



## Voter Education: Supervisor Candidates Offer Views on Child Care

In June, voters in the Second Supervisorial District will choose the person to fill the post being vacated by the retirement of



Yvonne B. Burke. It's a high-stakes position that could significantly reshape the region's political power base.

The candidates running are: Martin Luther King Aubrey, Antonio Alvarez, Delaney Smith, Jr., Bernard C. Parks, Florian Thompson, Mark Ridley-Thomas, Thomas Neusom, Drew Fenton and Morris Griffin.

Crystal Stairs contacted the candidates regarding their positions on child care and working families. Three responded. Their abridged responses are below and their full responses can be found on [www.crystalstairs.org](http://www.crystalstairs.org).

For information on the June 3 ballot, go to [www.smartvoter.org/2008/06/03/ca/la](http://www.smartvoter.org/2008/06/03/ca/la).

### The 3 Questions

1. What is your history on issues of early care and education policy?
2. Social programs that impact quality-of-life outcomes for children are being severely impacted by

budgetary restraints. How will you make sure that policy and funding match the verbal claims for commitment to better outcomes for children in Los Angeles County?

3. The Department of Public Social Services

reports that CalWORKs caseloads have declined by 47% since 1996, while the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy recently reported that 60% of working families still live in poverty. How will you ensure that these

families receive policy attention?

### Disclaimer

The responses provided do not reflect the position of Crystal Stairs. These are the words of the candidates.



Los Angeles City Councilman

## Bernard Parks

### Question 1

From a public resources standpoint and for the overall quality of life of a community, the very best investment we can make is in child care and early childhood education. That is documented most recently

*continued on page 2*



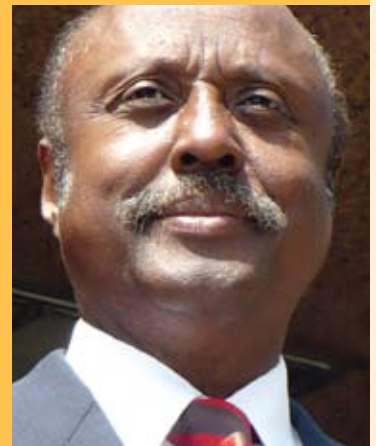
California State Senator

## Mark Ridley-Thomas

### Question 1

I am consistently committed to supporting early education and child care programs throughout Los Angeles and the state. Early education provides an opportunity for children to have access to high quality child

*continued on page 2*



Los Angeles Physician

## Dr. Delaney Smith, Jr.

### Question 1

My history with early child care is quite personal. I was in an educational "nursery school" before the term preschool had come into wide usage. I created the first urgent care center in Los Angeles in 1983, and family

*continued on page 3*

# Mayfield Shows Crystal Stairs the Money

On December 5, students from Pasadena's Mayfield School arrived at the Crystal Stairs to meet the children of SAGE and deliver a check for \$6000. The Mayfield children raised the money for SAGE through their annual walk-a-thon. During the visit, the two groups exchanged gifts with each other; Mayfield made a bookshelf for SAGE and SAGE made a reading chair for Mayfield. All the children had fun eating pizza and participating in making crafts.

# Crystal Stairs Hosts 47th District Health Commission

On Friday, March 28, 2008, Crystal Stairs hosted Speaker-Elect Karen Bass's 47th District Health Commission's Service Provider Roundtable. Over 65 service providers from across the district jammed into the conference room to talk about proposed budget cuts to health and human services, to map out strategies for action against these cuts and to begin the work of developing a Service Provider Directory for the district. Many of the families and children the service providers serve will be impacted by the proposed cuts to the state budget.

## Parks

*continued from page 1*  
by report titled "A Step Up, But Not Out" prepared for Crystal Stairs and by various reports of the First 5 California Children and Families Commission. If I learned anything as a police officer for nearly forty years, it is that an arrest of a juvenile more often than not illustrates a failure in a social service system that spends far more to incarcerate than to educate and prevent. Recent studies show, for example, that it costs \$44,000 a year to keep a gang member convicted of a crime in state prison and \$3,000 a year to keep a youngster out of a gang in the first place. As Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department and as a member of the city council, I have strongly supported services and programs oriented to children, and as a supervisor I will have even more opportunity to do so given the various departments that relate to children's services as well as the work of the First 5 Commission.

### Question 2

The best way to assure priority funding for priority programs is through the adoption of financial policies that guide budget decisions from year to year, especially in times of fiscal constraints. As chair of the City Council Budget & Finance Committee, I have done that for the City of Los Angeles. Under the city's financial policies, for example, 15% of the LAPD's budget must be spent on crime prevention programs, and other priorities are similarly laid out. I will do the same as a supervisor, and certainly child care and related services are priorities that must be recognized and honored when budget times are tough.

### Question 3

Again, "A Step Up, But Not Out" makes the compelling case that ending welfare does not mean ending poverty. Given the demographics of the Second Supervisorial District, attacking unemployment has to be a very high priority, but addressing the needs of the working poor is close to it. The first step in addressing that problem is to acknowledge that it exists. In my judgment, while assuring that a supportive safety net exists to provide essential services, we must aggressively pursue economic development opportunities and the opportunities that development can offer to escape the confinement of poverty-level jobs.

## Ridley-Thomas

*continued from page 1*  
care programs, while families can benefit from subsidized child care programs to help them work or complete their education.

In my work throughout the State Assembly and Senate, I have consistently supported legislation that would improve the quality of early education. During my tenure on the Los Angeles City Council, I created education and intervention programming for middle school students.

I have opposed budget cuts to the early education and child care programs that have been proposed since my service in the legislature.

I have supported efforts such as Universal Preschool that help expand services and will improve the access to high quality programs.

Last year, I authored SB 680, intended to provide training and support to child care providers, so that they are better-equipped and confident about serving children with special needs.

### Question 2

The hallmark of my career as a legislator has been based on empowerment. The County of Los Angeles is large and services millions of people. My role is to ensure that there is a cohesive and coordinated delivery system that maximizes current resources and is effective in serving children and families. I am an advocate of ensuring that our critical programs are adequately funded.

### Question 3

Welfare-to-work programs are currently under a lot of scrutiny at the federal level. I will work on this issue from several fronts:

- Support and insist that federal guidelines provide counties with maximum flexibility to deal with unique and challenging circumstances that keep people from participating in their welfare-to-work plans.

- Ensure that safety nets given to families are preserved and supported.

- Ensure that child care, as well as other supportive services, are adequately supported and funded.

- Review and support proposals that reduce administrative and policy barriers that compromise welfare-to-work participation rates in the county.

- Help reduce administrative burdens.

## Smith

*continued from page 1*

medicine and pediatrics were a significant part of my medical practice. I would commit substantial resources into early development programs for our youth since children are our most important resource!

### Question 2

There is considerable waste in government spending. The Federal Kinship Caregiver Act requires that DCFS make real attempts to preferentially place children with family members. In what one newspaper has described as a "cash for kids scheme" (L.A. County is number ONE in the nation), federal incentives for removing children from families in return for federal allocations at a profit to counties must be eliminated. In 2006, 76,000 children were in foster care in our county. It is estimated that 50% of them could have remained in their families with a responsible, willing family member. With needed reductions in inappropriate foster care placements, more money could be available for child care assistance to families in need, and child care agencies could be better funded for the valued services performed.

Instead of costly incarcerations, emphasis should be on medical treatment and rehabilitation of drug users and those with psychiatric illness for which prisons now serve as a revolving door at a cost to taxpayers of as much as \$100,000/year. The savings could be redirected to vital, worthwhile programs that enable rehabilitated citizens to obtain an education and work as productive citizens who earn their way in society.

### Question 3

I would ensure that working families that are impoverished are protected by policies that favor financial support for agencies that support children and families who are poor...by working with such foster care reform advocates as Speaker of the Assembly Karen Bass and others. I have personal experience in effecting positive change at DCFS. My writings as a forensic expert drew attention to the extent of wrongful, inappropriate foster placements ... directly resulting in additional training in sensitivity, ethics and current law for social workers.

## Crystal Stairs Gears Up for Dancing Under the Stars 2

In 2006, Crystal Stairs hosted its Dancing Under the Stars event. The fundraiser raised \$120,000 for Crystal Stairs' Nickerson Gardens SAGE Center.

This year we are hosting Dancing Under the Stars 2. The event promises more auction items, more dancing, more stars, more fun, and hopefully more funds raised to support Crystal Stairs and the important work we do.

■ There will be more silent auction experiences on which to bid...*Pauletta Washington's Oscar dress, time with a personal fitness trainer, the chance to meet Snoop Dogg, an "all access pass" at a celebrity charity tournament, a makeover at a celebrity salon...and the firemen are back. There is something for everyone.*

■ Live music with dancing and dance instruction...swing, disco and more...

■ Fabulous food and libations...

■ Stories of success from some of our parents and child care providers...

Get your dancing shoes and your checkbooks ready. On **Saturday, June 21**, we will be dancing for dollars to support Crystal Stairs.



*Happy faces on the winners of one of our auction items: lunch with local firemen at the station. Scorching!*

## Crystal Stairs Holds 6th Legislative Briefing

On February 20, Crystal Stairs hosted its 6th Annual Legislative Policy Briefing and Breakfast. The event has become a "must-attend" for county, state and federal representatives from the various districts that represent our service area.

This was a very important year for the agency to hold this event. It provided an opportunity for legislative staff to fully understand the implications of the proposed state and federal budget cuts and for Crystal Stairs to reinforce the importance of child care support for poor and working poor families.

While it may seem like a subject removed from everyday people, government budgets and laws are very important for all of us. They represent our priorities as taxpayers. Deep cuts that take away support for children in low-income families are untenable. Thousands of children will lose access to child care, health care and other social services.

Thank you to all who attended this year's event and made it a success.

## Dates to Remember

- May 2—Concert by retired LA Philharmonic orchestra member Bob Watt for Community Pre-Kindergarten and SAGE: 4305 Degnan Blvd., 90008; 11 a.m.
- June 21—Dancing under the Stars 2: Wallis Annenberg Science Center, Exposition Park; 6–10 p.m. Call 626-791-3847 for tickets and information.



*SAGE children try out their runway walks with fashion from long time supporter HEIR Apparel.*

## Move Over Project Runway, Here Comes HEIR

On Sunday, October 14, 2007, Crystal Stairs participated in the 1st Annual HEIR Street Fair. The street fair was an opportunity to highlight businesses in the fashion corridor and support local non-profits. There was a children's fashion show, food, live music and entertainment. Partial proceeds raised from the event went to SAGE.



### Crystal Stairs, Inc.

5110 West Goldleaf Circle, Suite 150  
Los Angeles, California 90056  
[www.crystalstairs.org](http://www.crystalstairs.org)

#### INSIDE:

### Candidates for L.A. County Supervisor: Find Out Their Views

#### ALSO:

- HEIR Apparel, p. 4
- Mayfield School, p. 2
- Legislative Briefing, p. 3
- Resource Library, p. 4
- Dancing Once Again, p. 3
- District Health, p. 2
- Coming Events, p. 3

## Resource Library

The Resource and Referral Department has recently renovated its Resource Library. Adjacent to its Leimert Park Village office and in the heart of our community, the Library is one of our more exciting and important efforts for child care providers and other early childhood professionals.

The Library serves as a lending outlet, a place where child care providers, students and other professionals in the early childhood field can access high-quality equipment and educational materials.

Many of these items can be inaccessible due to high cost and/or space limitations, which prevent the availability of a full range of materials for curriculum-based activities. This newly-renovated community treasure is one of the many ways Crystal Stairs, Inc. is working to bridge the gap between access to resources and quality child care services.

*R & R staff and children from our Community Pre-Kindergarten project enjoy the patio next to our Resource Library.*

