



Supporting Quality Child Care Since 1976

## A Healthy Start is the Best Start

**Children rely on adults to support their health and growth. Adults are key decision makers over what children eat, when and how they exercise and play with other kids and how often they visit the doctor. Parents, child care providers and other caregivers make a tremendous impact on children's ability to feel safe, secure and self-assured as they learn, grow, and develop.**

**C**hildren learn healthy habits that will last a lifetime just by adults modeling healthy habits and behaviors. At a very young age, children can learn how to brush their teeth, wash their hands and learn to eat healthy snacks. They begin to learn how to socialize with others and the importance of kindness.

Many preventable early childhood issues, including dental decay, being overweight and early childhood obesity are preventable with the help of caring adults combined with early physical, mental and emotional care and education. While many issues are unavoidable, parents and child care providers can make a significant impact in the health and well-being of the children in their care through basic prevention and helping to motivate behavioral change.

We can help children tremendously by guiding them to develop healthy behaviors early. Preventative check-ups, promoting healthy eating, allowing children to play, and ensuring adequate rest and exercise will all impact a child's health and growth. It is often said that it takes a village to raise a child. Let's all work together to nurture the development of healthy, strong children who will grow and succeed in school and in life.

*You can contact Connections For Children for health and wellness resources by calling us at (310) 452-3325.*



**Our Mission:**  
to help all children reach  
their full potential  
by supporting families'  
access to high quality  
child care and education.

CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN  
A Child Care Resource & Referral Agency  
[www.connectionsforchildren.org](http://www.connectionsforchildren.org)



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# From the Executive Director

As fall rolls in and the new school season begins, it's a great time to pay extra attention to what we all do to keep children healthy and thriving. Especially as children spend more time indoors – both at school and at home – it's a great time to get started with some intentional activity. As we learn more about the epidemic of childhood obesity, it's clear that both the problem and the cure begin during the very early years. So let's follow our First Lady's advice and get moving.

Here at Connections For Children we're excited about some new directions to support children in getting moving and staying fit. Together we can combat the growing health risks posed by this widespread epidemic. Through the pages of this newsletter, you will see some great tips for health and wellness from families and caregivers in our community.

We have many opportunities to get involved. You'll see them in this issue also. Consider showing your kids about fitness by example – walk or run in the Get Fit Be Fit 5K and 10K race. And sign the young ones up for the kids 1K fun run. Think about joining Team CFC to run the LA Marathon and raise funds for Connections – it's a win-win for your body and soul. Even if you're not a runner, join the fun by volunteering for these events. You can be a champion for healthy children in so many ways!

It's only because of you and your involvement with Connections For Children that we can continue to bring quality early child care and education to thousands of children and families this year! Together with your support we can expand our library to include more information for parents and providers about children's health and fitness, we can add more outdoor play equipment to our Toy Loan program, and increase the number of visits our resource vans make to child care programs. With your help, children can experience high quality early care and education that pays big dividends in success in school for years to come.

On behalf of all of us at Connections For Children, please know that we are grateful for the role you play in our success in helping families access quality child care that nurtures healthy, thriving kids. If you haven't stopped by to see the wealth of resources we offer for parents and child care providers, we hope you will visit us soon.

Sincerely,

Patti Oblath  
Executive Director



### **NEWSLETTER**

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# Supporting Healthy Kids – *Making a Big Difference with Small Changes*

Creating change all at once can be overwhelming for children and for those who care for them. Parents and child care providers are busy wearing multiple hats, often working within tight budgets. And children fare better with small, consistent changes rather than having to deal with too much at once.

As we work together towards the development of the health and well-being of the children in our care, we asked for individuals willing to share their thoughts and ideas for supporting healthy children.

Westside Family Health Center is one example of the many excellent resources available to local families in need of affordable health services. You can visit Westside Family Health Center online for more information at [www.wfhcenter.org](http://www.wfhcenter.org). Pat Chatfield, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Westside explains:

As children are our most precious resource and future, parents and healthcare providers need to maximize their potential for balance and happiness. Parents are the children's role models and need to understand their child's potential. As healthcare providers, we are responsible for supporting and educating the parents so that their children are healthy emotionally, physically and spiritually. Health care providers understand the needs of the parents and children. They are given a unique opportunity to help nurture healthy relationships between parents and children, beginning at birth.

– Pat Chatfield, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner – Westside Family Health Center

“As a child care provider, I look for activities that children can participate in at a very early age. At my child care site, the children love Latin music and dancing – children as young as one year old are influenced by the beat of the music and the ones a little older can't wait to dance!” – Esperanza S., Child Care Provider

“One Healthy habit can lead to another. Involve the entire family in planning a special meal once a week to include lots of color in the form of green, yellow and orange vegetables and a fresh fruit dessert. Colorful meals and snacks add eye and flavor appeal, and can replace the quick boxed noodle mix sides and the chips and cookie snacks. Kids eat healthy when they are more involved in planning or preparation. They also follow our lead as parents and caregivers when we model color with more fruits, vegetables and less packaged foods. Consistency produces new habits. . . leading to better health.”

– Mary Rotolo, RD, CDE – Outpatient and Diabetes Educator, St. Johns Health Center

“The average age of the children at our site is 2 ½ to 5 ½. I run a preschool out of my home and believe in creating healthy behaviors at an early age. Even very young children can learn to make healthy choices when we model healthy eating behaviors. We provide two healthy snacks (usually a fresh fruit and/or vegetable) twice a day. Once a month we have a baking or cooking project using healthy ingredients and minimal sugar to no sugar. I am lucky to have a lot of space, and in addition to healthy eating; we encourage a lot of activity and play.” – Gisa N., Teacher



# Running to Make A Difference

**HONDA**



**It's not too late to be part of this amazing team.**

If you are interested in learning more about how to join the team or would like to make a donation, please contact Lisa Daggett at (310) 452-3325 x211, [lisad@cfc-ca.org](mailto:lisad@cfc-ca.org), or go to [www.crowdrise.com/teamcfc](http://www.crowdrise.com/teamcfc). Your support this year will help quality child care and early education be within reach for all families.



This year, Connections For Children staff, board members, volunteers, child care providers and other friends, are joining together to be part of a life-changing and life-affirming experience that will make a huge impact in the health, success and well-being of children.

This amazing group has joined together this year to run the LA Marathon and raise money to help improve the quality of early child care and education, and to prevent the epidemic of childhood obesity. The goal of Team CFC is to complete the LA Marathon on March 18, 2012 and raise more than \$35,000 for Connections For Children in honor of our 35th year of service to the community.

Team members are training with Club 26.2, a program that not only helps prepare team members for the physical challenges of running a marathon but also motivates them towards their ultimate goal of completing the marathon and raising money! In addition to the coaching and mentoring provided by skilled coaches at Club 26.2, Team CFC members also have fundraising coaches to help them achieve their goals.

When asked why she was taking on the challenge of running a marathon as part of Team CFC, one of our board members shared her thoughts,

"CFC has played such an important role in my life and the life of my family. My two girls were so fortunate to have such wonderful and nurturing care in both a family child care home and early education center. Their successes today are a reflection of the strong foundations for learning they developed in their early years. I also want to remember my friend, Karen Kaye, previous Executive Director of CFC. Her sense of humor, commitment to children, and passion for learning spur me on to participate on Team CFC this year!"

- Terry Ogawa, CFC Board Member

## Paul Tordella and FrontRunners LA Support Children in a Big Way

Connections For Children had the good fortune of connecting with Paul Tordella, President of FrontRunners Footwear & Activewear and New Balance. While talking with Paul, we quickly learned of his strong dedication and commitment to the health and well-being of children and his desire to make a difference.

Before joining the fitness industry in 1976, Paul was a Social Worker, and understands first-hand the importance of reaching children early and helping them develop positive behaviors. "The most basic thing that anyone can incorporate when working with kids is outdoor play, which by my definition is any activity away from the TV and the computer. Play doesn't have to be organized, and children can select their own activities that allow them to play. I believe that physical activity helps feed children's minds – it creates endorphins that create the feeling of wanting to engage in that great activity again!"

This year, FrontRunners LA is visibly demonstrating their commitment to children through the GET FIT BE FIT 5 & 10K and Kid 1K in Brentwood on November 13, 2011 benefitting Connections For Children and other local charities. There will be lots of community spirit, a Race Expo featuring the latest in health, fashion, accessories and gear, even a Kid 1K so the whole family can get involved. And, while



# Taking Time to Relax



you're having all that fun, you'll be helping us provide quality child care and early education for kids!

Please contact Lisa Daggett at (310) 452-3325 x211 or [lisad@cfc-ca.org](mailto:lisad@cfc-ca.org) for more information on participating or volunteering, or, you can register for the race at [www.frontrunnersla.com](http://www.frontrunnersla.com). Thank you Paul and FrontRunnersLA!

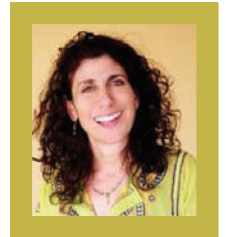
Working with children can be challenging. It is important that adults remember to take time to care for their own health so they have the energy needed to support the well-being of children in their care.

Zoe Sameth is a relaxation and stress reduction specialist who has worked closely with children and adults. Sameth describes children as “just like sponges in picking up these emotions around them. We are role modeling how to cope, either healthily or not, with stresses.”

According to Sameth, caregivers give out so much energy in their work so it is important that they find ways to relax and “fill back up again.”

There are many healthy ways of dealing with stress. For example, some adults choose physical activity and others choose to meditate. Guided deep relaxation is one method taught to help adults find peace at the end of a stressful day. Finding time to relax can be a challenge, but will ultimately pay off in improved well-being for the caregiver and child.

*Zoe Sameth is a bilingual (Spanish/English) relaxation and stress reduction specialist. She can be contacted via [www.zoesameth.com](http://www.zoesameth.com).*



# Why I Serve

by Connections For Children Board Member, Christie Forgash



Growing up in a family with a single working mom, I understand first-hand the importance of finding quality early child care and I place great value on education at all levels. It was this passion for supporting quality early child care and education along with my desire to make a difference in my Santa Monica home community that drew me to Connections For Children. I previously worked with Junior Achievement as a tutor and had been involved with fundraising projects for Make-A-Wish Foundation and United Way, but I was ready to step into a leadership role on a Board of a non-profit focused on education.

Since graduating from UCLA, I have been working as a certified public accountant and business advisor at PricewaterhouseCoopers. A colleague at PricewaterhouseCoopers introduced me to Connections For Children. I was immediately interested because of the organization's dedication to childhood development and education specifically supporting the Westside and South Bay communities of Los Angeles, and serving more than 5,500 children, families and child care providers each year. I believe that every child needs a positive early start to be successful in school and gain a strong education. I would not be in the fortunate position that I am today without the early education that I received.

Serving on the Board of Directors of Connections For Children allows me to give back – providing input to the strategic direction of the organization, serving as a professional business advisor, and helping to drive fundraising efforts. I currently serve as the Chairperson of the Fund and Business Development Committee, and I know every dollar that we raise is going to a great cause. I particularly appreciate that we are able to provide financial support to over 1,000 working families who otherwise would not be able to afford child care, allowing these families to continue working.

This year Connections For Children has also joined the LA Marathon as a charity team to help raise money and build awareness of the need for quality child care, early childhood education and the preventable epidemic of childhood obesity. I have joined the marathon team – Team CFC – and look forward to the journey with Connections For Children, both on race day and in the future!



## Special Thanks

At Connections For Children, we are so grateful for everyone who supports us. Your donations and countless hours of time make a tremendous impact in children's lives every day.

In this edition of our newsletter, we would like to thank everyone who helped us kick-off this first year in the LA Marathon. We will continue to keep you apprised of this effort. Thank you so much for joining us so far this year!\*

Aquarium of the Pacific  
Anonymous  
Ms. Bonnie Bailer  
Ms. Susana Benton  
Ms. Chante Bernard  
Ms. Glenda Bernard  
Ms. Adri Butler  
Mr. P. Carroll  
Mr. Shinli Chi  
Ms. Rebecca Davis  
Ms. Joy Di Palma  
Doug Fregolle Promotions  
Exalt Resources

Ms. Leticia Favela  
Ms. Marvel Ford  
Ms. Christie Forgash  
Ms. Roslyn Francois, Go To Health  
Nutrition Club  
Ms. Aurora Garcia  
Mr. Rob Good  
Ms. Gaby Hernandez  
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Ms. Yvonne Llamas  
Robert and Euri Mills & Club  
26.2 Marathon Training Program

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Ms. Terry Ogawa  
Mr. Martin Parise  
David & Gladys Peterson  
Ms. Vilma Ruvalcaba  
Ms. Adriana Sanchez  
Ms. Julie Sanchez  
Ms. Analu Sandoval  
Ms. Graciela Seminerio  
Mr. Paul Tordella & FrontRunners LA  
K-Swiss Santa Monica  
Pacific Park

*\*Participation and Support as of 9/30/11*



# Give the Gift of Health & Wellness

As the weather cools and we move into fall and soon after, the winter months, we are reminded about the importance of giving. At Connections For Children, there are so many different ways to give and we are so grateful for your continued support.

Whether you choose to make a donation, support us through one of our initiatives like the LA Marathon, participate in our Holiday Gift Program or shop at Ralphs, Food4Less or online through GoodShop, please know that you are making a difference in the health and well-being of thousands of children.



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to start shopping for the holidays!**

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## OUR ANNUAL APPEAL

Each year, Connections For Children conducts an annual appeal for funds that help to improve the quality of early child care and education, and improve the health and wellness of children through your donations. Your gift of support this year will help children grow up healthy and ready to succeed.

Your donations through this special fall appeal can provide educational games and books for a preschool classroom; educate child care providers about the prevention of childhood obesity and provide an early learning environment for children where they will be safe and well-cared for. Thank you in advance for your support.

You can also make your donation in memory of, or in tribute of a special occasion. We will send a card acknowledging your gift and you will be giving a gift that will last a lifetime.

## RALPHS AND FOOD4LESS COMMUNITY SHOPPING PROGRAM

You can help us raise money as you search for healthy Halloween treats, and prepare Thanksgiving dinner!

Committed to supporting education and the community, the Ralphs and Food4Less Rewards programs helps customers to save money while donating to the non-profit organization of their choice.

### SIGNING UP IS EASY, JUST FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

For Ralphs - sign up for a Ralphs Rewards Card at a store near you (not to be mistaken as the former, Ralphs Club Card). Visit the Ralphs Community Contribution page at [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com) and click on the "Participant" sign up. You will have the option of selecting "Connections For Children" as your educational organization to receive Ralphs Rewards earnings. Our NPO number is 90569. If you signed up last year, please note that Ralph's requires re-registration on or after every September 1.



For Food4Less - request a Food4Less Rewards Card by calling or visiting the Connections For Children Office at (310) 452-3325. Or, you can email Lisa Daggett at [lisad@cfc-ca.org](mailto:lisad@cfc-ca.org). Once you receive your card, you must register the card online at [www.food4less.com/community\\_rewards](http://www.food4less.com/community_rewards)



**In addition to this twice-yearly newsletter, we have added a monthly email update called "Connecting with Connections." If you are not currently receiving this and would like to, please go to our website and sign up – [www.connectionsforchildren.org](http://www.connectionsforchildren.org). Thank you!**



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# Happy Holidays for Families

Over 1,000 low-income families turn to Connections For Children each year for help with their child care expenses so that they can work or go to school, knowing that their children are safe, healthy and educated.

Each year, these families can come to CFC during the holidays and select new books, games and other toys for their kids as part of our annual Holiday Gift Program. We rely on your generosity for donations of new gifts, gift-wrapping supplies and your time. This year, we are also requesting gift cards appropriate for children ages 10-13 to stores such as Walmart, Target, BestBuy and Toys R Us.

Please consider supporting our Holiday Gift Program this year from December 19 through December 22. We are scheduling volunteers now through early December. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Lisa Daggett at 310-452-3325 x211 or [lisad@cfc-ca.org](mailto:lisad@cfc-ca.org).

