

Communicator

Community Action Partnership of Orange County
Celebrating 44 Years of Caring

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Backpacks for Success!

Education matters. A backpack full of school supplies provides a window of opportunity that leads to educational success in the life of a child - it marks the beginning of a new school year and a fresh start full of hope. For many inner-city children, going to the first day of class with a new backpack filled with new supplies just isn't possible. Their families have been impacted by the nation's failing economy, experiencing wage cuts or even job losses. Buying even the basic necessities is difficult, with some parents having to choose between feeding their children and ensuring their preparedness for school.



Community Action Partnership of Orange County, along with many community partners and volunteers, organized, gathered and filled new backpacks with grade-appropriate school supplies and healthy snacks. Community leaders such as the Crean Family Foundation and Allergan, donated \$5,000 each to sponsor and promote the Backpacks for Success! program. Other donors and volunteers included the Orange County Bar Association, Orange County Register, Target, South East Irvine Moms Club, and the Jain Center of Southern California. Over 1,350 backpacks were given to the Anaheim Family YMCA, Orange Coast Children's Society, Anaheim Independencia and El Modena Family Resource Centers to distribute to local low-income youth.

A very special group, the Jain Center of Southern California and its national organization, JAINA, organized a backpack packing event which resulted in a donation of 317 backpacks to the Backpacks to Success! program. Samta Jain, leader of the Jain Center of Southern California backpack packing project stated, "There is still a great need for backpacks in our community and it is simply unacceptable for kids to begin school without the basic supplies."



"Having made over 300 backpacks and having attracted and inspired hundreds of volunteers from ages 5 to 85 for the various undertakings, our expectations were not only met, but were far exceeded", explained Samta at the close of the project.

As one of the parents stated, "We are giving our children important tools that they need to start school with confidence and to succeed throughout the year".



Community Alliances Conference

CalOptima held its annual Community Alliances Conference that is designed to encourage collaboration and networking among community based organizations, health care professionals, policy makers and community health advocates.

This year's conference was held on July 23, 2009 at the California State University in Fullerton. More than 350 people attended, which was a 40 percent increase from the year before. The county-wide collaborative focused on current health-related issues and challenges such as: Health Care Reform, Senior Care and the Working Disabled, Mental Health Services, and Programs and Services for Homeless Individuals and Families. The luncheon program also featured an inspiring keynote address from America Brancho, Executive Director of Latino Health Access, an encore presentation of the 2009 CalOptima Safety Net Awards and a laughter yoga exercise.



CalOptima and its thirty community partners, including CAPOC's Alexandra Tran, Planner, and Trudy Wilson, CSFP Manager, helped organize the forum. Feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive, and a great deal of that positive feedback focused on the Conference Planning Committee. Written comments such as "[This was an] excellent conference; it keeps getting better and better", and "I always take great information back to the office and many contacts to begin new partnerships",

show that this event was a huge success thanks to the efforts of the Conference Planning Committee. It proves that difficult times can also create opportunities for new thinking, collaboration, and creative solutions.

Parent Leaders Get Cookin'!



Parent leaders of the Anaheim Independencia "Abriendo Caminos" committee take the lead in teaching weekly nutrition education classes to community residents. A series of ten nutrition and physical activity classes were taught by the parent leaders at the Anaheim Independencia Family Resource Center. For ten weeks, residents met at the family resource center to learn about nutrition and to get physically active. They also received the opportunity to practice healthy habits by cooking simple nutritious recipes from the *Network for a Healthy California –Latino Campaign* cookbook. With children going back to school, one of the major topics they focused on was packing a healthy lunch for their children. Here are some healthy lunchbox ideas they came up with

that are guaranteed to help kids be well nourished and energized for learning at school.

- **Carbohydrates** – Foods like fruit, whole wheat bread, crackers and 100% juice.
- **Protein** – Found in milk, cheese, yogurt, lean meat, beans and can help balance kids' meals.
- **Fat** – Found in nuts, peanut butter, meat and some dairy foods.

For more information on nutrition education and physical activity contact Joey Ayala, Nutrition Education Coordinator, California Association of Food Banks.

The Great Park Helps Local Food Banks

Local food pantries and food distribution groups are experiencing a shortage of donated food due to the increasing demand for emergency food assistance. Help has come from an unexpected source. The Orange County Food Bank has received 100 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables from the Orange County Great Park community farm and neighboring farms around the Great Park.

The Orange County Great Park Corporation Board of Directors, in cooperation with Orange County Produce, is donating a portion of their crop harvest to local food banks to help feed the poor. "Our interim and permanent farming activities will honor Orange County's rich agricultural heritage, provide opportunities for education and civic engagement, and address a social issue, like hunger, by producing much needed food for vulnerable Orange County residents," said Larry Agron, Chairman of the Great Park Corporation Board of Directors.



"This new source of donated food is coming along at just the right time," said Mark Lowry, Director of the Orange County Food Bank. "The economic crisis has strained our local emergency food network, so it is a great gift to discover a new sustainable source of donated produce. We have already provided produce from the Great Park to nearly 30,000 people. This is a park with a heart," added Lowry.

The donated crops will help support the Orange County Food Bank's "Farm to Family" program, which provides fresh produce to low-income senior citizens and families to avert hunger and malnutrition. To make a donation to end hunger, visit www.capoc.org or call Alexandra Tran at (714) 897-6670 ext. 3400.

The Power of One

Sometimes it takes only one person who cares to create a wave of change that impacts many people. 7th Grader Erica Squire of Trabuco Canyon, CA, is one such person.

Erica's 13th birthday was coming up. She felt that she had enough toys and clothes and wanted to do something really meaningful for her birthday. She came up with an idea to help hungry families in Orange County.

At her birthday party, each friend brought Erica \$13 in lieu of a gift. Altogether she collected \$105, which she then presented to Mark Lowry, Director of the Orange County Food Bank, to help feed the hungry.

"Erica walked away saying how good it felt to help others, exactly the feeling I wanted her to have, and how she wants to do more," said Terrie Squire, Erica's mother. "Thank you for making her day so special". Erica hopes her idea will help inspire other youth to assist those in need. Though young, she is indeed a role-model for people of all ages.





Helping People. Changing Lives.

Community Action Partnership of Orange County

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TO MAKE DONATIONS:

CALL Alex (714) 897-6670 ext. 3405

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2009 UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 5-Sept. 27: 2nd Annual Construction Exhibition at South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, CA. Free to public. Canned food exhibits to go to the O.C. Food Bank.

Sept. 26, 2009: 3rd Annual Asian Pacific Islander Community Health Fair. Garden Grove Community Meeting Center. 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Oct. 7, 2009: Orange County Food Bank Charity Golf Tournament, Tustin Ranch Golf Course. For info, contact Kristin Kvesic (714) 897-6670 Ext. 3604.

Oct. 12, 2009: Columbus Day Holiday. CAPOC offices closed.

Nahla Kayali Committee Appointment

Governor Schwarzenegger has appointed former CAPOC board member Nahla Kayali, of Access California Services, to serve on the California Complete Count Committee 2010. The Committee's goal is to ensure a complete count for the 2010 Census and represent the diverse geography, population and organizations in California. Election Data Services has reported that California may lose congressional representation for the first time in its 150 year history.



Ms. Kayali is excited and honored to be an appointed member of Governor Schwarzenegger's Committee. "I am grateful for this invitation and I will do my best to represent hard-to-count communities in California."

On behalf of Community Action Partnership of Orange County, please join us in congratulating Nahla Kayali on her prestigious appointment.