



**THE POWER  
OF TWO**  
ISSUE 34  
WINTER 2018

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Sign up for our e-newsletter online at  
[familiesforwardLC.org](http://familiesforwardLC.org)**

It's hard to believe that January has already come and gone! 2017 was filled with growth and change, from the transition to our new identity as Families Forward Learning Center to laying the groundwork for new endeavors and programmatic expansions. As always, our families remained at the heart of our work, and we ended the year with holiday celebrations that included hundreds of tamales enjoyed together, wonderful performances, and gifts for each and every child thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

The year ahead promises to hold many more exciting developments. In conjunction with our name change, we conducted a survey among program participants to determine how Families Forward can continue to serve the needs and interests of our clients. We utilized the results to develop additional programs that are being implemented in 2018, including a summer enrichment program targeting Families Forward alumni as well as a weekend sports program in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Pasadena and our teen volunteers.

Additionally, this year we will launch the second phase of our longitudinal study in an effort to measure the impact of our program on participating families after they leave the organization. In 2011, we conducted phase one of the study with The Institute at Indian Hill, Claremont Graduate School of Education, and will enter phase two in partnership with RAND, a global research organization with special expertise in research and evaluation of children and families. It is our goal to build upon the significant findings of phase one to establish Families Forward as a model and raise the profile of our organization both locally and nationally.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and learning about all that's going on at Families Forward, including stories from the classrooms, our upcoming Power of Two dinner honoring Judy Brown, and so much more. And, as always, thank you for your support.

Hector LaFarga, Jr.  
Executive Director



## Community Advisors Gather to Support Families Forward

Last year, Families Forward Learning Center’s transformation to its new name and brand presented many exciting opportunities. As long-time supporters of the organization, we felt this was the perfect opportunity to re-energize and redefine the Community Advisors, a group that provides essential support to the organization.

In January, the Community Advisors kicked off the new year with a “Coffee and Conversations” gathering, during which Executive Director Hector LaFarga, Jr. and Board President Nurit Kotick briefed the group on exciting new programs and organizational developments.

Additionally, those gathered discussed ways in which the Community Advisors might support the evolution and growth of Families Forward.

Comprised of former board leaders, volunteers, and community members – all passionate advocates for Families Forward – the Community Advisors will act as spokespersons in the community while providing support to the staff, the Board of Directors, and fundraising efforts.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for their previous years of participation as Community Advisors and look

forward to their continued support:

**Carole Babcock, Joan Cathcart, Jean Fleming, Adelaide Hixon, Maria Low Way, Judy McDonald, Mary Anne Mielke, Dianne Philibosian, Carmie Rodriguez, and Felicia Williams.**

We are very excited to introduce our current Community Advisors:

**Judy Brown, Co-Chair; Nancy Carlton, Co-Chair; Ann Erdman, Susan Futterman, Ellen Knell, Norah Morley, Fran Scoble, and Judy Wilson.**

*- Judy Brown & Nancy Carlton*

# Dramatic Play Flourishes in Pre-K

Working with children in the Pre-K class at Families Forward is incredibly rewarding. Our young learners are at a very exciting developmental stage in their lives, and as teachers we work hard to create diverse and age-appropriate opportunities for learning to ensure they are prepared for Kindergarten when they leave our program. One of my favorite tools for learning is dramatic play, which occupies its own special corner in our classroom.

Dramatic play is a powerful tool for a child to build social skills, practice communication and problem solving, learn to self-regulate, and express themselves in new and creative ways. Using costumes and props also has an amazing impact on the children in our class who are learning English as a second language. Recently I witnessed a total transformation in a child who, as an English language learner, had been shy and struggling to engage with her classmates. After donning a favorite costume from our dramatic play area, she was able to come out of her shell and interact with her peers in ways that had previously felt daunting. As her teacher, I felt so encouraged to see her confidence grow!

This winter, we had the special opportunity to work with Angela, an 8th grade student at Flintridge Preparatory School. A lifelong lover of theater, she generously shared her talents with our Pre-K class by helping produce our annual holiday performance of *The Nutcracker*. We were so surprised when Angela donated more than three dozen costumes to Families Forward as the culmination of her volunteer project. Our Pre-K students could barely contain their excitement! Angela's dedication to enriching the dramatic play experiences of our students certainly inspired all of us and impacted the growing minds at Families Forward for years to come.

- Sandra Mora  
Lead Pre-K Teacher



**PHOTO CAPTIONS:** L \_ TOP RIGHT: AN ECSTASTIC PRE-K CLASS POSES WITH THEIR NEW COSTUMES. L \_ TOP LEFT: STUDENT VOLUNTEER ANGELA PRESENTS MORE THAN THREE DOZEN COSTUMES FOR THE PRE-K CLASS. BOTTOM LEFT: PRE-K STUDENTS KAI, ARIEL, AND RENATTA PERFORM AS BALLERINAS IN THE ANNUAL FAMILIES FORWARD PRODUCTION OF *THE NUTCRACKER*. BOTTOM RIGHT: ALEJANDRO AND TIMOTHY EXPLORE NEW CHARACTERS DURING DRAMATIC PLAY IN PRE-K.

# The POWER of TWO

*Please join us for an intimate dinner  
to celebrate for the first time as  
Families Forward Learning Center*

*Honoring  
Judith Brown*

**Thursday, March 8, 2018**  
6-9 p.m.

**Descanso Gardens**  
Van de Kamp Hall  
1418 Descanso Drive  
La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011

**\$200 per person**  
Please RSVP by March 1, 2018

*For more information, please contact Berit Anderson  
berit@familiesforwardLC.org or 626.792.2687 x112*



## Panda Group Recognizes Families Forward at Grand Opening

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, Families Forward Learning Center joined Panda Group to celebrate the grand opening of a new Panda Express + Tea Bar in Pasadena. The occasion included remarks from Panda's Chief Marketing Officer Andrea Cherng, a dragon dance by students at Westridge School for Girls, and delicious food enjoyed by our enrolled families in attendance.

Panda Group generously partnered with Families Forward to commemorate the occasion, donating more than \$1,500 in proceeds from opening day sales.

Thank you, Panda Group, for partnering with us to empower families in the community!





## Kicking off Family Sports Day

The Families Forward Volunteer Program is excited to launch into 2018 with new programs! In January, we launched a weekend “Family Sports Day” program for our families, providing a fun opportunity for children in our classrooms to learn about sports and spend an active day outdoors. Very few recreational sports programs are designed for young children, and those that are can often be unaffordable for low-income families. We hope to help address this need and ensure our families have ways to keep their children healthy and active.

On a brisk Saturday morning in January, over three dozen family members arrived

at Families Forward to play soccer, learn new skills, and bond as a community. Our preschoolers loved the opportunity to practice their kicks and celebrate after scoring their first goals. Exposure to sports offers valuable opportunities for early learners to build motor skills, practice working as a team, and develop healthy habits for an active lifestyle. We would especially like to thank Ava Feldman, who donated the materials for our first Family Sports Day.

Our inaugural Family Sports Day was made possible thanks to a dedicated group of teen volunteers, many of whom spent their summer volunteering in our classrooms

and expressed a desire to continue to stay involved at Families Forward during the school year. Our teen volunteers bring a special energy to our classrooms, and creating a sports program in collaboration with them felt like a natural fit!

The program will grow to include sports such as basketball, football and tennis. Team sports are an important element in building healthy families and communities, and we are excited to see the many ways volunteers will create a lasting impact with this program!

*- Sarah Kimbrough  
Volunteer Coordinator*

**PHOTO CAPTIONS:** L \_ TOP ROW: PRESCHOOL STUDENT ALEX CUDDLES A NEW STUFFED ANIMAL. L \_ SECOND ROW LEFT: PARTICIPATING FAMILIES AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HECTOR LAFARGA, JR. ACCEPTING A DONATION FROM PANDA GROUP. L \_ SECOND ROW MIDDLE: PANDA GROUP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER ANDREA CHERNG AND CO-CEO PEGGY CHERNG POSE FOR A PHOTO WITH HECTOR LAFARGA, JR. L \_ SECOND ROW RIGHT: PRE-K STUDENTS ISABEL AND ARIEL ENJOY LUNCH TOGETHER. BOTTOM ROW RIGHT: STUDENT VOLUNTEER MICHELLE HIGH-FIVES A NEW SOCCER ENTHUSIAST. TOP ROW MIDDLE: PRE-K STUDENT JASON GOES FOR A GOAL. TOP ROW RIGHT: DEIGO AND ARIEL, LEARN TO WORK AS A TEAM. SECOND ROW: TWO-YEAR-OLD CLASSROOM STUDENT ZOE PRACTICES HER KICK WITH DAD PEDRO.

# Thank You to the Families Forward 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  
Gwen & Guilford Babcock  
Jennifer & Jake Baloian  
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## Congresswoman JUDY CHU

CELEBRATES



Families  
Forward  
learningcenter



REPRESENTING CALIFORNIA'S 27TH DISTRICT

## Volunteer at Families Forward

Spend an enriching Saturday morning with our families at Early Readers' Book Club! Volunteers will help facilitate an interactive storytime and fun craft activity.

Visit [familiesforwardLC.org](http://familiesforwardLC.org) to sign up!

### Upcoming Dates:

March 10

April 21

May 19



## JOIN US FOR A TOUR

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

**Tuesday, March 6 – 9:30am**

**Thursday, March 15 – 3pm**

**Tuesday, April 3 – 9:30am**

**Thursday, April 12 – 3pm**

**Tuesday, May 2 – 9:30am**

To RSVP or for more info call (626) 792-2687 ext. 122 or email [Berit@FamiliesForwardLC.org](mailto:Berit@FamiliesForwardLC.org).



**Formerly Mothers' Club**  
 980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue  
 Pasadena, CA 91103  
**O:** 626.792.2687  
**F:** 626.793.1832

Donate online at  
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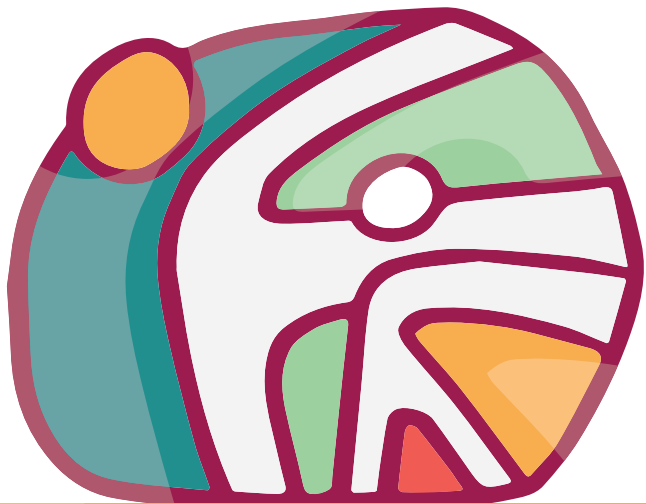
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**Our Mission & Guiding Principles**

Families Forward 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 parents 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.



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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Hector LaFarga, Jr.  
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 Johanna Clark

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