Children & Families
Commission of Orange County

Agenda Item No. 5
November 7, 2007 Meeting

DATE: October 29, 2007

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Michael M. Ruane, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Follow-Up Report on Childhood Obesity Prevention Programs: Sesame Street Exhibit Evaluation and New Opportunities

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SUMMARY:
The Children and Families Commission of Orange County was the local sponsor of Sesame Street's The Body exhibit that was on display for seven months at the Discovery Science Center in Santa Ana. The Morey Group, a national market research and evaluation company, recently completed an evaluation to assess the impact of the exhibit. To continue the positive momentum created by the partnership, Sesame outreach materials supporting physical fitness and nutrition as well as early literacy programs, are being distributed in Orange County. A statewide partnership with Westfield shopping malls could also result in a new venue to promote Commission programs with Sesame materials.

Sesame Street Body Exhibit Evaluation and Impact Report
Sesame Street's interactive exhibit featuring the body and how it works was at the Discovery Science Center (DSC) in Santa Ana from February 3 through September 9, 2007. More than 300,000 parents, caregivers and children visited the exhibit representing a 35 percent increase in the annual attendance and setting a new attendance record of 3,324 people visiting the DSC on a single day. The exhibit was heavily promoted through print advertising and exhibit signage, including an inflatable Elmo character on the DSC building adjacent to the I-5 freeway. The exhibit was also promoted through special events including Elmo's Birthday Party, Elmo 1K Walk & Healthy Monster Games, the Orange County Fair exhibit, and Elmo's First Pitch and Honorary Bat Boy at Angel Stadium.

The Morey Group was retained to identify the impact of the Sesame Street Body exhibit and evaluate changes children and families may have made as a result of visiting the exhibit to improve healthy habits in their lives. The impact evaluated by the Morey Group included both increased awareness and behavioral changes. The information was obtained through a combination of surveys and focus groups of DSC visitors, members and lower income Spanish speaking visitors.

The key findings were positive and confirmed that more than 85 percent of children learned something and at least 60 percent of children's behavior changed. In addition 48 percent of parents learned something and many reported changes in their own behavior. The children's

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behavioral changes included more likeliness to wash their hands, brush their teeth, exercise, take a bath, and comb their hair. The evaluation confirmed that the exhibit was appropriate for 3 to 5 year olds. Continuing sponsorship of similar exhibits was recommended by the Morey Group. A summary of the evaluation and impact study is included as Attachment 1. The comprehensive evaluation and impact report including the focus group transcripts and survey responses is available, but not included with this report.

Sesame Workshop Outreach Materials

Sesame Workshop developed parent/caregiver outreach materials that support the importance of physical fitness and nutrition activities and the new season of the Sesame Street television show focusing on vocabulary. These outreach materials are consistent with the Commission's programs, targeted to young children, and coordinate with the Kid Builder program to encourage parents and caregivers activities with children. To continue the positive momentum created through the Sesame exhibit at Discovery Science Center, the Commission approved purchasing the outreach materials for distribution to organizations that provide early education programs to young children.

Sesame Street Television Program (PBS) - Word on the Street

Sesame Workshop developed a tool kit to coordinate with the current season of the Sesame Street television program. The *Word on the Street* tool kits promote the importance of early literacy and language development. The Commission authorized the purchase of 3,000 tool kits that were received in August 2007. The majority of the tool kits have been distributed to qualified organizations and training opportunities for using the tool kits have been conducted. An evaluation plan has been developed to determine the effectiveness and use of the tool kit and improvements in children's vocabulary and language development. The evaluation results will be presented to the Commission following the implementation of the evaluation scheduled for January 2008.

Healthy Habits for Life Child Care Resource Kit

The *Healthy Habits for Life Resource Kit* is a comprehensive program focusing on physical fitness and nutrition. The materials are written for caregivers to implement in programs involving young children and parents. The bilingual, English and Spanish resource kit includes a binder of materials, a 30-minute DVD featuring the Muppet characters, a companion book to the DVD, and a parent/caregiver guide. The Commission purchased 2,500 Resource Kits and 5,000 parent guides. The Resource Kits were received in September 2007 and the parent guides are expected within the next two months. The distribution strategy, training process, and impact evaluation are being modeled after the successful *Word on the Street* process.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES:

Westfield Shopping Mall Partnership

First 5 California announced a new corporate partnership with Westfield shopping malls throughout the state to deliver childhood obesity prevention messages. The partnership agreement is through March 2008 and includes 23 shopping malls in nine counties including the

Westfield MainPlace in Santa Ana. The partnership offers opportunities for branding and material distribution including:

- Poster placement at strategic locations near Westfield play areas, food courts and family lounges
- Literature distribution at the concierge center
- Incorporating local commission contact information in the monthly e-newsletter and newsletter copy for Westfield MainPlace
- A link to the Children and Families Commission website from the Westfield MainPlace website
- Distributing the local customized Kit for New Parents through the concierge center

Discussions with Sesame Workshop to repurpose the *Healthy Habits for Life* creative materials featuring the Muppet characters for the poster and literature pieces at Westfield MainPlace are being pursued and would be consistent with First 5 California's obesity prevention messages. Commission authorization is requested to participate in First 5 California's corporate partnership with Westfield shopping malls, specifically at the Westfield MainPlace location in Santa Ana. The cost to participate in this partnership includes the development and printing of the posters and materials which can be funded within the existing budget. No formal funding action is required at this time.

Meredith Corporation New Parent Outreach Project
The Commission approved a partnership agreement with Meredith Corporation in June 2007 to develop the architecture of a comprehensive educational program that provides parenting information through multiple communications to reach expectant parents, caregivers and families. The Meredith Corporation will complete the evaluation phase of the project and present an analysis to address whether what is currently being delivered is appropriate for the audience by December 2007. The Commission will use the current agreement with Meredith Corporation, their expertise as a national magazine publisher, and their extensive data base of health care providers, OB/GYNs and child birth educators to develop and implement a comprehensive parent education program that may guide future efforts.

STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:

The programs have been specifically reviewed in relation to the Strategic Plan, and are consistent with the Commission's goals. There is no additional funding request required for this item. Funding is available in the adopted FY 2007/08 budget for any expenses related to the Westfield mall partnership.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:

1. The Commission authorized an agreement with the Discovery Science Center to secure the Sesame Workshop traveling exhibit at the October 4, 2006 meeting.
2. The Commission approved the purchase and distribution of Sesame Workshop outreach materials including *Healthy Habits for Life* and *Word on the Street* at the June 27, 2007 meeting.

3. The Commission adopted an agreement with Meredith Corporation to develop and implement a comprehensive outreach plan targeted to expectant parents, caregivers and families at the June 27, 2007 meeting.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Receive the Sesame Street Body Exhibit Evaluation and Impact Study.
2. Receive the Sesame Workshop outreach materials distribution update.
3. Approve participation in First 5 California's partnership with Westfield shopping malls, specifically the Westfield MainPlace location in Santa Ana and authorize execution of any related agreements or documents required for participation, subject to review by Commission counsel.
4. Direct staff to return at the January 2008 Commission meeting with a report on findings and recommendations from the partnership with Meredith Corporation.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Sesame Street Body Exhibit Evaluation and Impact Study

Contacts: Kelly Pijl

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BACKGROUND

- Morey Group, a national market research and evaluation company, was hired by the Children and Families Commission of Orange County to assess the impact of the Sesame Street Body exhibit.
- Morey Group specializes in not for profit cultural attraction research. Since 1985 Morey Group has conducted thousands of surveys and hundreds of focus groups for more than 150 cultural attractions throughout the US.
- The purpose of this study is to identify the impact (increased awareness and behavioral change) of the Sesame Street Body exhibit on different Discovery Science Center audiences.

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APPROACH

- A 3-pronged approach was used to obtain information regarding the Sesame Street Body exhibit. A combination of surveys and focus groups were conducted to quantify and qualify the exhibit among visitors, members, and lower income Spanish speaking visitors.
- A total of 72 visitors completed an online visitor survey and 139 members completed another online survey. These surveys were implemented via the internet to assess impact of the exhibit "post" visit.
- 4 focus groups were conducted in Spanish of recent visitors.

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KEY FINDINGS

We are pleased to report the Sesame Street Body exhibit had a significant impact on visitors.

- More than 85% of children learned something.
- At least 60% of children's behavior changed.

The impact of learning and behavioral change occurred across all racial, education, and income categories. However, there were some differences in the areas in which knowledge increased and/or behavior changed.

- Notably, at least 48% of parents learned something and many reported changes in their own behavior.

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LEARNING

- The exhibit was most likely to increase children's and adult's knowledge of the body.
- Visitors and members also learned more about handicap abilities, germs, and importance of exercise and hygiene. At least 40% learned something about each exhibit topic.
- Learning and behavior changes occurred after one visit and did not increase with multiple visits.
- The exhibit reinforced lessons being taught at home and/or at school.

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BEHAVIOR

- The exhibit had an impact on children's behavior. Children are more likely to wash their hands and brush their teeth, exercise, take a bath, and comb their hair.
- As many as 60% were more likely to brush their teeth.
- The action in which there was least behavior change was improvement in sleep and even then at least 30% were more likely to sleep, rest, or nap.

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EXHIBIT COMPONENTS

- The exhibit was well received by all audiences. Reaction to the exhibit was extremely positive though survey results suggest employee courtesy and cleanliness at the exhibit should be slightly higher.
- The areas of the exhibit that had the greatest impact on children were:
  - Locomotion
  - Digestion
  - Obstacle Course
  - Heart & Lungs
  - Hooper's Store
- Visitors liked the touch and experiment elements of the exhibit.
- Very few used the Exhibit Guide which was due mostly to a lack of receipt.
- Nearly all feel the exhibit is appropriate for 3 to 5 year olds.

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AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS

- The exhibit was responsible for a significant percentage of the Discovery Science Center's attendance (at least 19%).
- The survey results are reflective of visitors with higher education and income levels. Though the majority of these respondents were Caucasian, a significant percentage were Latino or Asian. It is our experience that race is not a variable that creates significant differences when income and education are the same.
- Members were more likely to be Caucasian than non-members and had higher income levels.
- Nearly all of the focus group participants had household incomes of less than $40,000 and nearly all were Latino.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend continuing sponsorship of similar exhibits. Topics in which focus group participants expressed an interest were the ocean, the universe, Recycling, environment, and animals.
- We recommend incorporating touch, experimental, and decision making experiences in future exhibits.
- We recommend taking steps to increase the usage of exhibit guides by increasing the exposure of the guide including more outlets and more references to the guide.
- We recommend taking steps to improve employee courtesy and cleanliness (though these ratings were not poor, we would like to see a higher percentage of excellent ratings).

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