

Housing Helps One of its Own

Story and photos by Liz Montes,
Club Counselor

■ Housing Dept. hosts auction to help former coworker caught in Katrina wake.

HOUSING — Raquel Polk, formerly a Management Analyst working in the Rent Investigation and Enforcement Section of the Los Angeles Housing Department, moved to New Orleans to be with her family about three years ago. Although LAHD employees remember her as Raquel Polk, Raquel married and became Raquel Molina. The Molinas lived adjacent to the Seventeenth Street Canal and just down the street from Raquel's mother. Her brother and his family also lived in the area but closer to the ocean. Following the Hurricane Katrina disaster, several friends in the Housing Department contacted her at her cousin's house in Baton Rouge, La., and discovered that she'd lost everything except a duffel bag of clothes. Her mother and brother's family lost essentially everything as well.

To further exacerbate their already desperate situation, the three families have had difficulty in obtaining emergency funding from the federal, state and municipal governments. Threatened by the advancing hurricane and at the behest of governmental agencies, New Orleans residents were directed to seek safety and shelter with relatives or friends living out of the path of the hurricane, which is exactly what the three families did. Later, when the levies broke and waters flooded and destroyed thousands of homes, the three families tried to obtain emergency funds only to find out that since they were able to find shelter with family and were not forced to go to a shelter, funds would not be readily available to them, only to those in the sheltering system. To date, the Molinas have received a \$300 voucher from the American Red Cross for their vital needs.

Raquel and her husband plan to permanently return to the Los Angeles area. In early October, they arrived to seek housing and employment and at press time are staying with a friend.

To raise funds to help the Molinas, the staff of the South Regional Office of the Rent Stabilization Division in the Housing Department donated new and used items for an auction. Among the many items donated were a bronze statue, lawn lamps, jewelry, sports cards, car speakers, in-line skates, picture frames, cooking appliances, silk scarves, a case of shampoo and even a pair of gloves once owned by Oscar winning actress Jennifer Jones. The auction raised more than \$1,000, which the Molinas will put towards their first and last month's rent.

The Club thanks Daniel Snyder and Cynthia Lim for their assistance in producing this story. ■



From left: Daniel Snyder, Principal Inspector; Cynthia Lim, Sr. MA I; Raquel Polk; and Mel Plummer, Chief Inspector.



Auctioneer Willie Andrews.



Lois Hearne shows off her new statue.



The staff admires a gold-thread linen.



From left: Daniel Snyder, Principal Inspector; Cynthia Lim, Sr. MA I; Raquel Polk; and Mel Plummer, Chief Inspector.



From left: Willie Andrews, Jose Zepeda, Daniel Williams and Cynthia Stanton.



From left: Daniel Snyder, Principal Inspector; Raquel Polk; and Willie Andrews.