



LAPD Officers Edward Moreno and Diane Reyes, left, along with Sgt. Eric Windham are responsible for bringing the holiday spirit, this year, to a Los Angeles family.

Chance Encounters with Cops Lead to Merry Christmas for LA Family

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(Dec. 21, 2001) Two warm-hearted LAPD officers and their colleagues from the MTA's Transit Group are making sure a Los Angeles family will have a Merry Christmas this year.

It all began with a chance encounter, last October, when officers Diane Reyes

and Edward Moreno noticed two young boys hanging around the Union Station mezzanine on a school day.

The younger of the two started crying when the officers questioned them, but Reyes and Moreno were able to learn that the boys – 11-year-old Gavin and 12-year-old Star Arvizo – were on their way with their 15-year-old sister, Davellin, to visit their mother. She was having surgery that day at Kaiser Hospital in Hollywood.

The officers' hearts immediately went out to the kids and, with their lieutenant's permission, they piled the youngsters into a squad car and drove to the hospital.

En route, Gavin revealed to the officers that he is in remission from cancer. The previous March, doctors had removed a 16-pound tumor, his spleen and a kidney – and he proudly showed them the scar to prove it.

In the following weeks, Reyes and Moreno often exchanged greetings with the Arvizo children as they rode the Metro Red Line. Gavin and Star attend a magnet school in Hollywood and Davellin is a student at Hollywood High.

Another chance encounter

Then, another chance encounter. One day last week, Officer Reyes noticed a woman making her way on crutches through a station. It was Janet Arvizo, the children's mother. Unemployed, she was on her way to a job interview.

Over the weekend, Reyes and Moreno – who have children of their own – decided they had to do something for the Arvizos. On Thursday, they dropped by the family's apartment to find a Christmas tree that had been donated by the LAPD's Hollenbeck Division officers, but no ornaments. And no gifts.

The officers bought a stock of ornaments with their own money, then talked to their sergeant, Eric Windham, about further help for the family.

So, at roll call this morning, Windham asked his troops to look into their hearts and their pockets for the Arvizos. They did, and out came some \$200.

It was enough to buy some gifts for the kids...and a little left over for a holiday dinner. The MTA also contributed school supplies for the

youngsters.

The Arvizos will have a Merry Christmas this year. Thanks somewhat to good luck. But, thanks mostly to the efforts of two LAPD officers with big hearts.

[Back to MTA Report](#)