

PRESS RELEASE

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A Purse of Her Own

For Sixth Annual Event, Alameda County Social Services Agency Gives the Perfect Mother's Day Gift

Hayward, CA.— “Woman must have a purse of her own,” wrote Susan B. Anthony in 1853, and few today would disagree that these are essential for most women – particularly mothers, for whom two hands never seem to be enough. Since many women on public assistance cannot afford the purchase, Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA) has come up with the perfect Mother's Day gift: The Annual Mother's Day Purse Giveaway.

Every mom deserves a nice handbag on Mother's Day, and for the sixth consecutive year that is just what they received starting on May 5 at four ACSSA locations: the Eden Area Multi-Service Center in Hayward, and the Eastmont, Enterprise, and North Oakland Self-Sufficiency Centers in Oakland. In previous years moms lined the buildings' halls to get a chance to shop for the perfect handbag at the perfect price - completely free. This year, due to the COVID-19 emergency, gift tables are set-up and festively decorated outside of Hayward, Eastmont, and Enterprise, and staffed by SSA personnel. In North Oakland, the waiting room has been pressed into service as a spacious location that would accommodate social distancing. What has not changed are the smiles and laughter from the guests of honor—parents who are recipients of public assistance. Over 400 purses, sachets, and totes – all filled with essential toiletries - and even more makeup and self-care products are being distributed over three days on a first-come first-served basis.

Wearing disposable gloves for safety, mothers are also choosing between purses and handmade sachets, along with one item from a basket full of individual pieces of make-up, i.e., mascara, eye liners, lipstick, etc. At the North Oakland location, donated shoes and clothes were offered as well, creating a golden opportunity to pull together a fresh new look for a newly reopening world.

“We want to do something special for the moms in our community every year,” says Lori Cox, Director of the ACSSA. “This past year especially, I know everyone wants to celebrate the role of mothers in steering our society through the storm of the pandemic.”

The event has become a tradition that clients and staff look forward to each year, according to Andrea Ford, Assistant Agency Director for ACSSA's Department of Workforce and Benefits Administration. “All of the purses are donated by staff. Any used items are in excellent condition. And what staff don't have in their closets, they purchase.”

One visitor chooses a roomy canvas bag and a subtle peach lipstick. She remarks, “With two small children in tow, having a place for my keys, glasses and other necessities makes a huge difference.” She adds, “Now that the world is opening up a little bit, a nice handbag and new lipstick will help me start each day with a little more confidence.”

If you would like to donate a new or gently used purse to a deserving mother next year, contact Sylvia Soubllet, Director, ACSSA’s Office of Public Affairs and Community Relations at 510-271-9100, or email ssoubllet@acgov.org



Photos (attached in a zip folder as jpeg files): A community comes together to celebrate Mother’s Day in style. Photo 1 – Mother and daughter choose a new look together.



Photo 2 – Spring is a time for a fresh start at the Alameda County Social Services Agency’s North Oakland Office.



Photo 3 – New bags – new beginnings

