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Newsbrief

NEW CENTRAL AMERICAN CENTER:

The Board of Public Works on May 3 announced the groundbreaking of the new technology and recreational center of CARECEN (Central American Resource Center). Founded in 1983 by Salvadoran refugees, CARECEN received a Proposition K grant of \$250,000 from the City of Los Angeles. Cynthia M. Ruiz, President for the Board of Public Works, applauded CARECEN's application and grant award to build a recreational facility and provide youth services in the Pico-Union area of the city.

"Providing positive alternatives for youth, where there is a scarcity of recreational opportunities, is at the heart of Proposition K, L.A. for Kids program," Ruiz said. "CARECEN is to be commended for identifying youth services, taking initiative to use City resources and contributing to the City's youth infrastructure by building youth facilities."

The renovation will be to the existing ground level to create a new 9,500-square-foot recreation center. The outdoor space will include a half-court basketball area in addition to space for activities such as jump rope, dodge ball and tabletop games. The indoor space will include open flexible areas for activities such as martial arts and exercise classes, visual and performing arts workshops as well as arts and crafts.

"The purpose of Proposition K competitive grants has been to combat the inadequacies and unmet needs for recreation, childcare, parks and community facilities," said Neil Drucker, Program Manager for Proposition K. "Community based organizations throughout the City are encouraged to consider submitting an application for these capacity building funds for capital improvements and maintenance."

On May 7, the "L.A. for Kids" program opened its 2007-08 Proposition K competitive grant application period to continue improving and expanding the City's youth infrastructure at public parks, recreation and community service facilities. The Board of Public Works and Bureau of Engineering Recreational and Cultural Facilities Program Proposition K Group will make available approximately \$11.5 million to address unmet youth and community facility needs in the City.

Proposition K grants may be used to improve, expand and construct new facilities that improve the availability and utility of the city's youth infrastructure. For more information on Proposition K, please visit <http://propk.lacity.org>.



At the groundbreaking, from left: Michele Hasle, CARECEN Project Manager; Fang Chang, Prop K; Carlos Ovalle, CARECEN Architect; David Moss, Prop K; Angela Sanbrano, CARECEN Executive Director; Marvin Andrade, CARECEN Director of Programs; and Neil Drucker, Program Manager, Prop K.



Fontayne Holmes (right), City Librarian, is pictured here with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

Top Award for City Librarian



■ City Librarian Fontayne Holmes receives Urban Libraries Council's 2007 "Urban Player" award.

LIBRARY — In recognition of her successful leadership in the nation's largest library building program, which modernized and expanded Los Angeles' network of 72 libraries, City Librarian Fontayne Holmes has received the Urban Libraries Council's (ULC) 2007 "Urban Player Award." ULC presents the award annually to the individual who most profoundly demonstrates library and community leadership. Holmes will receive the award at the American Library Association national conference in Washington DC this month. ULC is an organization of North America's premier public library systems and the corporations that serve them.

"The Urban Player Award identifies the leaders in our industry who not only understand the pivotal community role libraries play, but model it for others," says Martín Gomez, ULC President. "Fontayne takes it a step further—she's an inspiration to our industry . . . a living reminder that libraries belong to their communities and that the job of library leaders is to be guardians and stewards of that ownership."

The award recognizes Holmes' leadership in the massive two-phase branch plan that modernized the City of Los Angeles' library system, first by renovating and expanding historic buildings, and then by replacing and expanding the aging, nondescript 1960s branches with new, modern facilities.

ULC praised Holmes for her passion and enthusiasm, which she instilled in community members and elected officials. According to ULC, residents listened and internalized Holmes' message of community renewal through its libraries. More than 70 percent of voters approved the ballot measures that funded the library program, a dramatic endorsement for her plan. Equally noteworthy was her work with elected officials and other government agencies that leveraged the original \$232 million in bonds into \$317 million, providing funds to build additional facilities.

According to ULC, even more impressive than her innovative and sensible plan and her engagement of the community in funding it, was how Holmes implemented her vision. Involving the community through 180 meetings, she created

unique libraries that are community landmarks.

The 17-year journey culminated in 2006 when Holmes' original plan was completed on time and under budget. The Los Angeles Public Library now is a 71-branch system, with 1.5 million square feet of the latest technology, extensive collections, meeting rooms and special areas for children, teens and adults. Nine new branches were added in communities previously without them.

With more than 15 million visitors and Web resources accessed more than 110 million times last year alone, the Los Angeles Public Library is more popular than ever. As City Librarian, Holmes is responsible for the overall administration of the Los Angeles Public Library, a department of the City of Los Angeles, which has an operating budget of \$128 million and serves 3.9 million people, the largest population of any library in the U.S.

Holmes has 30 years experience at the library, having served as Assistant Director of Branches, Central Library Director, Director of Library Facilities, and Assistant City Librarian.

Among her other notable accomplishments, Holmes effectively restored branch library services following the 1992 civil unrest and 1994 Northridge earthquake, which destroyed two libraries and damaged more than 30 libraries. All were back in service within a year.

She led the library's success in bridging the digital divide community-wide through technology and the library's 2,200 public computers, and she strengthened the library as an educational resource for children with innovative programs that help them succeed in school.

Ms. Holmes' leadership, together with the staff and support of elected officials, has made the Los Angeles Public Library a model for other libraries around the world. Through its Central Library, 71 branch libraries, more than six million books and other items, its state-of-the-art technology, Web site (www.lapl.org), and more than 18,000 public programs, the library provides everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning.