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Making Memories E-News March 2011

Big Animals for Little Kids mission is to bring joy into the lives of children facing health, emotional or socio-economic challenges. We regularly visit children in hospitals, homeless shelters and foster care facilities. A majority of our events support kids at Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, Kaiser Hospital, Balboa Hospital as well as organizations such as: The Make a Wish Foundation, the San Diego Center for Children, Christie's Place and ChildHelp.



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What Being A Member of Big Animals Means...

I have been a member of Big Animals for Little Kids for six years in May. I have been the Toy Drive Coordinator for the last two years. Coordinating this effort is the ultimate gift for me.

We make Christmas happen for low income and, homeless-children, many of which would not experience

Christmas without the gifts we bring. Can you imagine being a teenager and living in a homeless shelter or on the street? I can't and



Newsletter!

Do you know someone who would like to join this mailing list? If so, please encourage them to send Big Animals an email.



I Would Like to Volunteer!

Big Animals relies on volunteers to bring "Magical Moments" to children. If you are interested in coming out to play with us, [please email Luanne](#), Vice President for Volunteers.

Big Animal Officers

Jody Decker
President

Denise Pelton
Vice President, Donations

Luanne McPherson
Vice President, Volunteers

Mary Ellen Barnum
Vice President
Costumes and Purchasing

Lynn Navarrski
Secretary

Joann Lee
Treasurer

SB Waitt
Sergeant of Arms

Francisco Perea
Member at Large

Who Benefits from Big Animal?

The three major beneficiaries of Big Animals for Little Kids programs are:

I imagine, most of you couldn't either. Knowing that I have the ability to network with businesses and our community to receive donations on their behalf makes me feel larger than life!

Last year, at the YWCA Cortez Hill Family Center **not only did the children receive gift bags but the parents did too!** It's one thing to go to an event for your child however, it's another to give the parents something special as well, tears of gratitude and hugs were shared that evening. **It was a wonderful night filled with laughter, tears and joy. I, along with many other Big Animals, experienced the "true meaning of Christmas" that night!**

This year's toy drive was so successful that we were able to give to two brand new organizations. This would not have been possible without everyone's continued love and support! That support may mean hosting a box in your business, donating toys, or giving a cash donation. No effort goes unnoticed by these families and our volunteers and the community's efforts are appreciated by everyone.

Each person, volunteer, and gift made a difference this year, as a group we helped bring the Holidays to many families this year. Big Animals for Little kids could not do all we do if it were not for all of you!

Denise Pelton
Donations Vice President, Toy Drive
Coordinator

The Big Animals Have A NEW Home!

March 1st marked a very special day for the Big Animals for Little Kids organization....The Big Animals have a new home!

For the last several years the board, officers, and volunteers of this wonderful group has had a vision to raise enough funds annually to finally have one permanent place for event preparation

1. **The children** in hospitals, shelters and other institutions and their families who are visited by Big Animals receive encouragement at a difficult time in their lives.

2. **The teenagers** who volunteer to wear the Big Animal costumes are empowered by the discovery that they can really make a difference! They can take that empowerment into their own lives to make better choices. It's such a joy to watch this happen!

3. **The San Diego Charities** whose events are made more fun and popular are more successful in their mission at no cost to them.

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[Big Animals Website](#)



Big Animals for Little Kids - Leadership Award Video

Upcoming Events

and Big Animals operations. 2011 is the year!



Thanks to the generosity of many, many, many (did we mention many?) groups and individuals our organization finally has a home.

Our new headquarters will help volunteers organize, store, and provide space for:

- more than 26 costumes,
- volunteers who design, sew, clean, and mend costumes,
- storing and staging areas for props and materials for more than 40 large scale events for children a year.
- With the new space, volunteers now have a space to work, organize, and run the operations of the organization from one central location.

Huge thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the move, everyone's support with gifts of support over the last



year which helped to make this vision come true, and to all of the great children's groups and organizations who continue to value the "Magical Moments" Big Animals for Little Kids brings to their events.

Big Animals Thanks Cox Kids!

Big Animals for Little Kids received a generous gift of \$1,000 from the Cox Kids Foundation..

The notice of the grant award came with a note



- 3/19/11
St Patrick's Day Dance, Noah Homes
- 3/20/11
Mardi Gras Party for Seniors, Belmont Senior Living
- 3/26/11
Climbing to New Heights, Down Syndrome Action
- 4/16/11
March for Kiki's Red Ribbon, Say San Diego
- 4/16/11
Bone Marrow Drive/Children's Carnival, Nu Kappa Alpha
- 5/1/11
Jenny's Walk, Friendship Circle
- 5/7/11
Children of the Military Spring Carnival
- 5/14/11
Relay for Life, American Cancer Society
- 5/21/11
Celebration of Champions, Rady Children's Hospital

from Amy Berry sharing that "on behalf of the Cox Kids Foundation, I would like to congratulate you on the work you are doing with Big Animals for Little Kids. Your contribution to our community is invaluable."

This funding comes at a critical time for the Big Animals organization as 2011 is a year of growth and capital building. Big Animals for Little Kids has expanded our capacity, inventory of costumes, and added a new headquarters space to do so. **This funding will help support this year's growth.**

Over the last 10 years of the non-profit's existence we have grown from a few volunteers and a couple of hand-made costumes to more than 100 adult volunteers, dozens of teen volunteers and 26 costumes.

If you would like to help Big Animals reach more kids this year, please consider a donation of \$5, \$25, \$50, \$100 or more.

[Every gift makes a difference!](#)

To learn more about our events or how to volunteer [email our volunteer coordinator!](#)



Big Animals for Little Kids / 1380 Garnet Ave / San Diego, California 92109 /

(858) 270-4824

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