Cerritos College Hosts Chivas USA’s “Parent and Me Soccer Clinic”

Program Teaches Preschoolers Skills and Stresses Importance of Exercise

Event Held as Part of Efforts to Fight Childhood Obesity

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NORWALK, Calif. – May 24, 2012 – Nearly 70 preschoolers from the Cerritos College Child Development Center participated in a Chivas USA Parent and Me Soccer Clinic today that was organized by Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) as part of efforts to emphasize the importance of exercise, and drive home the message to parents about the importance of fitness.

The event, which took place at Cerritos College, brought the preschoolers out of their classrooms from the campus’ Child Development Center to a nearby Fitness Field where they learned basic soccer skills from Chivas affiliated coaches. Laughter resonated as the children dribbled, ran and kicked the balls to the delight of many parents in attendance.

“It’s important to teach the kids the importance of health and wellness,” said Alicia Mendoza, senior manager of Business Development for Chivas USA. “If we teach kids to eat better and exercise, they’ll have a better life. Soccer is a natural fit.”

With obesity rates among children in Los Angeles County causing much concern, Celia C. Ayala, CEO of LAUP, noted that the partnership with Chivas USA aimed to spread the message about the importance of exercise and healthful eating starting with children at a young age.

“We’re thrilled that because of this partnership, preschoolers learned more about new healthy living techniques,” she said. “The event also encouraged families to role model healthy habits for their children, as well as eat healthful food, drink healthy beverages and start exercising.”

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Hanna Parklee, the mother of participating preschooler Ryan who participated in the clinic, praised efforts to combat childhood obesity by stressing the importance of exercise and healthful eating. “It’s very important,” she explained. “Health and exercise is one of the most important things for these kids to learn at this age.”

California’s childhood obesity rates remain dangerously high, threatening the long-term health of children throughout the state, according to a study by a UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the California Center for Public Health Advocacy study released in November, 2011. About 42 percent of children in Los Angeles County were obese or overweight in 2010, compared to 38 percent statewide, the study said.

Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college’s district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 180 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their course of studies, and enrollment currently averages 23,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at http://www.cerritos.edu/.  

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