

In this monthly feature, Club CEO John Hawkins and Director of Member Services Angel Gomez introduce you to people you see every day, but you might not know who they are. The Club reminds you that we all have names and stories to tell.

People We See

in downtown Los Angeles.

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Meet Dwayne Thomas.



AGE: "62."

BIRTHPLACE: "New Orleans, La."

MARITAL STATUS: "Married once, but now divorced."

FAMILY: "Four brothers and six sisters."

RELIGION: "Baptist."

FAVORITE CHILDHOOD MEMORY: "Getting my driver's license."

MOVED TO THE CITY: "About two years ago, after Hurricane Katrina. My work dried up."

EDUCATION: "I have a high school diploma from J.S. Green High School."

MILITARY: "I was drafted into the U.S. Army and was sent to Vietnam. I served from 1966 to 1969 as a medic and saw much fighting. I spent time in the Mekong Delta. I got injured when I fell on a pungee stick [a bamboo shoot that's cut, sharpened and buried in a pit, seriously injuring a soldier if he or she fell into the pit]. They told me I'd get a Purple Heart, but never did."

IF YOU COULD WISH FOR ANYTHING, WHAT WOULD IT BE? "Getting up off these streets and being self sufficient. Getting a job is pretty slim for a black man being my age and all."

LAST JOB: "I was a landscaper in New Orleans. I did things like cut people's grass. I did 60 yards a week."

FAVORITE SPORTS: "Football and basketball."

FAVORITE FOODS: "Meatloaf with ketchup and hot sauce."

FAVORITE MOVIE: "I like scary movies."

FAVORITE ACTOR: "Denzel Washington."

FAVORITE TV SHOW: "I don't watch much TV."

FAVORITE MUSIC: "Jazz, of course."

FAVORITE CANDY: "Hershey bar."

LAST BOOK READ: "I want to read *Shock Doctrine*."

WHERE DO YOU LIVE? "I live in a tent over on Seventh and Maple."

ADVICE FOR EVERYDAY PEOPLE: "Just remember that you're just one paycheck away from being in the same situation as me."

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE WAR IN IRAQ? "It sucks. It was instituted behind a lie."

WHAT IS YOUR SOLUTION TO THE ECONOMICAL CRISIS? "We need to create a new system altogether."

WHO ARE YOU VOTING FOR, FOR PRESIDENT? "Obama!"

IF YOU WERE THE MAYOR, WHAT WOULD YOU DO ABOUT THE HOMELESS SITUATION? "First there's no room for the homeless. There's 93,000 homeless on the streets and there's just not enough room. The mayor needs to create housing opportunities. The missions are not a solution; they are very institutionalized and very demeaning, not to mention seriously overcrowded."

The Club gave Dwayne a water bottle, three pairs of socks, a \$25 McDonald's gift certificate, \$20 and snacks.

The interview took place Oct. 24 at Second and Los Angeles Streets, Downtown Los Angeles.



Newsbrief

SANITATION SUPPORTS

FIRE VICTIMS:

Public Works/Sanitation stepped forward Oct. 15 to provide additional support and assistance to fire-stricken communities and victims of the latest fires that have hit Los Angeles communities.

Through the end of October, Sanitation trucks went through the streets of fire-stricken communities to collect large bulky items that have been damaged or destroyed by the fires. Residents affected by the fires were asked to place their fire-damaged bulky items on their curb.

At the same time, Sanitation provided additional support directly to homeowners affected by the fire. Homeowners who needed special assistance or who had special material including hazardous and electronic waste could request the support by calling 3-1-1.

Residents who needed to dispose of hazardous material, automotive products and/or electronic waste could also take their material to any of the City's SAFE Centers. S.A.F.E stands for Solvents, Automotives, Flammables and Electronics - items hazardous to the environment that should not be disposed of in the regular trash.

STUDENT SMART PROGRAM:

An expanded version of the Student Smart program, which helps middle and high school students improve study skills and SAT scores, was launched by the Los Angeles Public Library and Princeton Review in response to increased demands from parents searching for help during difficult economic times.

More than 200 Hollenbeck, Markham, Stevenson and Gompers middle school students helped launch the third year of Student Smart Oct. 16, in Central Library's Mark Taper Auditorium. The middle schools are part of the "Partnership for LA Schools" program created by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to improve reading and literacy skills at 10 elementary, middle and high schools.

"We have received more calls this year from parents about Student Smart than past years, and they say they want to take advantage of this program because they cannot afford to pay for similar programs during these hard economic times," said Georgette Todd, Director of the Library's Young Adult Services. "We have expanded the number of workshops and seminars because of the demand."

The free program allows students to attend PSAT and SAT seminars and take SAT practice tests, a package that generally costs several hundred dollars. The program also reviews techniques to improve test scores, study habits, writing and skills for college preparation. This year, the program will offer 133 Student Smart programs - 56 seminars and 77 SAT practice tests - a more than 46 percent increase in programs compared to last year.

The program is open to all middle school and high school students and more than 10,000 students have taken advantage of the program over the past three years. The "Student Smart" seminars and workshops will be offered at the downtown Central Library and at Los Angeles Public Library's branches Citywide. Also, as a part of the program, libraries will offer more PSAT and SAT books and other study materials.

The Student Smart schedule of seminars and practice test sessions is available online at www.lapl.org/studentSMART. Teens interested in participating in a particular seminar are encouraged to contact the libraries where programs are scheduled; pre-registration will be available and is highly recommended.

For more information about the program, call Young Adult Services at (213) 228-7510 or visit the Library's Web site at www.lapl.org/studentSMART.

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Who are the people you see every day?