

Rick Rackers Give Preschoolers a "Head Start"

As most schools, students, and parents were winding down the school year and easing into summer in June, Rick Rackers were at it again. This time, Rick Rackers' Operation School Bell® had a special mission – Operation Head Start. Members of Rick Rackers were determined to provide all of the 1,545 Head Start preschoolers who were moving on to kindergarten with backpacks, school uniforms, and toothbrushes, in order to prepare them for, none other than, their first day of school in September!

Head Start preschools are family-focused, comprehensive child development programs, which provide education, health, nutrition, social services, and parental involvement to at-risk children under five years of age and their families. Long Beach's Head Start education program is a perfect fit for Rick Rackers' efforts to provide school uniforms to students in need. By providing students with "learning suits," Rick Rackers encourages self-esteem and creates an open environment for learning, allowing Long Beach's youth to become both educated and empowered to succeed during the course of their education.

With help from members of Assistance League of Long Beach and its other auxiliaries, Rick Rackers filled the backpacks at the Philanthropic Center over the first weekend in June. Under the direction of Rick Rackers' outgoing Philanthropic Chairman Kelly Wigod and incoming Philanthropic Chairman Melissa Murchison, 1,545 uniforms were delivered to the 21 Head Start preschool sites on June 9th and 10th, just in time for their students to break for summer.

Head Start students and their families were grateful for all that Rick Rackers have been able to provide. One family wrote to Rick Rackers, "Thank you. You've got an angel on your shoulders. You've done so much for our family."

FYI: Rick Rackers is a nonprofit volunteer organization, chartered in 1942, whose purpose is to carry on a program of philanthropic work to improve the lives of children in the community. Together with Assistance League's 6-12 Operation School Bell® program, they provide more than 6,000 school uniforms to Long Beach Unified School District elementary students annually and have a goal of clothing 10,000 children annually by 2010.

For more information on Rick Rackers, Operation School Bell or to receive information on upcoming events, please call the Assistance League of Long Beach Philanthropic Center at (562) 627-5650, or visit the website at www.allb.org.