

**Thursday, October 21, 2004**

### **COMMUNITY AND CHILD CARE CENTER OPENS AT HARBOR HILLS SITE**

On Wednesday, October 20th, Los Angeles County officials and the community celebrated the grand opening of a 12,000 square foot Community and Child Care Center at the 300-unit Harbor Hills public housing site in Lomita. The center – which includes an enclosed multi-purpose athletic court, a child care facility for 30-40 kids, conference rooms, and a Sheriff's community policing office – is the first such facility in the history of the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission (CDC), which serves as the County's Housing Authority.

The \$4 million center, located at the southwest corner of Western Avenue and Rancho Palos Verde Drive, will provide vital services for the site's approximately 800 residents that are not readily available in the adjacent community. Activities such as organized sports, recreation, community events, and educational and self-improvement workshops, will foster self-sufficiency for residents.

Don Knabe, chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, said, "This center will provide valuable services in a friendly and secure environment. Parents can now go to work and leave their young children in an on-site quality and affordable child care facility. They and their children also have a place to bond with fellow residents, recreate, and also develop skills that will help them achieve self-sufficiency."

After remarks from officials, attendees watched Supervisor Knabe officially open the shining new athletic court by flipping a switch that lowered the basketball rims on the court. He was joined by Nate Archibald, head coach of the Long Beach Jam professional basketball team and also an NBA Hall of Famer who grew up in public housing, and by Natasha Watley, star shortstop on the U.S. Olympic softball team that won the gold medal in 2004 and also a Southern California native and UCLA student-athlete.

The trio immediately tossed over a dozen basketballs to the scores of children who quickly ran onto the court and started shooting baskets. Archibald and Watley volunteer their time to help inner-city youth, serving as positive role models. They have arranged to have the Jam and UCLA provide free game tickets for the Harbor Hills youth and their families so they can enjoy the sporting events.

"Getting to this point was no easy feat," said Carlos Jackson, executive director of the CDC ([www.lacdc.org](http://www.lacdc.org)). "Over the years, we held a number of meetings with the community to ensure that the facility is sensitive to their concerns and the residents. We will continue our good neighbor policy. I thank all the parties and the Community Development Commission staff for working long and cooperatively on what will be a valuable Harbor Hills resource." Funds for the center came from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department's Public Housing Capital Fund and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs.

Watching the excited youth on the athletic court and the toddlers in the child care area, Janice Kelly, could not help but smile. As president of the Harbor Hills Resident Council, an elected body that represents residents, she knows that the demand is there. "This is the second oldest public housing site managed by the County Housing

Authority. It was built in 1941, over 60 years ago. The site needed to be modernized. The \$9 million site modernization project over the last five years helped. Today's new \$4 million center helps even more. We needed more space to meet, learn, and grow as individuals. It is a positive thing for everyone."