


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net](#) (web)

## Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom](#) (web)

[CEO Hotline](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance](#)  
(web)

[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/  
Library](#)
[Metro Cafe](#) (pdf)

[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Retirement  
Round-up](#)

## Metro Info

[Strategic Plan](#) (pdf)

[Org Chart](#) (pdf)

[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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[E-Mail Webmaster](#)

## Authorities Locate Mother of 4-year-old Found in Subway

By KIM SIM

(Jan. 27, 2004) Authorities have located the mother of a 4-year-old boy found alone, but safe, at the entrance to a Metro Red Line station.

The boy, discovered outside the Wilshire/Western station near Koreatown, Sunday afternoon, has been identified and members of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau have met with his mother.

The youngster will remain in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services while Sheriff's deputies investigate the incident.

Normally, a child in protective custody will not be released until a department caseworker determines that the child can and should be returned to the parents, said Det. Sgt. Luis Nunez of the Transit Services Bureau.

## Custodian discovered boy

Aurora Amador, a subway custodian, discovered the boy at 4:10 p.m., Sunday, and contacted the Metro Rail dispatcher, according to phone logs. Miguel Banuelos, a rail transportation operations supervisor, then alerted the Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff's deputies arriving at the scene could not determine either the boy's name or address. Because he had not been reported missing, deputies had to turn to both the English- and Spanish-language media for help in finding the family.

They also requested the assistance of the Department of Children and Family Services.

Early Monday morning, a breakthrough.

The boy's aunt saw his picture on the news and called the mother, who called the Sheriff's Department.

## Boy was with uncle

Laura Cuellar, the boy's mother, told authorities she last saw him walking with an uncle at around 4 p.m., Sunday, after a family barbeque, said Lt. Mike Parker of the Transit Services Bureau.

Cuellar, who lives about eight blocks from the station, said she went to bed at 9:30 that night without knowing her son was gone.

Parker said it was unusual to find someone who had not yet been reported missing. "We deal more with found, not missing persons."

"We're happy that we identified the boy and that we located the mom," Nunez said. "(But) the investigation into this matter is ongoing."

