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Almost 1,500 employees, family members and guests gathered in the concourse of the Universal Amphitheater to enjoy Metro's agency-wide picnic.



PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON

Metro Family Day Meets Approval of Employees, Families

- Kids and adults enjoyed the outing at Universal Studios

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(April 19, 2005) A warm, sunny day. Red- and blue-checkered tablecloths. Plenty of food and fun for everyone. It was Metro Family Day at Universal Studios.

Almost 1,500 employees, family members and guests crowded into a grassy area just outside the Universal Amphitheater to enjoy the event. It was the first agency-wide picnic in recent memory and spirits were high.

"This is nice," said retiree LaVerne Payton, who came in from Palmdale and was gathered around a sunny table with 11 other members of her family. The former East Valley Division 15 bus operator remembered agency picnics in Chatsworth and added, "I think we should do something every year."

Scenes from Metro Family Day



Jennifer Salamanca greets arrivals at Metro ticket table. Below, Div. 1 Operator David Martinez and wife Diane carbo-load.

Many employees came early, checked in outside the main gate, and strolled through the theme park, playing the carnival-style games or boarding the rides. An orange Metro wristband issued at check-in allowed free entrance to the theme park and a coupon ensured a discount of 10 percent on park merchandise.

When a good crowd had gathered in the picnic grounds, they were welcomed by Deputy CEO John Catoe. CEO Roger Snoble was at home recovering from neck surgery earlier in the week.

Burgers and hot dogs

Many of the kids didn't know which to do first – participate in the games to win a prize or line up for the food. Burgers, foot-long hot dogs and barbecued chicken topped a menu that included cole slaw and potato salad, piles of fruit, cookies, brownies and other desserts.

Senior Legal Secretary Delfina Rios of the County Counsel's office brought her 9-year-old twins, Jose and Luis, and her 9-year-old granddaughter, Jasmine, in from Upland. She held 23-month-old granddaughter, Julia, on her lap while an artist painted a yellow flower on the little girl's cheek.

"The luncheon was really good," said Rios, who was visiting Universal Studios for the first time. "The kids liked the games and we took pictures with Sponge Bob, Spiderman and Shrek."

Metro Bus Operator Jack Dedrick of Division 8 brought his daughters Danielle, 8, and Melanie, 12. The girls played games, had their faces decorated and enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

"This was fun because you could take your whole family," said Dedrick. "It was pretty good for a first-time deal."

'Nice show for the kids'

Ernest Scotti, secretary of UTU Local



Deputy CEO John Catoe relaxes with Ron Jue, Fran Curbello and a Universal Studios event planner. Below, Div 10 Operator Francisco Martinez with wife Emeteria and sons Abraham and Israel.



Metro kids tap celebrities for photo op. Below, OCI TOS Anthony Salcido with daughter Angelina.



1565 and a bus operator at Division 15, brought members of his family. "It was a nice show for the kids, music, good food. It was a good effort – a good job done by the MTA."

Lewis McKellar, a West Hollywood Division 7 operator and former UTU official, agreed. "It was invigorating for the employees. I think it will increase morale."

Mattie Jones, a computer operations analyst, her husband, Cornelius and granddaughter, ZZ, enjoyed the Family Day event and their visit to the theme park, but had to leave earlier than planned. Jones was on call for ITS and had to go to work.

"It was a nice place, the food and the people were nice at Universal Studios," she said. "I had a very, very, very enjoyable time. I will come again if they have it."

Credit Roll: Metro Family Day was staffed by Danielle Boutier , Jennifer Salamanca , Alicia Rodriguez , Fran Curbello and interns Crystal Martel and Sasa Bahadori.



Metro Cafe grill chef Juan Carlos Hernandez enjoys other people's cooking. Below, Metro kids compete in marshmellow race.



Fe Alcid-Little tours theme park attractions. Below, Martin Batistelli and son Nicholas take in Water World.



Div. 10 Operator Berlina Looney, at right, brought along family members Bernard and Angela Payton.

