

Local Grinch 'Steals Christmas' from Metro Blue Line Passenger

- LASD Deputies collect cash, MTA donates monthly pass to crime victim. [See article below.](#)



PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

New Metro monthly pass for Metro Blue Line patron Fidelina Lopez-Hernandez, center, replaces pass stolen at the Firestone Station on Dec. 21. LASD deputies collected donations to replace the stolen cash. Pictured with Lopez-Hernandez, are, from left, LASD Team Leader David Vargas, Director of Rail Operations Jess Diaz, LASD Sgt. Allan Stanny and Rail General Manager Gerald Francis.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Jan. 2, 2003) 'Twas the Saturday before Christmas, and already dark at 5:45 p.m. when Metro Blue Line patron Fidelina Lopez-Hernandez held the elevator open for a passenger, who was making a mad dash across the Metro Blue Line Firestone Station.

But she didn't get a polite "thank you" from the breathless passenger. Instead, the young man robbed the hapless woman when the doors closed and exited in a blur, taking her purse and its contents with him.

The woman, a senior citizen on her way to do some holiday shopping, was not harmed, but her nerves, along with her plans for the holidays, were shattered. Now stranded, her Metro Pass and \$143 dollars in cash had disappeared with the purse.

As soon as the details from the

LASD deputies replace cash stolen from Metro Blue Line patron Fidelina Lopez-Hernandez on Christmas eve...



Fidelina Lopez-Hernandez arrives at Gateway Building on New Year's eve with LASD Lt. Ernie Gjendem ...

incident report filtered into the Transit Services Bureau, LASD deputies wanted to right this wrong.

Sheriff's Transit Sergeant Ann Ramirez immediately organized a collection among the deputies, reported Lt. Mike Parker. "She couldn't bear to let this particular Grinch get his way."

Spirit of the Season

"The true spirit of the season appeared here at the Transit Services Bureau when LASD deputies Cynthia Cobos and Jose Belmares picked up Ms. Lopez-Hernandez at her home on Christmas eve and brought her to the Rail Operations Center," said Parker.



... and relates the incident to LASD Team Leader David Vargas and Rail Operations Director Jess Diaz.



When she arrived, unaware of the gift about to be bestowed, deputies gathered and gave her \$143 in cash.

"Ms. Lopez-Hernandez' reaction made it all worthwhile," said Parker. "She was overjoyed. Her smile, and words of respect and appreciation showed everyone that the spirit of the season lives on. As she said that day, 'Feliz Navidad.' "

The holiday spirit reappeared on New Year's Eve.

Again, deputies arrived at the woman's home on Gramercy Place in Los Angeles and brought her to the Gateway Building. There, surrounded by deputies, Rail General Manager Gerald Francis presented her with a Metro Pass for January.

"We want you to have a *happy* new year," GM Francis told the smiling woman.

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