

## 'Celebrate being a kid'

The first-ever event of its kind at LeRoy Haynes Center in La Verne – to bring together community partners, families, alumni and more to light two miles of holiday lights and make holidays special for the kids.

A project that started as an attempt to bring smiles to the faces of the kids at LeRoy Haynes Center in La Verne is scheduled to unfold on Friday, December 3, with the lighting of the holiday lights along Baseline Road in La Verne and throughout the campus in the first-ever event of its kind in the 64-year history of the facility.

"In these difficult times – and the holidays are always difficult for our kids – we decided that this was a good way to bring family spirit – and spirit from throughout the community – into the lives of our children," said LeRoy Haynes

President & CEO Dan Maydeck. "Our volunteer planning committee literally jumped on the concept and ran with it and, when December 3 comes and we finally throw the switch for the lights, we're going to make an evening of it."

He said the evening's festivities will include everything needed for the holiday spirit – hors d'oeuvres, drinks for all ages, music, a raffle and lots of excitement.

The event is scheduled from 4 to 7 p.m. and the holiday lights will be turned on at 6:30 p.m. (Ceremonies begin at 6 p.m.) The lights will remain on each night

throughout the holiday season.

Residents from throughout the East San Gabriel Valley, the Inland Empire and beyond are participating in the event, helping sponsor the holidays for the kids, and generally just getting involved in the overall effort, Maydeck added.

"For many of our children the holidays are a very difficult time," Maydeck said. He added that with the help and support of the community "we will make this one of the best holidays ever."

The dual-phase program started last October 9 when more than

100 volunteers installed some two miles of holiday lights.

"It should be spectacular on December 3 when we actually throw the switch for the first time," Maydeck said.

"We invite and encourage support from the public for this event as it will not only make wonderful holiday memories for our kids but will also help us sustain the much needed programs we provide to our special population of children," he added.

**Public invited to participate, bring entire family**

Maydeck encouraged supporters to bring the entire family, adding that Santa was expected to be on hand with a photographer for pictures.

In addition to the holiday lights, numerous corporate and community donations for the lawn display include everything from eight animated reindeer and a North Pole scene with nine-foot tall bears to an inflatable snowman, a polar bear, a manger scene complete with bales of hay, a Santa and more.

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Also donated for the evening were a popcorn machine, cotton candy machine and photos with Santa.

Ontario Refrigeration is the title sponsor for the event. Major sponsors are Southland Data Processing and Stellar Business Bank. Committee Chairperson of the project is Dena Garvin-Smart, a Board member at LeRoy Haynes and Senior Vice President and Administrative Officer of Stellar Business Bank in Covina.

The lighting event was coordinated and sponsored by The Christmas Light Pros of La Verne, a professional holiday lighting company that sponsors one lighting project at no cost each year ([www.thechristmaslightpros.com](http://www.thechristmaslightpros.com)).

For more information on sponsorship opportunities, contact the LeRoy Haynes Center at (909) 593-2581 or visit the web site at [www.leroyhaynes.org](http://www.leroyhaynes.org). LeRoy Haynes Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible to the full extent authorized by law (Tax I.D. #95-1506150).

### **About LeRoy Haynes Center**

The LeRoy Haynes Center provides specialized treatment and educational services to children with special needs relating to emotional development, autism, Asperger's Disorder, learning disabilities, neglect and abandonment.

It was founded in October 1946 by LeRoy Haynes, a former chaplain at the Fred Nellis Youth Authority in Whittier, as a way to help many of the troubled boys he served through intervention and treatment in a home-like setting.

The group home facility has grown from its initial 10 residents to six cottages, each housing 12 children. Mental health treatment services are provided to every resident.

The Haynes Education Center, a non-public school founded in 1989 as a companion to the group home facility, initially provided schooling to the children of what was formerly LeRoy Boys Home. It has grown to serve not only the children who live on campus but the community as a whole, accepting children (boys and girls) from 14 school districts throughout Southern California.

Credentialed teachers working in a highly structured environment address curriculum as well as learning disabilities including autism, emotional challenges and developmental disabilities.

The entire facility serves 350 to 400 children annually through its three basic programs – residential, Haynes Education Center and mental health.

For more information, contact the LeRoy Haynes Center at 233 West Baseline Road, La Verne, CA 91750, (909) 593-2581, or visit the web site at [www.leroyhaynes.org](http://www.leroyhaynes.org).