



Press Release

For Immediate Release:
Dec. 19, 2016

Contact: Lindsay Ivins
William Diepenbrock
909-445-1001

Montebello Unified Families in Need Receive Gifts and Cheer in Time for the Holidays

MONTEBELLO – The holidays are a little brighter for dozens of Montebello Unified students and families identified as homeless, as parents picked out gifts of toys, books, school supplies, dental kits, gift cards and canned hams to give to their children as part of MUSD’s inaugural Families in Transition Gift Giveaway on Dec. 9 at Laguna Nueva School.

The Families in Transition Program mission is to provide MUSD’s 972 identified homeless students and their families with support services to promote academic achievement.

“Montebello Unified constantly strives to provide special opportunities like this for all families, despite any hardships they may be undergoing,” Board President Dr. Lani Cupchoy said. “I feel honored to have helped wrap gifts for these families, who are trying their hardest to make the holidays special for their children.”

The holiday aid was a districtwide effort, organized by the Families in Transition Program, which graciously accepted donations from L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis, California State Senator Tony Mendoza, the Montebello Unified Transportation Department and Montebello District Office personnel.

“Caring for our families in transition is our program’s number one priority. Montebello Unified is committed to building the bridges to provide our families with a quality life and education,” MUSD Program Specialist Aida Hinojosa said. “Thank you to our elected representatives for their contributions, and especially to our transportation department, which worked so hard to make this a special occasion.”

Wearing tiny Christmas stocking nametags, District staff and Bell Gardens High School students greeted the families, who selected a gift based on the grade level of their child – a brand new toy or game for elementary or intermediate students, or a gift card for high school students – and stood by as volunteers wrapped them in holiday colors.

—more—

Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone’s efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District’s number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at www.montebello.k12.ca.us.

“It’s wonderful that our students and their families have resources like this available to them throughout the entire year,” Board member Benjamin Cárdenas said. “We all want to ensure that all our students have an opportunity at a quality education, and giveaways like this contribute to their motivation to exceed.”

Maritza Romero lives with her husband in a motel while the two of them raise four children, all of whom attend MUSD schools. The Families in Transition Program has proven to be an invaluable resource for the Romero family, providing support that helps them get by on a day-to-day basis.

“They arrange for my children to get TAP cards to ride the bus, and give us referrals for the food bank,” Romero said. “My husband and I are very appreciative of the assistance we have received. We are so happy to be able to give our children brand new gifts and toys for Christmas.”

The MUSD Transportation Department held a two-week toy drive which provided more than 300 toys and games. A chicken and ribs fundraiser netted more than \$1,000, which went toward more gifts and supplies. Transportation Supervisor Ruben Saenz said that his department conducts a toy drive every year, but this year was special because of the personal attachment his drivers feel for the recipients.

“These are families within our district, parents and students that we know,” Saenz said. “It’s a little personal, we wanted to do something special for the families.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

121916_MUSD_GIFTS1: Montebello Unified Families in Transition Program liaisons and families prepare for the group’s Dec. 9 Gift Giveaway at the Laguna Nueva School Families in Transition Resource Center, where MUSD parents identified as homeless had the opportunity to pick out holiday gifts to give to their children.

121916_MUSD_GIFTS2: Nadine Schlessler (left), an MUSD bus driver, helps Maritza Romero pick out gifts for her children during the Dec. 9 Gift Giveaway at the Laguna Nueva School Families in Transition Resource Center, where MUSD families identified as homeless had the opportunity to pick out holiday gifts to give to their children.

###

Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone’s efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District’s number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at www.montebello.k12.ca.us.