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Gift-giving drive volunteer Veronica Hargrove signs up Communications Manager Bill Heard for a gift pledge.



## Metro's Annual Gift-Giving Drive Gets Underway

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 2, 2005) This year will mark Metro's 10th annual Holiday Gift Giving Drive for the Fred Jordan Mission for Skid Row Kids and coordinators are making up lists and checking them twice as gifts and donations begin to pour into the collection center.

A group of volunteers from the Gateway Building and the divisions are busy collecting unwrapped gifts and toys for the Fred Jordan Mission in downtown Los Angeles and arranging for delivery.

Norfina Joves and Tashai Smith, from the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department, are coordinating the annual effort. They take over from former employee Bessie Rush-Johnson, who had been the Gift Giving Task Force coordinator since 1996.

"The gift giving drive is in transition right now, " said Smith, who is already planning to kick next year's drive into high gear by enlisting a round of volunteers for a gift giving task force.

This year, the gifts will be collected without the fanfare of previous years, when Santa and his helpers would load the gifts onto decorated buses in the Plaza, cheered on by employees and children from the Gateway Child Center. However, this will not damper spirit of giving for those in need, says Smith.

Gift tags are available during office hours from Norfina Joves on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor, cubicle 95.



Gift tag comes with instructions.

Smith reminds gift-givers to attach the gift tag to the unwrapped present. "If you haven't signed up for a gift tag, you can still bring a gift," she said.

The volunteers are seeking donations of new unwrapped gifts that can include an abundance of suitable items such as blankets, toy cars and dolls, games, pencils and paper, stuffed animals, footballs, soccer balls and basketballs, rain gear, back packs and even canned goods.

Monetary donations also are accepted, says Smith. Checks may be made out to "Fred Jordan Mission."

Gifts must be delivered by Friday, Dec. 9. Volunteers will point out the drop-off location on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor.

The gifts will be picked up by the Fred Jordan Mission on Monday, Dec. 12, and will be distributed at the mission's Skid Row Annual Christmas Celebration on Sunday, Dec. 18, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.