

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

Resources

[Safety](#)[Pressroom \(web\)](#)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)[Policies](#)[Training](#)[Help Desk](#)[Intranet Policy](#)

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After devastating fire that destroyed her family's Long Beach apartment, Metro Bus Operator Monique Henson can count her blessings.

gasoline cards, and money. One operator bought each child an outfit.

The family received \$2,000 in cash, \$750 from Division 10 alone.

According to Caroline Howard, a transportation operations supervisor at Division 10, Henson received some good news Jan. 3. She is being promoted to full-time bus operator beginning Jan. 8 and will continue to work from Division 10. Henson had worked as a part-time bus operator since May 2006.

Looking for an apartment

Henson and her children now live with her fiancée's mother in Compton. She has begun looking for an apartment.

Henson said she was surprised by the amount of donations. "I didn't know how to take it. 'Cause I'm usually helping other people, not other people helping me; so I didn't know how to feel about it."

Henson was picking up her children from after-school daycare when the fire broke out around 4 p.m.

Metro Operator Surprised by Amount of Donations after Apartment Fire

- Co-workers' generosity allowed family to celebrate Christmas

By NED RACINE

(Jan. 5, 2007) Surprised by the amount of donations her family received, Metro's Monique Henson and her three children managed to celebrate Christmas despite being burned out of their Long Beach apartment Dec. 8.

The deadly fire in the 158-unit Paradise Garden Apartments caused two fatalities and 26 injuries. The Long Beach fire caused \$3 million in damages. It also caused Henson, 26, to lose everything: clothing, furnishings, photos, toys, and other belongings.

Because Gateway Division 10 pitched in to gather donations for Henson, her 6-year-old daughter, Traniquv, and 8-year-old twins, Maliq and Domoniqv, the family received gift cards from Toys R' Us (her children's favorite donation),

"They were scared," she said of her children. "They were just glad they weren't there. They missed their toys but now they have new ones, so they're not worried about it anymore."

"I'm really grateful, and I thank everybody," Henson said.

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