing Arts instructor **Anna Leger** began teaching art when she herself was facing a trying time in her life. The course at Mothers' Club started as a volunteer effort on Anna's part. Once she saw its positive results, she expanded her reach and now teaches Healing Arts to children at a local elementary school; helping people of all ages heal through art.

The success of her course is evidenced by the moms' sheer enjoyment of the class. Their attendance, willingness to participate, and the beautiful pieces they create all show how effective this form of expression can be in encouraging mothers not to

repress their emotions but rather to convey them in a peaceful, supportive environment.

- Lara Nassar

Development Assistant

Healing Arts pieces created by Mothers' Club moms will be available for purchase at our Fall Food & Wine Festival on October 18th! Please join us for the opportunity to bid on these beautiful pieces of art in our silent auction. Your contribution will support the next semester of Healing Arts at Mothers' Club.



Members of our first Fathers' Support Group with their instructor, Ramon Bañuelos (second from right)

However, in recent years, greater attention has been given to the involvement of fathers in early childhood education. **Children who grow up with actively involved and nurturing fathers reap numerous benefits** including: better school performance, increased self-esteem, and healthier relationships. Fathers are responding by taking a more active role in the home – serving as partners in parenting and developing close bonds with their children. In turn, Mothers' Club Family Learning Center has made many moves to ensure that the whole family is included in programming in order to give the entire family a better chance to succeed in school and in life.

For most families, mother and child come to the center every

day. However, our holistic programming includes many opportunities for fathers to participate: they volunteer in the children's classrooms when they have time off work; they take English as Second Language if they need it; they orchestrate field days and lead physical activities; they come every month to the Early Readers' Book Club; and they participate in family counseling if a crisis has occurred.

Our latest enterprise to involve the men of the family has taken the form of a weekly **Fathers' Support Group**. Led by Ramon Bañuelos, an experienced parent educator, the group meets for an hour and a half on Thursday evenings for a seven-week session. Our pilot session was consistently attended by 11 fathers. Each week focused on a different parenting topic and fathers

participated in group discussion led by Mr. Bañuelos. Topics covered included: respect, communication, spending time with children, discipline, planning for the future, being your child's first teacher, and family literacy. Our fathers were engaged, interested, and committed to bettering themselves as men and as parents in order to support the growth and development of their young children. They came to class every week, after completing a full day of exhausting work, **not because they had to, but because they wanted to.**

We look forward to our next session which begins this fall, filled with another group of dedicated dads!

- Mara Leong-Nichols
Development Manager

Earn Money for Mothers' Club!

Shop at Ralphs?

By registering your Ralphs Rewards card with their Community Contributions Program, a percentage of every dollar you spend at Ralphs will go to Mothers' Club. Please follow these simple steps to register:

1. Pick up a Ralphs Rewards card at your local market.
2. Register online at www.ralphs.com and click on the upper right-hand link "Sign-In/Register."
3. Once you have an account, click on the "Community Contribution Program" in the left column.
4. Confirm your Ralphs Rewards card number is correct.
5. Locate Mothers' Club by entering our code: 90748
6. Select Mothers' Club and know that you are helping families every time you buy groceries!

Make Purchases on Amazon?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite organization. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to Mothers' Club. Please follow these simple steps to register:

1. Go to smile.amazon.com
2. On your first visit, select Mothers' Club Family Learning Center to receive donations from eligible purchases.
3. Shop as you usually do!
4. Visit www.smile.amazon.com every time you want to purchase something through Amazon. Mothers' Club will automatically be selected.

Introducing our New Board Members



Left to right: Nurit Kotick, Jennifer Quintanilla, Julie Ward (2013-2014 Nominating & Governance Chair), Monica Wahl Shaffer, Hector LaFarga, Jr. (Executive Director)

In July, we kicked off the 2014-2015 fiscal year at Mothers' Club, prompting exciting additions to our Board of Directors. We are thrilled to have the biggest Board in Mothers' Club history, with a total of **24 active community members**.

While we are very excited to welcome five new members to our Board, it was a bittersweet start to the year as we paid tribute to long-time Board member, **John Carlton**. A Board member since 2001, John served as Board Chair and Finance Committee Chair throughout his tenure. He and his family have been actively involved in Mothers' Club for decades, developing a meaningful connection to our mission and the families we serve each day. We thank John for his years of service and unwavering commitment to Mothers' Club.

Our new Board members bring invaluable support to our Board with their professional expertise, leadership skills, and dedication to our mission.

Nurit Kotick has over 25 years of experience in the marketing field. Focused in the consumer packaged goods industry, Nurit specializes in business/marketing plans, public relations, website development, advertising, and digital app development. For nearly 15 years, she was the President and CEO of Kotick Marketing Group. Today, Nurit is the President and CEO of Trans-Pacific BPO, a full service website

programming and app development company.

Jennifer Quintanilla began her time at Mothers' Club as an enthusiastic volunteer through the Junior League of Pasadena. She received her B.A. from Cornell University in Government with a concentration in law. She then earned her J.D. from the University of Notre Dame Law School and is currently a Law Clerk for the Los Angeles Superior Court. Jennifer has been an active volunteer at Mothers' Club over the years, participating in our Early Readers' Book Club, Pen Pal Program, and Fall Food & Wine Festival Steering Committee.

Monica Wahl Shaffer spent many years as a Law Clerk to a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and a litigation attorney focused on labor and employment law. She holds a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School and a B.S. from Miami University in Ohio. Since retiring from law, Monica has shifted her focus to philanthropy, volunteering her time to the National Charity League in Pasadena, High Point Academy, and the Natural History Museum, among other organizations.

Norweeta Milburn received her BA in Psychology from Wesleyan University and her Ph.D. in Community Psychology from the University of Michigan--Ann Arbor. She is a Professor-in-Residence in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the UCLA Semel

Institute Nathanson Family Resilience Center. Her main research areas include homelessness, mental health, substance abuse, and family-based behavioral interventions. Norweeta is an inaugural member of the Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology and received the Community, Culture and Prevention Science Award from the Society for Prevention Research.

Elizabeth Woo is a Certified Public Accountant and currently a Senior Manager with Crowe Horwath, LLP. In her current position, Elizabeth advises and consults with audit clients, sets learning curriculum, and designs and delivers professional training materials for accounting professionals. In addition, Elizabeth is a member of the California State Society of CPAs and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

This year is bound to be a great one with the support of these influential Board members and under the leadership of Board President Fran Norris Scoble for the second year running.

*- Lara Nassar
Development Assistant*

Thank You to the Mothers' Club Guardians

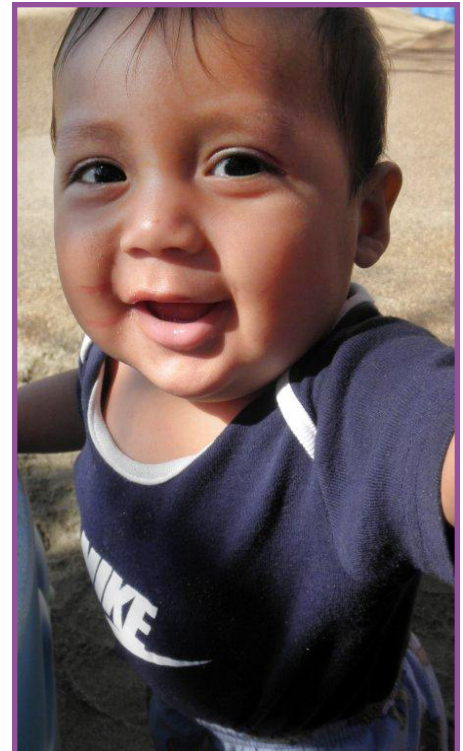
The *Guardians* provide sustaining support for our programs and operations by donating \$1,000 or more to our annual fund.



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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 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.

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or search "Mothers' Club Family Learning 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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Hector LaFarga, Jr.
The Power of Two - September 2014
Editors: Mara Leong-Nichols & Lara Nassar

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Fall Food & Wine Festival

October 18, 2014