

A Brighter

# FUTURE

Para Los Niños / For The Children

Fall 2008

## MUSIC IN THE AIR

*Musical Partners Enrich Students' Lives*

Para los niños



**IT'S OFFICIAL!**

*Charter Middle School Opens*

**RENOVATION CELEBRATION**

*Family Learning Complex  
Completes Final Phase*

***Home Run for Kids is Sunday, November 16!***





## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO . . .

Dear Friends,

Socrates. Summer. Strategic planning. You might wonder what these three things have in common; yet, as we look back at this past summer and celebrate the close of another successful year at Para Los Niños, these three things are greatly on my mind.

In June, our second class of fifth graders graduated from our Charter Elementary School. In our preschools, 300 children joyously participated in culmination ceremonies, complete with caps and gowns. Some of our children were awarded scholarships to the Colburn School of Performing Arts, and the closing program made our hearts sing. And over the summer, children at eight of our After-school Program sites enjoyed a safe, educational—and fun—summer.

While for the children, summer was a time for fun and relaxation, for the leadership team at Para Los Niños, it was not the time to rest, as our principals and program directors were busy laying plans for the coming school year. This was especially important as we prepared the groundwork for our new middle school, which opened in its temporary quarters at our Family Learning Complex in September. Our petition to the Los Angeles Unified School District board for the middle school was approved unanimously—a resounding endorsement of the model for urban education that we have been developing these past 28 years.

But, as we reflect on our achievements, we have also taken to heart one of Socrates' great pronouncements—that an "unexamined life is not worth living." Even as we continue to provide the highest quality services, and to receive accolades for our accomplishments, we are mindful of the great need in the communities we serve, and the importance of continually striving for excellence. As we go forward into the next year, Para Los Niños will engage in a profound examination of our mission, our values, and our services, as we prepare a long-range strategic plan for the coming years. Board members, staff, clients, and community stakeholders will all be asked to participate in this effort, as we build a roadmap for future expansion and enhancement of our programs. This plan will guide our marketing and fundraising activities and ensure a wide and deep commitment by all in the Para Los Niños family to our important mission.

Our work, as always, is only possible with your support. I look forward to keeping you informed about our progress. My personal goal is to be a transparent organization. An organization that has healthy and appropriate growth without ever losing sight of our mission. I believe we are doing some of the most important work in this city—we are identifying the root causes of poverty and finding long-term solutions so that our community will be healthy. We thank you for your support and trust. As always, I ask you to call me, ask questions, visit, and work with us to find ways to ensure the success of the children, youth and families we are so privileged to serve.

Sincerely,

Gisselle Acevedo  
President/CEO



## YOUTH WORKFORCE SERVICES CELEBRATES JOB FAIR, NEW DIRECTOR

**J**ORGE OROZCO knows that today's inner city youth face tough challenges. A longtime Para Los Niños staff member, he has seen teens constantly struggle to resist pressure to become involved with gangs or to use or sell drugs. He has also seen these same young adults put a great amount of effort into obtaining a quality education and career training. As the new director of the Para Los Niños Youth Workforce Services Program, Jorge is proud to lead a team of professionals who successfully assist teens in making healthy life choices.

In addition to providing career guidance, skills training, job search assistance, and college preparation, Jorge and his team host the quarterly **Para Los Niños Community Job Fair**.

More than 38 Southern California companies participated in the April 25<sup>th</sup> fair at the Roybal Youth & Family Center in Boyle Heights. While the large show of corporate and government support demonstrates how well received the event and the Youth Workforce Services Program have been, Jorge says that the true measure of success is the number of lives positively influenced.

"This was an extremely successful and important event for the youth," he said. "We were able to assist people beyond our Para Los Niños Youth Workforce Service Program, which demonstrates the desperate need at this time."

More than 900 youth, ages 16 and older, attended the three-hour job fair. Buses full of local high school students from as far away as Lancaster traveled to the Roybal Youth & Family Center to speak with representatives from participating companies and gain insight into the skills and training needed to successfully start a career in today's competitive business environment. Some even took first steps toward gaining full or part-time employment, by interviewing with companies such as Bank of America and Federal Express.✕

# FAMILY LEARNING COMPLEX RENOVATION CELEBRATION



Above, left: Laurie MacDonald and Walter Parkes in the new Parkes Family Library. Above, right: Para Los Niños' Inner-City Arts Chorus entertains guests. Left: Maria Garay, Vice President & Chief Operating Officer (center) with board member James Morrison and Donna Morrison. Below left: Members of the U.S. Marine Corps color guard who raised the first American flag at the site.

**ON MARCH 4, 2008, FRIENDS OF PARA** Los Niños gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the final capital phase of the Family Learning Complex renovation, including a new library, health clinic, and playground. The night began with a catered reception on the recently upgraded playground, which was designed and built by Taylor-Fierce Architects.

able," said Para Los Niños President and CEO Gisselle Acevedo, who spoke during the evening's program. "And just as the children rely upon parents, teachers and staff to assist and guide them in their development, the Family Learning Complex has reached this milestone thanks largely to the continued support of our donors."

"Like the children it so lovingly serves, this Complex has quickly blossomed into something truly remark-

After enjoying the exquisitely catered food provided by Chef Lala, Para Los Niños clients and staff honored Walter Parkes, Laurie MacDonald, and the Parkes family, who so generously donated the funds to make the new Parkes Family Library possible. Board member James Morrison arranged for a trio of Marines to raise the first American flag while the Para Los Niños/Inner-City Arts Chorus sang the national anthem.

The evening continued inside the Complex where guests were taken on a tour of the facility and the new library. Containing more than 7,860 volumes and run by Martha Flores, the new library allows Para



Los Niños to offer its children a window into learning like no other.

Ms. Flores, who has a Master of Library Science from San Jose State, trains all classes in the use of the library, assists students with research and teachers with curriculum planning, and helps students in selecting and checking out books. In addition to the new books, the Parkes Family Library boasts 10 new computers equipped with Word, PowerPoint, and Internet access.

With more than 337 students at the Family Learning Complex, and Para Los Niños' new middle school being housed there temporarily this fall, the final phase of renovations could not have been timelier. These significant improvements have already made a deep and tangible difference in the literacy, physical fitness, and general academic success of the children enrolled at the school, and we believe speak to the holistic approach of our curriculum and our mission. Para Los Niños thanks the many of you who came to support the grand opening in March, and looks forward to giving you a tour of the new middle school this fall. ✕

**FAST FACT** THE LAUSD HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE IS 45.3 PERCENT, RANKED 42<sup>ND</sup> OUT OF THE 50 LARGEST DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTRY.



# MUSIC IS IN THE AIR AT PARA LOS NIÑOS!



*Above and right: Para Los Niños' Inner-City Arts Chorus performs at the swearing-in of Karen Bass as California Assembly Speaker.*

**T**HE CHILDREN OF PARA LOS NIÑOS are enjoying the sweet sounds of music. Living in a city rich in arts and culture, Para Los Niños is fortunate to have recently collaborated with several arts organizations in Los Angeles to bring music to its educational programs. Para Los Niños has recently partnered with Inner-City Arts, Sound Art, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and The Colburn School of Music.

The after-school program at Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School benefits from a tremendously popular chorus group which has performed for large audiences, from the opening of the Noah's Ark exhibit at the Skirball Center, to the swearing-in of Karen Bass as California Assembly Speaker. The chorus of 20 students, ages 8 to 11 years old, is directed and produced by **Inner-City Arts**, a multi-disciplinary campus in Downtown Los Angeles that offers opportunities for children to build artistic self-expression and their ability to perform both creatively and academically in challenging environments. It has served students enrolled in public elementary schools in and around Los

Angeles' Skid Row since 1989, and has been making music with Para Los Niños since 2005.

"The children enjoy singing and participating as a group," said Edith Vargas, the Para Los Niños/Inner-City Arts Chorus director. "The chorus members learn the value of hard work, practice and commitment. They know first-hand, whenever they sing for others and hear the applause, that these skills really pay off!"

The **Sound Art** program assists 11 to 18 year olds with accomplishing many goals, including preparing for college, exploring careers, learning about arts and culture, and developing family awareness. This program engages youth in music education and provides an intro to music, guided by professional musicians and instructors. Recently, 12 teens received guitar lessons from professional musicians and eight teens participated in a recording and production class, working closely with industry professionals on all aspects of creating a CD single.



The partnership with the **Los Angeles Philharmonic** brought the world of orchestral music to the children at the Charter Elementary School. A representative from the LA Phil taught in third through fifth grade classrooms twice a month over a three-month period. And the fifth graders were treated to a Los Angeles Philharmonic performance.

Thanks to the partnership with **The Colburn School**, five of our elementary children attended its wonderful music camp in July, broadening their musical experience in terms of both appreciation and performance. ✕



## GISSELLE ACEVEDO KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT PRESCHOOL CALIFORNIA'S ADVOCACY DAY

**O**N APRIL 22, 2008, PRESCHOOL California hosted more than 300 preschool experts and supporters from across California at the state Capitol for one purpose: to advocate for expanded access to high quality preschool. Teachers, early care educators, parents, business and labor leaders, and others met with more than 90 state legislators and staff, and were able to share their stories of how high quality preschool is a critical first step in education reform. But earlier in the day, advocates attended a special series of lectures, including one from our own president & CEO, Gisselle Acevedo, who was a keynote speaker for the day.



Gisselle was the final speaker before advocates went on to meet with legislators at the Capitol. She inspired the advocates with a talk on the transformational role of the preschool programs of Para Los Niños. She introduced them to our Early Childhood curriculum, rooted in the Italian educational philosophy, Reggio Emilia, and practiced at nearly nine Para Los Niños sites throughout Los Angeles. Gisselle explained that as our agency has grown, so has our preschool education, evolving into a progressive, competitive program for our earliest learners.

Like many of the advocates in attendance, Gisselle expressed the urgent need for high quality preschools throughout California. Earlier in the day, advocates heard from an equally stellar lineup of speakers. Assemblymember Dave Jones welcomed attendees, telling them that in kindergarten classrooms across California, he has observed that “you can tell a child who has had high quality preschool, and a child who has not. “Unfortunately, not enough children have access to quality preschools, and that’s something we need to change,” Jones said.

Senator Darrell Steinberg shared his top 10 tips for being an effective advocate and offered some encouraging words about the state budget challenges: “Now is the time to lay the foundation for the inevitable return of the good cycle, and the time when we will be able to have more money to spend on education and preschool,” he said.

In their remarks, California Secretary of Education Dave Long and Camille Maben, director of the California Department of Education Child Development Division, both emphasized that closing the achievement gap starts with preschool. And finally, a panel of parents and teachers shared their stories of how preschool taught their children early academic and social skills, such as counting, writing, learning the alphabet, and paying attention, giving them a strong start before their first day of kindergarten.

Addressing her colleagues, Gisselle reminded them of the responsibility we all have to our children, and that the work must start in their earliest years, in order for them to be successful students, adults, and ultimately, the future leaders of our world. ✕

## FIFTH GRADERS TAKE CENTER STAGE FOR SECOND ANNUAL CULMINATION CEREMONY



**P**ARA LOS NIÑOS CELEBRATED THE lives, accomplishments and dreams of its charter elementary school fifth grade class at an emotional commencement ceremony on June 11, 2008 at the Family Learning Complex.

The 33 students, along with more than 150 family members, friends, and Para Los Niños supporters, were treated to keynote speeches from Monica Garcia, L.A. Unified School District board president, and acclaimed actor Tony Plana. Ms. Garcia and Mr. Plana joined elementary school principal Norma Silva and Para Los Niños President and CEO Gisselle Acevedo in handing out culmination certificates to the children.

“For me, graduation means something real special,” said Ana M., a fifth grade class member. “For me, it means something like a door closing but another one opening. It means something new.”

Part of the “something new” at the second annual fifth grade culmination ceremony was the announcement of the first sixth grade class offered by Para Los Niños’ Charter Middle School. Judy Perlmutter, formerly of UCLA’s University Elementary School, was also introduced as the incoming middle school principal at the ceremony. Sixth grade began in September at the Family Learning Complex, where it will be housed temporarily until a permanent site for the middle school is secured.

Immediately following the ceremony, all in attendance were invited to a reception, with food graciously donated by Panda Express and music by DJ Pasha.

Congratulations to the 2008 fifth grade graduating class of Para Los Niños on this pivotal moment in their lives, as they rise to reach their dreams. ✕



**AS FOOD PRICES RISE AND AVERAGE EARNINGS FALL NATIONALLY, 99 PERCENT OF FOOD BANKS ARE REPORTING INCREASED DEMAND, INCLUDING FROM MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES.**

# CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATION RAISES \$670,000

**S**ALSA, RUMBA OR HIP HOP...NO MATTER WHAT DANCE STYLE GOT THEM MOVING, hundreds of Para Los Niños supporters took to the dance floors at **¡Bailemos!** (Let's Dance!): **The 12th Annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration.**

Draped in champagne gold linens and bathed in pink coral lights, the gorgeous Gilmore Adobe at the Original Farmers Market in Los Angeles once again served as the location of the organization's signature annual fundraiser on Friday, May 2, 2008. The event was both a party and a celebration of the lives and accomplishments of the tens of thousands of underprivileged children and families Para Los Niños has helped to succeed.

Thanks to a generous matching gift of \$250,000 from Rick and Tina Caruso, and the support of numerous corporate and individual sponsors, more than \$670,000 was raised to assist economically challenged families throughout Los Angeles and San Bernardino.

The more than 600 guests in attendance received a red carpet welcome, complete with a glass of bubbly, compliments of liquor sponsor Young's Market, and tray-passed hors d'oeuvres from Casablanca Restaurant and Catering. They were then tempted by a lavish array of silent and live auction items, which included tickets to private performances by Latin Grammy Award Winners Pepe Aguilar and Juanes, a three day/two night vacation in Puerto Vallarta, and a Sushi Roku dinner package with a one-day use of a Bentley luxury car.



During the evening's brief program, Event Co-Chairs and Board Members Colleen Sweeney and Mark Pan recognized members of the Cinco de Mayo Event and Host Committees for organizing an incredibly successful event. KROQ, a longtime supporter of the agency, also sent deejay Psycho Mike to present organization president and CEO Gisselle Acevedo with a \$20,000 check from the proceeds of the station's 2007 Almost Acoustic Christmas Concert.

As the premiere Cinco de Mayo celebration in Los Angeles, **¡Bailemos!** attracted the support of celebrities and local dignitaries, including Honorary Co-Chairs Tony Plana, from television's **Ugly Betty**, Adam Rodriguez of **CSI Miami**, Benicio Del Toro, and Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Board member Diane Medina of KABC-TV talks to Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas.



Throughout the evening, strolling mariachis, salsa instructors and platform and Mexican folklorico dancers made sure that even the shyest of wallflowers did not miss out on the action. When not on the dance floor, attendees were treated to hand rolled cigars, a selection of fine wines, espresso from Starbucks, Carnation ice cream treats and an abundant supply of premium Corralejo Tequila.

Para Los Niños would like to thank all the sponsors of **¡Bailemos! The 12th Annual Cinco de Mayo Celebration.** ✕



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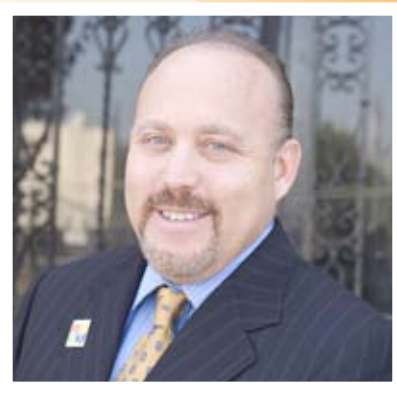


**JULIA GASKILL**  
*Vice President of Development*

"There's so much going on in and around our sites that we can definitely capitalize on the potential there. Our facilities are part of the fabric of the community. I believe our downtown neighbors are just waiting to be asked to join our efforts," Julia said.

Aiding Julia in her efforts is Avery Bell, who was selected to fill the newly-created position of Director of Corporate Relations. Avery brings more than 20 years of marketing experience with well-known brands, including The Walt Disney Company, AT&T Broadband, Bally Total Fitness, and Wasserman Media Group.

One of Avery's goals at Para Los Niños is to develop a new form of support for the agency's programs: cause marketing. Everyone benefits from this growing field: the non-profits that receive a percentage of sales, the companies that can attract new buyers by collaborating with a non-profit, and consumers who prefer to buy products that benefit a cause. With Avery leading the way, one day soon you will be able to shop and support Para Los Niños at the same time!



**AVERY BELL**  
*Director of Corporate Relations*

Among Julia's goals for increasing support for the agency is reaching out to new constituencies, like the retailers and loft developments sprouting up in the warehouse and arts district bordering the Para Los Niños Family Learning Complex and Skid Row.

As part of the restructuring, Marketing and Special Events have been moved into a new, separate Department of Communications, headed by Elena Stern, Vice President of Communications and External Affairs. X

**This new section of the Para Los Niños newsletter is dedicated to thanking our corporate sponsors for their generous contributions and continued support. They provide the funding needed for our programs for children, youth and families, and for our fundraising events.**

**VONS** Vons not only has the ingredients for life, but it also supports Para Los Niños. Vons has been a major supporter of Para Los Niños for many years, and continues to be. This year, Vons will be sponsoring the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Thanksgiving Celebration event, to be held on Tuesday, November 25 at the Cathed

dral of Our Lady of the Angels. Five hundred Para Los Niños families will enjoy a holiday feast made possible by the generous contributions of Vons and two other sponsors, KABC-TV and CVS/Pharmacy. Co-hosting the dinner again this year will be His Eminence Cardinal Roger Mahony and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.



Wells Fargo believes in investing in and supporting its communities. In 2007, Wells Fargo awarded \$10.5 million in grants to non-profit organizations and schools in Los Angeles and Southern California that address vital community needs. Para Los Niños is fortunate to be one of these organizations.

In addition to charitable grants, Wells Fargo team members generously volunteer their time with non-profits and at community events. Wells Fargo rewards its team members for their volunteer service by providing grants to the nonprofits with which they are involved.

Autumn Mosteller Krischer, Vice President and Senior Foreign Exchange Specialist for Wells Fargo, and a Para Los Niños board member, was recently recognized with a \$1,000 Wells Fargo Volunteer Service Award for her outstanding volunteer efforts and her



Autumn Mosteller Krischer (left) and Todd Wartchow (center), Sr. V.P. & Finance Manager of Wells Fargo's Los Angeles Community Metro Bank, accept the 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of Wells Fargo. Para Los Niños President & CEO Gisselle Acevedo (right) presented the award at the second annual Goal for Kids fundraiser.

dedication to Para Los Niños. Her \$1,000 grant is being generously donated to Para Los Niños.

Wells Fargo received Para Los Niños' 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award for its commitment to improving the lives of Southern California children, youth, and families, and we continue to appreciate them this year!



We would like to thank our sponsor Alaska Airlines for its generous support in helping children, youth and families succeed. Alaska Airlines is proudly celebrating 20 years of service to Mexico, with 10 nonstop flights from Los Angeles, and is offering the opportunity to win complimentary

roundtrip airfare for two from LAX to any one of its 10 nonstop destinations in Mexico. These cities include Cancun, Guadalajara, Ixtapa, La Paz, Loreto, Los Cabos, Manzanillo, Mazatlan, Mexico City and Puerto Vallarta.

To submit an entry, fill out the entry form below and submit it using the return envelope in this issue. The winning entry will be drawn from all entries received by December 31, 2008.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS: "PLN AA SWEEPSTAKES" NO PURCHASE OR DONATION NECESSARY. A PURCHASE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCE OF WINNING. Must be a resident of the fifty (50) United States and/or the District of Columbia and at least 21 years old at time of entry. Sweepstakes begins 12:00:00 AM (Midnight) Pacific Time ("PT") October 1, 2008 and ends at 11:59:59 PM PT December 31, 2008. For complete details see Official Rules available online at [www.paralosninos.org](http://www.paralosninos.org). VOID WHERE PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED BY LAW. Certain restrictions apply for seat availability and may not be available on desired dates.

# LAUSD APPROVES CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAN

## First sixth grade class begins



**IT'S OFFICIAL - THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED** School District approved Para Los Niños' plan to open a Charter Middle School, and the first 6th grade class began this September, temporarily housed in the Family Learning Complex.

The Charter Elementary School's culminating class of 2008 has the exciting opportunity of being part of this first sixth grade class at the Charter Middle School. The staff is especially pleased to have the children remain a part of its ever-growing family!

Like the Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School, the Para Los Niños Charter Middle School will accentuate the organization's core mission and values. Building on the successes of the kindergarten through fifth grade curriculum, the middle school's specific mission is to provide a rigorous and supportive educational experience in a nurturing and safe environment.

The educational experience for the new middle school students will benefit from innovative approaches, such as the formation of student advisory groups. Each group of 20 to 25 students and one teacher will stay together for their entire middle school experience. This structure will allow families to connect with the same advisor for their child throughout their child's middle school years. Middle school families will also have access to a wide range of services to ensure that the children can achieve their full potential as students and individuals.

The first sixth grade class of 50 students has two teachers, and their studies are enhanced and enlivened through partnerships with Inner-City Arts and the California Science Center. ✕

**FAST FACT** FEWER THAN HALF OF FAMILIES IN CALIFORNIA EARN THE \$72,000 A YEAR NEEDED FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR TO AFFORD HOUSING, CHILD CARE, FOOD, HEALTH INSURANCE, AND TRANSPORTATION.

# NEWS CLIPS

## MORE THAN 130 GOLFERS HIT THE GREENS AT WILSHIRE COUNTRY CLUB

for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Fiesta Broadway Charity Golf Tournament. Para Los Niños, the National Institute of Transplantation, the Los Angeles Children's Museum, and Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times will receive a portion of the \$197,000 raised at the May 5<sup>th</sup> event. Para Los Niños thanks all of the tournament organizers, including Frank Sanchez of McDonald's, Sandra Richlin of The Richlin Group, John Echeveste of Valencia, Perez & Echeveste PR, and Peter Bellas of All Access Entertainment.



The beautiful golf course at the Wilshire Country Club in Los Angeles, site of this year's Fiesta Broadway Golf Tournament.



**HOME RUN FOR KIDS ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16** This annual fundraiser at Dodger Stadium is a dream-come-true for baseball lovers and Dodgers fans, featuring baseball clinics, autograph signing with Dodger Greats, tours of the stadium, sports memorabilia, delicious food, and more. You can support the event through a sponsorship, donation, program advertisement or ticket purchase. Tickets: \$225/adult; \$50/kid; \$500/family package (includes two adult and two kids tickets). For sponsorship information, please contact Avery Bell, Director of Corporate Relations.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND SCHOOL AGE YOUTH SERVICES

These two programs moved their headquarters in September to a new facility in Leimert Park, the center of Los Angeles' historical African-American arts and cultural scene. The 3,850 square foot facility, which was recently renovated, is located at 4315-4317 Leimert Boulevard.



The new home of YDS and SAYS



### Para Los Niños works to help children today for a brighter tomorrow . . .

**Our mission:** Helping children succeed. **Our vision:** Is to become the leading provider of high quality services for children.

**Our values:** Children come first • Excellence in all areas • Respecting and embracing diversity • Responsive, compassionate, and inspiring to those we serve • Highest ethical standards • Transparency and accountability • Teamwork

#### Executive Team

**Gisselle Acevedo**  
President & CEO

**Stefanie Eppe, Ph.D.**  
Vice President, Quality Assurance & Research

**Maria E. Garay, M.S.W., Ph.D.**  
Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

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Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

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Director of Corporate Relations

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Manager, Public Relations & Communications

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Photo credits: Ellice Schwartz, Avery Bell, Leroy Hamilton, Clifford Lester, Jim Morrison, Howard Pasamanick, Elena Stern

Correction: In the Para Los Ninos Annual Report 2006-2007, Lucy McCoy and Paul Bacigalupo were listed incorrectly under "Gifts of \$250 and Above" on the page thanking our donors. They should have been listed under "Gifts of \$1,000 and Above."



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