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Mothers & Babies are Homeless Too

‘Continuum of care’ programs help mothers, children regain their lives

San Diego, Calif. -- This Mother’s Day there are many homeless mothers getting the help they need to regain their independence at St. Vincent de Paul Village through a variety programs that help them become successful, self-sufficient citizens.

One such program is Baby Bucks, which supports Project SAFECHILD, an early identification and intervention program for children and their families residing at the Village. When parents complete classes and activities in Project SAFECHILD they earn Baby Bucks, which they exchange for hygiene products, toys and educational items.

Since September 2004, approximately 600 parents have received Baby Bucks, a program created by Ruth P. Newton, Ph.D., supervisor of Child and Family Track in Mental Health Services, and made possible by the donation of new items to Father Joe Carroll’s Mother’s Day drive.

“Parents can use Baby Bucks for infant, toddler and pre-school items through our Baby Bucks Catalog. Baby Bucks have proven to be highly motivational and popular with our residents,” says Connie Mullan, program assistant. “There is a large assortment of items for parents to choose from including bathtubs for infants, toys for toddlers, and puzzles and games for pre-schoolers. Family Bucks are also given for completion of many Project SAFECHILD classes and can be used to purchase fun activities for families.”

Project SAFECHILD services include ongoing prenatal care for mothers and for children age birth to 5; developmental assessments; and onsite interventions and community referrals. Speech and language assessments and individual therapy are provided by a speech pathologist. Multiple interventions are provided based upon the development assessments including parent/child dyadic therapy, child play therapy and family therapy. Group interventions include parent education, baby classes and speech enhancement groups for toddlers and pre-schoolers.

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Father Joe’s Villages® is a San Diego-based nonprofit that helps homeless neighbors in need regain their lives through a unique life-changing program that is nationally recognized and modeled for its effectiveness. Our groundbreaking approach to rehabilitation, known as the “University of the Human Spirit,” addresses the underlying causes of homelessness to break the cycle and help thousands of people become responsible, self-sufficient, productive citizens and pass their newfound independence and life skills on to their children and families. When we help one person, we help generations of families and communities.

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