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Travels with Bridgette: Preschool Kids Learn Rail Safety

By RICH MORALLO

(April 5, 2005) Metro's Bridgette Thomas, surrounded by 30 preschool youngsters, turned on her portable PA system and spoke into the microphone, "Children, remember to stay close to your mothers at all times."

As the children nudged closer to their parents, Thomas – a records and information coordinator – smiled and motioned the group towards the middle of the platform at the Del Amo Metro Blue Line station.

The southbound train arrived and when it departed with the young travelers and their parents, Thomas was strolling along the aisle to make sure everyone was safe in their seats.

Thomas was escorting children from Good Blessings Head Start that day on a trip to Long Beach.

"Traveling with the group allowed me to represent Metro and to interact with children," said Thomas, who also volunteers to manage her son's football and basketball teams. "Dealing with children is one of the things I love to do."

A safety reminder

Before they caught the train, Thomas went over the safety guidelines with the Metro Rail visitors, who had walked to the station from their nearby school. The same group had earlier received a classroom visit from other Metro representatives who talked to the students about

Bridgette Thomas is a records and information coordinator in the Records and Mail Services Department.



Children from the Good Blessings Head Start group caught the Metro Blue Line at the Del Amo station.

safety near trains and at train stations.

Four Sheriff's deputies and fare inspectors travelled with Thomas to Long Beach and later escorted the head start group back to the Del Amo station.



"This train is faster than the bus," laughed Carla Celestrain, one of the students. Teacher Matilda Izmajdobich, a first time rider, wished the train traveled to more places.

Thomas, who typically spends her day conducting records inventory evaluations, believes that Metro should continue to interact with the community.

"At Metro we care about the areas we service," Thomas said, "and the more the community is educated about Metro, the safer their travel will be."

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