

# The Collective Express

October 2003



"Caring for Kids Since 1972"

## Walters Learning Complex First Anniversary Celebration



**Councilwoman Rita D. Walters posing proudly next to her portrait, accompanied by (from left, Anthony Ephraim, Carla Murphy, Gloria S. Clark, Asst. General Manager CDD, Bernard Parks, Eight Dist. Councilman, and Dr. Jackie Kimbrough, TCCI Director).**



**Bernard Parks, Eight District Councilman presented The Rita D. Walters Learning Complex with a recognition award for their outstanding services provided to the community.**

Eleven years following its conception, it stands off the corner of Vermont and Manchester as a pinnacle for the community. Phoenix-like in its existence, the structure presents a symbol of the rise from the ashes of despair; giving credence to the belief in possibilities of thought being crystallized into realities of action.

It's the Rita D. Walters Learning Complex. And on this day, September 15<sup>th</sup>, The Children's Collective, Inc. as the lead agency of the complex, celebrated its inaugural year of service to the residents of the Vermont/Manchester Corridor.

Funded by the Los Angeles City Community Development Department, this brainchild of, then Eighth District Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas offers childcare for infants, toddlers, and preschool children; a community center; an LAUSD alternative high school; and, in the near future, a medical clinic.

"It's a wonderful safe place where people from our community can come and feel safe within an environment which promotes respect for their worth," noted Carla Murphy, TCCI Program Coordinator. "We encourage an atmosphere, especially for the children who attend our programs, where each person is embraced with dignity and enhanced with a renewed sense of self respect; to help them all recognize their potential."

"Councilman Ridley-Thomas has a vision for this the residents of this corridor, following the civil unrest of 1992," stated Dr. Jackie Kimbrough, Executive Director of The Children's Collective, Inc. "While so many people gave up on many neighborhoods, the Councilman recognized this community as one with a strong capacity for growth and development, and this complex, in many ways, provides a guiding light."

Indeed, over the past year, the complex has done just that. Through its youth and adult basketball leagues; its after school program and summer cultural enrichment sessions; its case management services; and its community outreach festivals; the Rita D. Walters Learning Complex presents itself as an incandescent presence for the neighbor-



**The Willowbrook preschool children with their #1 hit "ABC Rock", performing live at the RWLC 1st year anniversary celebration.**

hood; lighting the fuses of community spirit; igniting insight to civic leadership; and radiating as a shining star within the firmament of interpersonal relationships.

"The programs we provide within our community, we realize that we do with the collaborative assistance of others," notes Dr. Kimbrough. "Many agencies and businesses within this community work with us to meet the needs of our residents. They have contributed to a united effort through in-kind donations, volunteer efforts, financial gifts, and corporate sponsorships. They come from a variety of backgrounds and use this place as the common ground for community involvement. What it amounts to is a beautiful example of individual commitment to a group effort."

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## Historical Halloween



-Inez Rice, Instructional Material Center

Samhain was an ancient Celtic fire festival connected with the return of the herds from summer pasture, the rekindling of fire for the coming year, the practice of examining the portents of the future, and its association with the dead, whose souls were supposed to revisit their earthly homes on this day. On the evening of the festival, the Druids burned animals, crops, and possibly even human beings as sacrifices to the gods. During the celebration, people sometimes wore costumes made of animal heads and skins.

After the Romans conquered the Celts in A.D. 43, and occupied what is now Great Britain for about 400 years, 2 Roman autumn festivals were combined with Samhain. One of them, called *Feralia*, was held in late October to honor the dead. The other was a harvest festival held on November 1st in honor of *Pomona*, goddess of fruit and trees.

The festival of the dead was gradually incorporated into Christian ritual. During the 800s, Pope Gregory III of the Roman Catholic Church established *All Saints' Day* as a feast in honor of all the saints (All Hallows) on November 1st. The night before came to be called All Hallows' Even, All Hallows' Eve, or All Hallow e'en, and the common people integrated the old pagan customs with the Christian holy day.

As the U.S. was settled by many people from Celtic regions, Halloween customs were brought to America. In the 1800s, large numbers of Scottish and Irish immigrants (many fleeing the potato famine of 1846) made secular Halloween customs popular in the U.S. People began going house to house asking for food or money. Mischief making by boys and young men involved overturning sheds and outhouses and breaking windows; property damage was sometimes severe. In later years the occasion came to be observed mainly by small children demanding *trick or treat*—usually the treat was doled out and the trick rarely played.

During the mid-1900s, trick-or-treating became less popular in large cities where neighbors often didn't know one another. Pranks became rowdy and destructive and traffic accidents increased. There was a move to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers. As a result, family parties and large community celebrations gained popularity. The parties focused on games, foods of the season, and festive costumes. Parents were encouraged by newspapers and community leaders to take anything frightening or grotesque out of the celebrations. So Halloween in the U.S. lost most of its superstitious and religious overtones by the beginning of the 20th century. Then in the 1950s, with the baby boom in full force, Halloween evolved into a holiday directed mainly at the young.

Today, many communities sponsor bonfires, costume parades, dances, skits, and other forms of entertainment to celebrate Halloween. Adults are again dressing up and having parties of their own. Today, Americans spend \$2.5 billion annually on Halloween, making it the country's second largest commercial

### Bulletins

#### October Calendar

**Oct. 7 - Recall - Election Day**

Your vote is important to the history of our children, families, and state. Please be sure and **VOTE**.

**Oct. 26 - Day light Savings Ends**

Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour this morning.



**Oct. 31 - Halloween Festival**

at the Rita D. Walters Learning Complex, 915 W. Manchester Ave. 4:00 to 7:00 P.M. The Children's Collective, Inc. will host this free Halloween festival as a safe place for children to celebrate Halloween. There will be lots of candy, costume parade, arts & crafts, games and fun for children of all ages.



## FLU VACCINATIONS

**Free To All Employees**

Sponsored by:

The Children's Collective, Inc.

**Friday October 17, 2003**

**1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

**Location: Administrative Office**

Human Resources has sent sign up sheets to all sites for employees who would like to take advantage of this free service. Protect your health! Sign up Now! Sign up sheets are available at your site or for more information call Adriana, H.R Assistant (310) 733-4388.

### **Potent virus brings warnings to get your flu shot**

By Steve Sternberg, USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Public health experts, worried that the coming flu season could bring an especially

**How often a flu season has peaked in a certain month, from 1976 to 2002.**

December: 15%  
January: 23%  
February: 42%  
March: 12%  
April: 4%  
May: 4%

**Source: CDC, Center for Disease Control**

nasty virus and thousands of deaths; Americans are urged to get flu shots.

Influenza kills an average of 36,000 in the USA each year, new research shows, nearly twice the previous estimate. About 20% of the population will become infected, and 114,000 people will be hospitalized. Most vulnerable are people 50 and older and those with chronic heart, lung and kidney diseases.

The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends vaccinations for healthy children 6 months to 23 months old because they are more likely to be hospitalized for flu-

related complications. Older children also could be at risk.

Yet, just 70 million people get a flu shot every year, roughly half the number in high-risk groups. Fewer than one-third of children and adults with asthma and two-thirds of those older than 65 are vaccinated, even though Medicare covers flu shots, which cost \$10 to \$15 a dose. A new nasal spray vaccine, made with a live, weakened virus, costs \$46 a dose wholesale. Doctors may charge \$10 to administer it.

*Above courtesy of USA Today .*



## Connecting to Parents

First 5 LA is pleased to announce the First 5 LA Connect, a free, confidential phone and web site service for parents and caregivers of young children in Los Angeles County.

In putting together First 5 LA CONNECT, Next Care Collaborative formed an Advisory Committee with representatives from the UCLA School of Public Health, Cedar-Sinai Medical Center, Crystal Stairs, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, Parents Anonymous, the Prenatal Advisory Council, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National Health Foundation and the Los Angeles County Office of Education, Los Angeles County Medical Association among others.

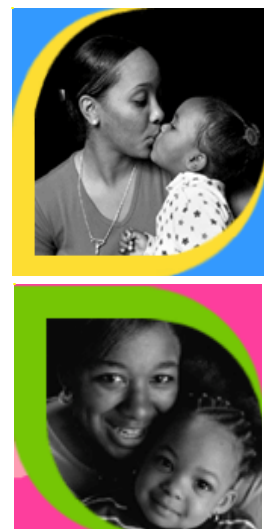
When the First 5 LA Commission initially funded First 5 LA CONNECT in April of 2001, the concept was to create a signature service that would improve the lives of every family in Los Angeles County by giving them something every parent wants: Answers. First 5 LA does just that and more.

Being a good parent in Los Angeles County just got easier. New and expectant parents can now get answers to their questions about pregnancy, breastfeeding, finding prenatal care and parenting classes, getting free vaccinations for newborns, low-cost or free health insurance, child care in their neighborhood and more.

All parents need to do is dial toll-free 1-888 FIRST-LA (1-888-347-7855) or log onto the web service at [www.first5laconnect.org](http://www.first5laconnect.org). Both, the telephone line and the website are free and confidential.

Currently, 1-888-FIRST 5 LA is available seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Parents can visit the website anytime.

*By: Nexcare Collaborative, Inc.*



## Person Of The Month

Since June of 2001 Chris Kubisiak has been the Human Resources Manager for The Children's Collective, Inc. Before hiring Chris, The Children's Collective, Inc. never had an H.R. Dept. "It was a tremendous burden for the program managers to run employment ads, review resumes, interview all the people, in addition to doing their program work" comments Dr. Kimbrough. As The Children's Collective, Inc. began to expand, the need to hire a highly qualified H.R. Manager became a high priority. That is how Chris Kubisiak came to be part of this company. "Since the very first day on the job, the whole agency has felt the positive impact of her knowledge in her work output." Says Dr. Kimbrough, "People think she is fair and knowledgeable, two essential ingredients for an H.R. Manager." H.R. Assistant Adriana Hernandez adds: "I have worked closely with Chris for one year and it has been a great experience. She is a great person and manager. I have learned many good things from her that have helped me improve in my work. She supports and assists me in my daily responsibilities and is never too busy to answer any questions. Besides being a great Human Resource Manager, Chris is also a sweet and caring person; she's the kind of person that goes out of her way to help others."

And that is why we choose Chris Kubisiak as our **Person of the Month**.



**Christine Kubisiak,  
Human Resources Manager**

### **Walters Learning Complex Celebration Continued from page 1**

As a part of the day's activities, The Children's Collective, Inc. recognized four individuals who had contributed to the success of the initial year of the complex's operation. The recipients were Willie Cole of Wal-Mart/Crenshaw Plaza representing business & industry, Beatrice Lee of Community Build, representing community collaboration, Pastor Faye Newman of the Neighborhood Outreach Council, representing inter-agency partnerships and Sawnia Hogue, representing parent volunteerism. Each individual received the first of what will be the awarding of an annual plaque in recognition of outstanding service to the community through the Rita Walters Complex.

Gloria Stevenson Clark, Assistant General Manager for the Community Development Department and current Eighth District Councilman Bernard Parks both noted how the complex continues to make a positive impact in the quality of life within the community. In his remarks, Councilman Parks also stressed the importance of the children who use the facility to know the role that the Center's namesake, Ms. Rita D. Walters, made in the landscape of African-American advances within the City of Los Angeles; as both a member of the Los Angeles School Board and as the first black woman to sit on the Los Angeles City Council.

During the ceremony, Ms. Walters, who also attended the event, was on hand to see the unveiling of a portrait of her, which will be on permanent display in the complex lobby.



**Group photo (From top, Bernard Parks, D'Ann Morris, From bottom left, Carla Murphy, Dr. Jackie Kimbrough, Rita D. Walters, Rhonda Gaston, Gloria S. Clark.)**



5870-C W. Jefferson Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90016  
310-733-4388

**Executive Director  
Jackie Kimbrough, Ph.D.**

*The Collective Express*  
Editor, Brenda Trejo

**By: Mark A. Grant**

