

# Holiday Happenings

## PORT

### Holiday Toy Giveaway

Gang program, Port Police Association sponsored toy giveaway during the recent holidays.



The G.A.P.(Gang Alternatives Program), in coordination with the Los Angeles Port Police Association (LAPPA) and several other supporting organizations celebrated the holidays by giving back to the community at the 2009 Holiday Toy Giveaway.

Dec. 20 at Banning's Landing, 100 Water St. in Wilmington, families were given the opportunity to take pictures with Santa; participate in arts, crafts and face painting, and enjoy a great luncheon. There were volunteer Christmas carolers; and many donated gifts were raffled, including bicycles, Juanita's Foods gift boxes and the table centerpieces. Every child left the event with a gift, which were generously donated by the sponsors.



The citizens of the Port community were able to mingle with all the volunteers and see Law Enforcement in a different light.

The Holiday Toy Giveaway Event began two years ago with a vision of an officer within the Los Angeles Port Police; her vision was to find a way various organizations could come together to help needy families in the community and allow families to mingle with officers out of uniform and in a casual family environment.

Everything at the Holiday Toy Giveaway event was free to the families and donated by the numerous companies and organizations that support our effort to help our community.



## AGING

### Project Care

Holiday gift project for elders was a 2009 success.



Aging's lobby.

The downturn in the economy proved no barrier to success for Department of Aging in its fourth year of Project CARE (Caring Actions Responding to Elders), a holiday project fulfilling the gift requests of low-income, isolated and homebound seniors throughout the City.

Spearheaded by the Department's personnel officer, Mariella Freire-Reyes, 2009's holiday gift drive was more successful than ever, with 1,263 generous sponsors providing 1,497 gifts, including items including shoes, clothing, toiletries, groceries, gift cards, books, CDs, DVDs, blankets and cold-weather items.

Laura Trejo, General Manager, was delighted with the project's success last year, recognizing the outstanding efforts of everyone who participated in making the project another proud accomplishment for the busy Department. She explained that each year, Project CARE has a tremendous impact on the lives of some of the City's most frail and vulnerable seniors; often providing what is the only gift they will receive during the holiday season. She went on to high-

light that the project was more important than ever this year, given the increased struggle many seniors are having in meeting their basic needs, due to static or decreased incomes and the ever-rising costs of healthcare, medications, food, housing and utilities. Their struggle was reflected in the gifts they commonly asked for, which are basic needs including food.

Project CARE, a partnership with the Los Angeles Foundation on Aging (Lafa) is an enormous undertaking, and its success is due to collaboration between Aging staff, interns, employees from departments throughout the City, community partners, and members of the public.

Starting in September, Mariella Freire-Reyes enlisted the assistance of Project CARE Ambassadors from throughout the City to solicit and coordinate sponsors among their co-workers, families, and friends. 2009 Project CARE Ambassadors were: Rizza Abuan; Zakkiyya Akram; Mechelle Banuelos; Tori Black; Martin Chavez; Capt. Ray Hamel; Sally de Leon; Lupie Leyva; Melissa McGriff; Jeanie



Holiday festivity at the Bradley Multipurpose Senior Center.

Molinar; Sandra Moore; Ruth Perry; Lillian Pineda; Cheryl Shanks; Kelli Shope; Tammy Watson; David Burrus; and Tina LeBlanc.

Departments that collaborated this year as official gift drop-off locations were Board of Public Works; Public Works/Street Services; DWP; Harbor; LACERS; Airports; Library; Rec and Parks; and Personnel.

In addition to the overwhelming response from City Employees, Project CARE also saw an increase in community participation.

December was a busy month for the Project CARE team, which gathered the gifts from locations throughout the City and County, prior to distribution throughout LADOA's 16 Multipurpose Senior Centers and other senior centers and adult day programs. Many of the centers joined in the spirit of the project by organizing holiday parties at which they gave out the gifts to their participating seniors.

Anyone interested in participating in this worthwhile effort for the next holiday season is encouraged to contact her at: (213) 252-4042.



Student volunteers Jeff Thepperseit, Anastacio Reyes and Ronnie Pagcu took gifts to and from City Departments and senior centers.



Staff at Bradley Senior Center.



Holiday festivity at the Bradley Multipurpose Senior Center.



Angie Vivar, Care Manager for Bradley Multipurpose Senior Center, with Ana Maria, who was sponsored by Ninine Mendoza, Airports.