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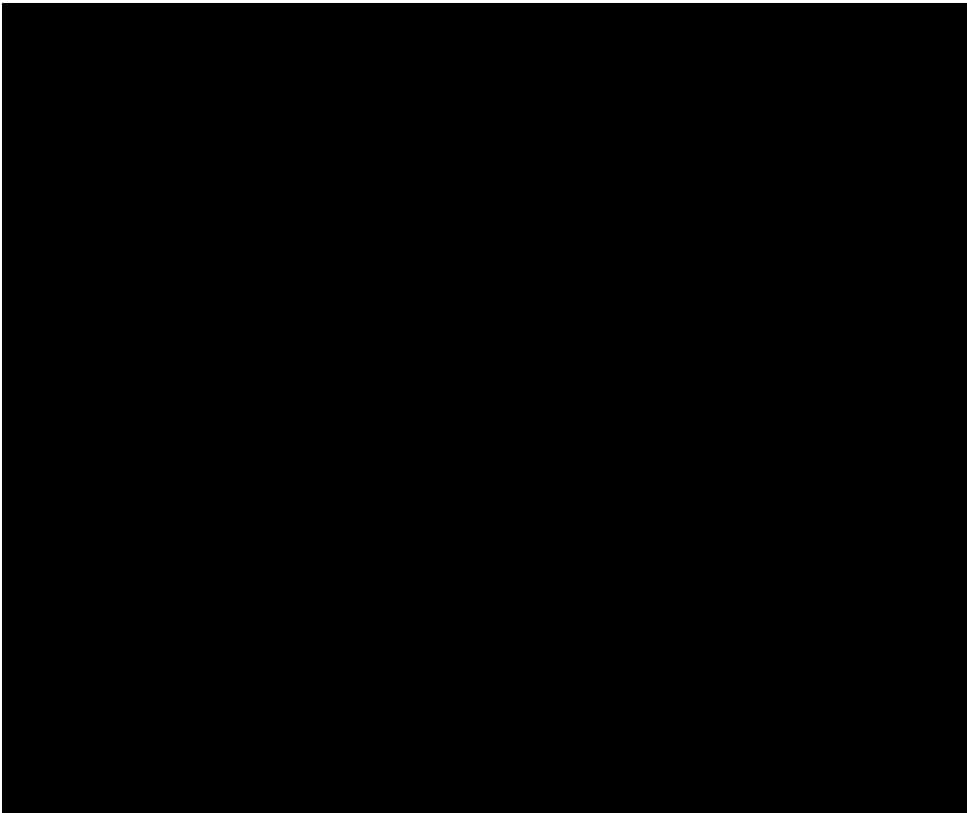
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Video by Rich Morallo. Not hooked up to YouTube at work? Watch at home at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1AbWM1Yn4Y> NOTE: This YouTube link is being sent to you for the purpose of viewing the Metro video only. Metro employees are subject to the Employee Code of Conduct that generally restricts the use of company time/equipment to conducting Metro business. Please click on icon above to view the video.

Weathering Difficult Times Resources Conference: Metro promotes Wheelchair Marking and Safety Strap Program for Children’s Hospital

By Rich Morallo
Community Relations / Volunteer Coordinator

(March 2, 2010) Representing the Wheelchair Safety Program of Metro's ADA Compliance Unit, Juanita Cook is pleasant but direct. "Good Morning," Cook greets a visitor to the Metro information table set up Feb. 22 at the California Endowment Center. "Do you know anyone in a wheel chair?" she promptly asks.

Cook knows that visits to the table by attendees of the resources fair hosted by Children's Hospital of Los Angeles may be brief and she could have only seconds to pitch the Wheelchair Marking and Safety Strap Program.

This morning, however, many of the participants attending the fair geared at children with special needs and their families are interested in Cook's safety program.

"Metro offers expert pre-marking of tie-down locations on wheel chairs

and other mobility devices or new safety straps for the tie-down locations," said Cook who has used a wheel chair herself since 1999.

Cook explained that bright yellow tape is used to identify parts of a wheel chair or mobility device where a strap or hook can tie down the chair inside the bus and this helps an operator to quickly secure the patron for safe travel.

Technicians go to appointments at hospitals and senior center facilities where they evaluate and mark individual wheel chairs and mobility devices such as scooters. "We also brief the participants how bus operators will assist in lifting folding seats and attaching tie-down hooks to the chair's safety straps," Cook said.

In charge of an aggressive campaign, Cook aims to mark a thousand wheelchairs in the next five months.

"We want to help our patrons feel more comfortable, secure and safe," said Cook.