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**ABC Unified School District (ABCUSD)
Holds 13th Annual Parent Leadership Conference at the Cerritos Sheraton Hotel**

For the 13th year, the ABC Unified School District and the ABC Adult School, in collaboration with the ABC PTA Council, hosted its highly acclaimed Annual Parent Leadership Conference. More than 300 ABCUSD parents, school and community service groups, and volunteers gathered at the Cerritos Sheraton Hotel on Saturday, March 7, 2009 to celebrate this year's theme - *Mind and Body Connection*.

At a gathering of people with great concern about the economy and its impact on education, California Assembly Member Tony Mendoza and ABCUSD Superintendent, Dr. Gary Smuts, addressed the budget and what is being done to maintain academic excellence in the District. At lunch, entrepreneur and visually impaired business advocate, Brian Tom entertained and informed about how to help their students achieve amid unexpected challenges.

Throughout the day, community and district service groups helped attendees learn about resources in the community including:

- Safe and healthy after school activities at *Cerritos Parks and Recreation* headed by Sherri Titus and *Lakewood Parks and Recreation* headed by Valerie Frost;
- Drug and violence intervention from District Programs including *Safe Schools-Healthy Kids* headed by Terri Villa-McDowell, *Safe and Drug Free Schools* by Maryann Fong, *Alternative Options* with Debbie Webb, and *School and Community Partnerships* headed by Ann Griffo;
- Education enhancing activities through the *Migrant Education Program* headed by Maria Macias-Hoyo and *Magnet Schools* with Deputy Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu;
- District-wide *Child Development* activities headed by Mike McCoy;
- *Adult School* offerings for academics, ESL, enrichment and parent education headed by Principal Dr. Pao-Ling Guo;

- And additional enrichment opportunities through *ABC PTA Council* headed by Louise Dodson and educational tools from Bayyinah Shotwell at *MacMillan/McGraw Hill* publishers.

Participants gained valuable information at ten special workshops.

- *Pursuing Victory with Honor* featuring a panel of experts Dr. Gary Smuts- ABCUSD Superintendent, Dr. James Staunton- CIF Commissioner of Athletics and ABCUSD Coaches Dennis McReynolds and Suzanne Murphy – How good sportsmanship is changing interscholastic sports for good because Character Counts.
- *Beyond the Grades – The Millionaire Student* with luncheon speaker Brian Tom and his California Educational Centers Staff - How to help students get into college and jobs.
- *Nutrition & Children* presented by ABCUSD Nutrition Education Expert Dipa Shah-Patel – Introduction to healthy foods children actually eat in an interactive workshop.
- *The Cycle of Violence and Its Impact on Academic Achievements: What Can Be Done?* by Domestic Violence intervention expert, Don Copeland from Casa Youth Shelter.
- *Peace Builders* presented by Peace Ambassador, Linda Woodbury, provided information on how ABCUSD and other School Districts help students to be positive influences.
- *Technical Graduation Requirement* – Barbara Miller advised about the new requirements taking effect in the next year.
- *California High School Exit Examination* – presented by Assistant Superintendent, Valencia Mayfield and CAHSEE Coordinator, Sarah Halili about How parents can help students succeed on this crucial exam.
- *One Person Can Make A Difference – Go Green* - Representatives from Cerritos - Mike O’Grady, Lakewood – Lisa Novotny, and Artesia – Jose Hernandez discussed plans to Go Green in each city and how to participate.

- *Line Dancing for Movement and Health* - Fitness is fun with ABC Adult School fitness instructor, Trish LaCommare.

The event was topped off with a prize raffle including *Mind and Body Connection* themed gift baskets created by Parent Leadership Committee Volunteers, Gina Tate-Pulliam and Cathy Carter with items donated by local businesses.

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