

County DIGEST



DECEMBER 1996

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



HAPPY HOLIDAYS IN "DEPARTMENTLAND"

Each day on the job, County employees provide assistance, support and services to the millions of residents who live within its boundaries. But as the holidays approach, many employees spend that extra moment to make clients feel the spirit of hope that comes with the season. Many organize holiday events to benefit others less fortunate, some of which have continued for decades, have become "department traditions" of their own. Here's a sampling of some of the many holiday charitable programs spearheaded by County employees for the benefit of the communities in which they work:

At Public Social Services...

At the Department of Public Social Services El Monte office, County employee Ted Walters has spent the past 20 years leading and organizing a Christmas choir to carole throughout the office corridors to help lift the morale of staff and clients alike. The group also travels to the El Monte Convalescent Hospital to spread the good will of the season to elderly patients. Songs are sung in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and German.

At the South Central District office, the staff have exhibited an elaborate

Holiday and Light Display for the past eight years for the enjoyment of their clients and the community. The display is located in their central patio area, making it visible to everyone and provides a wonderful sense of calm, peace and enchantment of the season.

At Health Services...

The Central Health Center hosted its first formal Thanksgiving Luncheon Celebration on November 27 for the enjoyment of 45 employees, complete with candlelight, music and holiday spirit-building.

At Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center, many civic and community organizations visit patients and bring exciting holiday parties, gifts and companionship, including the Junior Lions Clubs, the Downey Fire Department, the Bicycle Club Casino, the Downey Elks, Southern California Edison and the Starlight Foundation, among others.

Retired Rancho employee Jerry Bixler, who began as a dishwasher/pot washer in 1955, has spent many years organizing (and continues to do so now as a



SHERIFF SHERMAN BLOCK, FAR RIGHT, AND PERSONNEL FROM THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, GET READY TO SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER AT THE ICAN (INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT) HOLIDAY PARTY AT MACLAREN CHILDREN'S CENTER.

volunteer) the "Holiday Food Basket Project." With his expertise at cooking large quantities, Bixler custom arranges each basket with family-sized holiday meals. For those unable to pick up their baskets, Bixler acts as Santa Claus and delivers the food baskets to those families. Employees donate the turkeys,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

hams, canned food, toys, clothing and personal care items given as gifts to needy patients.

Now in its 17th year, the "Holiday Program for Needy Patients and Their Children" at LAC+USC Medical Center provides gifts of toys and clothing to patients and their families. Employees in hospital department's "adopt" a family listed on the register of patient recipients, complete with information about each child's first name, sex, age, gifts desired and clothing sizes. Money is collected and each child receives between \$30-\$50 worth of gifts. This tradition began in 1979 when General Hospital Director of Volunteer Services Margie Dolinski received a request from a dying patient to provide Christmas gifts for her three children, ages three, five and seven.

At the Superior Court...

Staff will again participate in the Department of Children and Family Services Adoption Unit's annual Christmas gift drive. Over the years, judges and employees have donated thousands of dollars and many wonderful gifts to abused and neglected children under the care of DCFS.

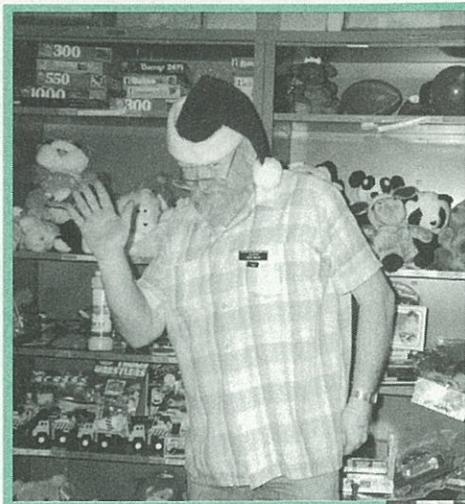
At the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk...

For the third year in a row, employees have supplied holiday gifts to school age children in the community who have been identified by their teachers as less fortunate. Called the "Angel Tree Holiday Project," department employees will provide clothes to these local school children. A Christmas tree is placed in the department's lobby decorated with "angel tags" imprinted with the name, size, age and gender of a child. Employees are invited to select an "angel tag" and purchase a new article of clothing as a gift. The gifts are distributed to the children at a City of Norwalk Christmas

party held for the children in mid-December. Last year, over 300 gifts were given to these children.

At Public Works...

Employees participate in the annual Holiday Card Fund, a program which helps fellow employees and their fami-



LEFT: RETIRED RANCHO EMPLOYEE JERRY BIXLER DONS A SANTA HAT TO GET INTO THE SPIRIT OF GIVING TO OTHERS.

BELOW: PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEER FOR THE "HOLIDAY CARD FUND."



lies in need. Last year, employees contributed over \$5,000, purchasing 36 food baskets and grocery gift certificates for deserving families. Employees also participate in the SEIU Local 660 MacLaren Children's Center Christmas Toy Drive and the placement of a Christmas tree in a group home in Altadena.

At Beaches and Harbors...

Employees take to the kitchen to prepare meals for less fortunate residents. For the past 15 years, Ken Johnson, Community Services Division Chief, has prepared holiday meals for 150 shut-ins served by the South Bay Meals on Wheels Program. Johnson recruits co-workers to help carve the 10-12 turkeys he has oven-baked the night before, complete with all of the fixin's. Meals include favors and greeting cards to add that special holiday touch. Barbara Ellison, secretary in the Planning Division, joins members of her church to prepare holiday meals for 60 local residents with disabilities living in Inglewood. Liz Kalinowski, an assistant in the Pro-

curement Division, volunteers her culinary skills to also provide meals for 50 homeless women at the Downtown Women's Center in Los Angeles. She also spends time with the women and assists them with self-help projects.

At the Sheriff's Department...

Holiday time is when much of the year-round employee fundraisers benefit the local communities served by the Sheriff. Annually, the "999 For Kids" Christmas party is held at STARS Center for children with disabilities who are victims of the most severe cases of child abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. Dolls and toys handmade by detainees of the Sybil Brand Institute and other

County jail facilities are distributed to many local children's charities throughout the County. Many other local holiday parties are sponsored by the Department, including the Belvedere Children's Center, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and the MacLaren's Children's Center holiday celebrations

At the Sybil Brand Commission for Institutional Inspections...

Mrs. Sybil Brand, among the most beloved and honored humanitarians in Los Angeles' history, is perhaps best known during the holidays for her annual celebratory visit to detained women at the Sybil Brand Institute, the facility which she first conceptualized in 1950 and opened in 1964. Her annual visit and holiday celebration with the detainees is an inspiration for the women, many of whom have never received gifts or had a positive role model.

Whether on the field coaching sports after work or on the job coaching employees, Maurice Porter knows how to build team spirit. He learned this during his childhood growing up in south central Los Angeles, where he spent every free minute playing sports in his neighborhood park. As the son of a single mother, he was mentored by dedicated coaches who cared. More than 40 years later, those principles of getting the job done and working as a team to achieve a winning result remain with him, whether he's sitting behind his desk in the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration or coaching on the baseball field. His 26 years of County service and decades of community involvement were recognized by the Board of Supervisors on November 26, when he was honored as November 1996 County Employee of the Month.

As Head Clerk in the County Assessor's office, Porter supervises a staff of six clerks in the Auditor-Interface Section. There, he has been instrumental in setting up filing systems, both manual and computer, to track the work of the unit. Together with a member of his staff, Porter designed and implemented a form that eliminated the copying of various documents and screens required by the County's Auditor-Controller when processing taxpayers' requests for changes in property assessment value.

Porter came to work for the Assessor in 1982, when County budget cuts closed Helen Keller Park in Los Angeles, where he had worked since 1970 as a Recreation Supervisor. For more than a decade, Porter was responsible for coordinating the many sports and recreational activities, especially for children seeking after-school entertainment. Over the years, he got to know each of their names; parents in the community felt safe knowing that their children were at the park under his supervision.

"Mothers used to call me up and ask if their child was at the park. All I had to do was look out of the large picture window in my office and I could easily spot where the child was," says Porter. "Parents in the neighborhood really count on local parks to provide that safe place for their children to play, and learn team spirit through organized sports activities. I wanted to pass on that positive experience that I had received as a child."

EMPLOYEE OF THE
MONTH

MAURICE PORTER: BUILDING TEAM SPIRIT



PORTER ACCEPTS A SCROLL OF COMMENDATION FROM MAYOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH.

Even though Porter left that position years ago, he has remained just as involved, if not more so, in the community through his continued coaching schedule. In 1990, he was instrumental in forming the Will Rogers Park Sports Club in Watts to help create a new baseball league for the park, long abandoned by the community out of fear of escalating gang and drug dealings. Driving home from work each night past the empty fields and burned down gym only fueled Porter's determination to make it happen. Together with the park's director and local community volunteers, Porter

was also able to obtain a \$20,000 grant from the Amateur Athletic Foundation to purchase equipment, uniforms and other league necessities to create the park's first sports program in nine years.

"During its first year, youth participation went from zero to more than 300 youngsters," explains Porter. "We're getting ready to start our seventh season this next spring."

Each season since 1970, he volunteers to coach either little

league baseball, junior All-American football, or basketball. Many of his team players have gone on to play sports at the college level. One of the things he is most proud of is the fact that, in an area where there is a large number of high school dropouts, active gangs and drug dealings, many of his players have finished high school and have gone on to college. Over the past 27 years, he has coached literally hundreds of boys.

"My wife says that everytime we leave the house to just do routine things like have dinner or shop, we always run into former players who remember their experiences fondly," he says. "Many of them are now grown up with their own families, and I encourage them to continue the sports tradition with their children."





EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
ENJOYING THE HOLIDAYS

Have some of your past holidays been a let-down? Stop for a minute and analyze what went wrong. In the Employee Assistance Program we have found that complaints regarding the holidays fall into three major categories. Below are the most common types of complaints we hear:

Unrealistic Expectations

Some people expect loving family gatherings, the ability to give and receive expensive gifts, and to be immune to overeating or drinking too much. Holiday expectations vary among us. You may envision invitations and gatherings that do not materialize. If you have no family around, now is the time for you to do the advance planning to make something happen. For example, call your friends for a potluck holiday gathering. If you have no close friends, volunteer at a shelter or hospital or call United Way for other possibilities. Your local newspaper lists many holiday activities that are available for everyone.

If you have had the experience of taking on too much during the holidays, don't feel you have to accept every invitation. Do what is comfortable for you, which may include a time limit for certain invitations.

There is an unspoken expectation that we must drop all health guidelines because it is the holiday season. At these stressful times, it is even more important to monitor our eating and drinking habits when attending holiday parties. The activity should be the primary focus.

Overspending

The following suggestions may be worth considering:

1. Send a card notifying each person on your gift list that you have sent a donation in their name to your favorite charity.
2. Make something creative, i.e., cookies, holiday ornaments, etc. People really appreciate the effort. Be creative in finding simple, unusual, fun, inexpensive gifts.
3. If you prefer to buy gifts, keep a very strict budget. Decide on the maximum amount you can spend and stick to it.

Exhaustion

Try the following suggestions:

1. Plan to do preparation daily, well in advance and in small time segments rather than run around trying to do it all at the last minute, having to spend whole days shopping, etc.
2. Mail out-of-town gifts first, and leave local gift buying until later.
3. Budget your time so that obligations and exertion are balanced by relaxation periods and activities such as meditating, exercise, bubble baths, reading.
4. Maintain a healthy diet and get plenty of rest.

If you would like to talk to a counselor at the Employee Assistance Program for a free, confidential session about these issues, call (213) 887-5300 to make an appointment.

Happy Holidays from the EAP!



FOURTH DISTRICT SUPERVISOR DEANE DANA: A FAREWELL MESSAGE

The following are remarks given by Fourth District Supervisor Deane Dana on the occasion of his retirement from County service after serving for 16 years as Supervisor:

It is with a certain sadness and a measure of satisfaction that I mark this, my final meeting as a member of the Board of Supervisors.

It is the kind of sadness that comes when you have dedicated 16 years of your life to coping with the cares, concerns and problems that have confronted the County during my tenure.

There are many things of which I am proud, including being an integral part of the actions that brought a more streamlined and business-like approach to County operations. That began by getting unresponsive department heads out of Civil Service and off the County payroll.

We continued this streamlining of County government operations by reducing the number of departments from an unwieldy 57 down to the present 34. We made managers directly accountable to the Board and gave our new managers the tools needed to do their jobs.

I was also pleased to be an integral part of the voter-approved privatization effort that helped the County save hundreds of millions of dollars while maintaining services.

Throughout my career, I have remained a strong supporter of law enforcement. The times demanded it and the need for strong support continues.

But I will take with me the pleasant memories of many other actions for which

I am also very proud:

- Creating the County's first homeless shelter in Long Beach to bring not only food, clothing and shelter to homeless families and women with children, but a program designed to help them get back on their feet;

- Our efforts to help emancipated foster children make the bridge to adulthood by opening the Westchester House;

- Pushing through the successful launching of the Countywide 9-1-1 emergency telephone system; and

- What has been accomplished by the Harbor Area Gang Alternative Program. By bringing together a consortium of school and community agencies, we were part of a program that today has had a dramatic impact on a reduction in gang membership and gang-related crime rates in the Harbor Area. By giving our youth real alternatives, we are also giving them a chance to have better lives.

There are always the "big ticket" issues that draw a great deal of public and media attention, but what I will remember with the greatest fondness is the way we were able to work closely and cooperatively with the cities of the Fourth District. Together, we were able to resolve a great many problems for the

residents at a level where it really mattered.

If the years on this Board have taught me anything, it is that County Government is and always will be "a work in progress."

There are no eternally perfect solutions. What may seem right today will ultimately have to be adjusted.

Key to this evolving process are the people you work with and who work for you. In that light, there are a great many people to thank for the help and cooperation they have contributed. There are too many to mention by name, but let me number among them our departments, their managers and employees.

I want to thank as well the members of my staff for their many hours and years of dedicated service. None of us could survive or succeed without them.

And finally, I want to thank my colleagues for their willingness to work together in search of those elusive solutions, even when there was not total agreement.

I am confident you will afford Supervisor Don Knabe that same cooperation. He will bring to this Board and the Fourth District the experience and energy that will be so helpful in that never-ending search for the right solution. Thank you.

WIN TICKETS TO THE AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS

Although most people will watch the American Music Awards broadcasted on ABC Television, one lucky County employee will enjoy the thrill of it in person! Through the continued generosity of Dick Clark Productions and the County's Film Permit Office, try your luck once again in winning two tickets to the 1997 American Music Awards! This spectacular evening featuring top performers in the music world will be held on Monday, January 27, at the Shrine Auditorium. To enter, mail a postcard with your name, department and work telephone number, to: American Music Awards Ticket Giveaway, P.O. Box 36066, Los Angeles, CA 90036-0066. The winner will be notified by telephone. Entry deadline is January 21, so hurry! **One entry per County employee, please.**



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS AROUND THE COUNTY

CATCH THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT WITH A LIVELY PERFORMANCE FROM THE LULA WASHINGTON CONTEMPORARY DANCE THEATRE AT THE COUNTY'S FREE HOLIDAY CELEBRATION AT THE MUSIC CENTER ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

In the spirit of the season, the County sponsors numerous special events at many of its concert halls and public gardens. Here's a sneak preview of some upcoming activities to help you celebrate this special time of year:

Through December 29, 1996, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.: the Hospitality House at Descanso Gardens in La Canada Flintridge will feature dozens of creatively decorated Christmas trees. The House also serves as the site of an elaborate art show with rooms furnished and decorated by professional interior designers. A variety of musical groups and pianists will furnish festive holiday music. For more information, call (818) 952-4401.

December 24, 1996, 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.: the County, in cooperation with KCET, will present its 37th Annual "Los Angeles County Holiday Celebration" at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion of the Music Center in downtown Los Angeles. For more information, call (213) 974-1396 or visit their web site at www.co.la.ca.us/arts.

December 27, 1996, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.: Unwind from all of the holiday hustle and bustle with a relaxing Friday evening jazz concert at the County Museum of Art. Part of their year-round, free "Friday Night Jazz" concert schedule, enjoying the music of the Art Davis Quartet. The galleries, cafe and Museum Shop are all open until 9:00 p.m. For more information, call (213) 857-6522.

DECEMBER RETIREES

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired, after 30 or more years of service to the people of Los Angeles County:

ASSESSOR: Joseph P. Giannone, Maximilian D. Villa

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER: George J. Nakamura

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES: Clyde L. Feldman, Carol L. Hansen

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: John E. Erlinger, Jr.

FIRE: Peter J. Andruska, Kurtis D. Doty, Gregory A. Vital, Donald Sturzenacker

HEALTH SERVICES: Beverly Bruton, Wanda Campbell, Priscilla G. Gabb, Dale J. Gierthy, Carolyn Henry, George Hernandez,

Claudia Marshall, Martin Randolph, Rose C.

Schlessinger, Daisy M. Spence, Lillian K. Triggs, Hank N. Wong, Mary A. Young

INTERNAL SERVICES: James L. Phillips

MUNICIPAL COURT: Edward P. Bryant

PARKS AND RECREATION: Donald W. Provine

PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Thomas J. Barton, Nancy J. Crowley

PUBLIC DEFENDER: Jessie Thompson

PUBLIC WORKS: Albert B. Duplessis, Walter P. Pruszynski

REGIONAL PLANNING: Marion Lenoir

SHERIFF: Dieter J. Gerlach, Kenneth D. Hotton, Roger J. Konoske, Thomas H. Pavlich, James A. Pierson, Thomas G. Redd, Dale E. Shetley, Thomas J. Toner, Irma I. Varnado

SUPERIOR COURT: Sylvia J. Crisp

Congratulations to the following employees who retired after serving the County for 25-30 years:

ASSESSOR: Rosetta E. Batson
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Fred D. Ball

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES: Roberta J. Falter, Leonor Pedersen, Virginia Richards

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Beatrice Jaime

HEALTH SERVICES: Jo A. Atwater, Myrtle Beesley, Margarita B. Blabagno, Marjorie Brade, Cheryl P. Desmond, Theodore L. Ebenkamp, Gloria C. Gutierrez, Erma J. Hill, Lagi Hunkin, Willie L. Julian, Donna Lashmett, Nellie Marquez, Calvin Z. Miller, Rosia H. Minor, Natalia V. Molina, Gloria Press, Isaac C. Reese, Emma L. Riveros

INTERNAL SERVICES: Mohamed S. Elkobaitry

MENTAL HEALTH: John Garbarino, Phoebe L. Hsu

MUNICIPAL COURT: Sandra K. Luther

PROBATION: William C. Buchanan, Ralph G. Rodgers

PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Carlos B. Alpuerto, Eleanor Eisenberg, Thomas J. Flannigan, Sharon Harris, Delia Martinez, Coramae Norris

SHERIFF: Arnold Allende, Gerald E. Lay, Vincent O. McDonald, Beverly D. Taylor

SUPERIOR COURT: Julita Lazo, Mimi McCoy



Members of the Board

Zev Yaroslavsky
Chairman
Third District

Gloria Molina
First District

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Second District

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

Michael J. Henry
Director of Personnel

Sandra A. Hoodye
Community Liaison/Ombudsman

Kristina T. Hajjar
Managing Editor
Department of Human Resources
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 375
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-2611
fax (213) 680-2450