



The Priority Center
Ending the Cycle of Generational Trauma

Media Contact:
Donna Hahn
Hahn Communications
(949) 874-2675

Organization Contact:
Lisa Fujimoto, Ex. Dir.
The Priority Center
(949) 939-0971

THE PRIORITY CENTER HOLDS FIRST-EVER HOLIDAY DRIVE-THROUGH EVENT FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIF. – Dec. 18, 2020 – [The Priority Center](#) of Santa Ana, California, distributed hundreds of video games, dolls, toys, jackets and shoes, along with gift cards for food and other basic necessities, to some of Orange County’s neediest families on Saturday, Dec. 12, as part of its annual Families Helping Families holiday campaign. Now in its 17th year, the 2020 Families Helping Families gift distribution was held for the first time as a COVID-conscious drive-through event with all families, volunteers and Priority Center staff wearing masks and following social distancing guidelines.

The Families Helping Families gift distribution was held from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Freddie Georges Production Group (FG/PG), located at 15362 Graham St. in Huntington Beach, California. More than 30 volunteers and Priority Center staff distributed nearly \$130,000 worth of gifts to the children and gift cards to the adults.

The Families Helping Families program matches families, individuals and companies in Southern California with families enrolled in The Priority Center programs. Donors contribute funds to the holiday program which are used to fill the children’s wish lists and provide food and basic household items for the families. Last year, approximately 140 families received children’s gifts and gift cards. More than 270 families participated this year, up nearly 100 percent over 2019.

According to Lisa Fujimoto, executive director of The Priority Center, the dramatic increase can be attributed to the economic instability these families are experiencing as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

“COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on these families, some of which were already living paycheck to paycheck,” Fujimoto said. “People have lost their jobs and exhausted their savings. For them, it’s a hard choice between paying rent and utilities or buying food. Spending money on toys and games for their children is just not an option.”

Catherine Sorensen, chair of the Families Helping Families campaign and a longtime Priority Center board member, added, “We are thrilled by the community’s response to our call for financial support this year. Many families and individuals in the broader community have adopted our Priority Center families for several years as part of their own holiday tradition. This year, some of them adopted more than one family because of the demand. But we’ve also had many new individuals, companies and families participate this holiday season, which has been nothing short of extraordinary during these extremely unsettling financial times.”

About The Priority Center

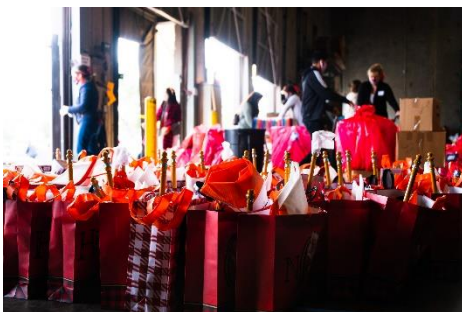
Established in 1983, The Priority Center (formerly known as the Child Abuse Prevention Center) serves at-risk adults, families and children in crisis to prevent and break the generational cycle of trauma and abuse. The center matches individuals and families at risk of trauma with professional caseworkers who work with them directly through telemedicine health services during the pandemic. The Priority Center also works with adolescents and adults in crisis who need intervention services dealing with a mental illness and suicidal ideations.

According to a report by the Orange County Health Care Agency, suicide in the county is at an all-time high with a rate of 10.9 people per 100,000 people. The Priority Center teams work with adolescents and adults experiencing suicidal ideation and self-harm. ***The Priority Center is the only nonprofit organization in Orange County offering in-home crisis stabilization for children, adults and families.*** The center employs 125 professional staff members, two-thirds of whom provide direct services to individuals in need. In 2019, the center’s programs served more than 6,000 individuals in crisis and families. The corporate offices for the center are located at 1940 E. Deere Ave., Suite 100, in Santa Ana, California. Visit [The Priority Center](#) for more information.

###

PLEASE CREDIT ERNIE PERALTA, ESPRESSO PHOTOGRAPHY, FOR ALL PHOTOGRAPHY.

PHOTO #6051:



[The Priority Center](#) of Santa Ana, California, distributed hundreds of video games, dolls, toys, jackets and shoes, along with gift cards for food and other basic necessities, to some of Orange County’s neediest families on Saturday, Dec. 12, as part of its annual Families Helping Families holiday campaign. Now in its 17th year, the 2020 Families Helping Families gift distribution was held for the first

time as a COVID-conscious drive-through event. Red gift bags were assembled and distributed at Freddie Georges Production Group in Huntington Beach, California, to more than 270 families.

PHOTO # 6144:



Geovanni Garcia was one of 30 volunteers who participated in the Families Helping Families gift distribution.

PHOTO # 6401:



Volunteer Adeela Gokal followed social distancing guidelines with contactless delivery.

PHOTO # 6292:



Michael Littler (green sweater) with The Priority Center and volunteer Misael Coto (red sweater) load bicycles into the car of a family receiving holiday assistance from The Priority Center.

PHOTO #6102:



Top Left: Priority Center Executive Director Lisa Fujimoto and Catherine Sorensen, chair of the Families Helping Families event and a Priority Center board member, helped out as Santa's elves. Priority Center Chief Program Officer Bill Tornquist did the Santa honors.

###