



News briefs - Dec. 10, 2009

'A Christmas Carol' will benefit dental program

For each regular-season theatrical play Bag&Baggage produces, a portion of all tickets sold on a specific night is dedicated to a chosen local charity. For tonight's show, "A Christmas Carol," Bag&Baggage has chosen the Children's Dental Program at Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center as the beneficiary.

The Benefit Night for Virginia Garcia will take place at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10, at The Venetian Theatre. For every ticket purchased, \$5 will be donated to Virginia Garcia; the evening could raise as much as \$2,000 for its Children's Dental Program.

"We created our Benefit Night program to provide a new way for theater-goers to support service organizations, and Virginia Garcia is exceptionally worthy of support," said Patrick Spike, Bag&Baggage board member. "The funds we raise will help provide comprehensive dental care for children."

Virginia Garcia provides primary healthcare with a special emphasis on migrant and seasonal farm workers and their children, serving more than 30,000 people per year.

"In our 2009 fiscal year, we served 5,395 children in the dental program alone – that's a 23 percent increase over 2008, and a 74 percent increase over 2007," said Dental Director Lisa Bozzetti. "Oral health is vital to a child's well-being."

"A toothache affects school attendance, concentration, self-esteem, nutrition and general health. Dental decay is the most common childhood disease – and it's 100 percent preventable. We use education, prevention and treatment to change these statistics in the communities we serve."

Virginia Garcia leaders are grateful for the support of the production company.

"A benefit night at the theater is an exciting way for families and individuals to do something fun in the holiday spirit while simultaneously supporting children's dental health," said Christine Rontal, executive director of the Virginia Garcia Foundation.