

Natural Parenting Consumer Show Set for 2006 Launch

The Rebedeau Group and author Kathy Arnos are launching a consumer show at the Los Angeles Convention Center next year that will focus on natural parenting.

The Whole Children, Whole Planet Expo, scheduled for the April 22-23 Earth Day weekend, will include celebrities, healthy foods and five education and entertainment stages, in addition to an exhibit floor spanning about 30,000 square feet.

"Everyone was very excited about this project," said Mary Beth Rebedeau, who serves as executive director of the Society of Independent Show Organizers, in addition to operating the Rebedeau Group show management firm. "This is the first one of its kind."

Arnos is the author of two books on natural parenting, including "The Complete Teething Guide: From Birth to Adolescence." The expo will embrace everything from herbs, flower essences and vitamins, to natural cleaning and body care products.

Doctors and experts in holistic pediatrics will provide information on natural products. Sustainable living practices will be stressed in the Children's Village. Pollutants will be discussed in the Environmental Safe Zone. And fertility and delivery discussions will take place in the Birthing Corner.

Rebedeau said when her daughter, Dallas, was growing up 20 years ago, information on raising healthy children wasn't readily available. Nowadays, applying natural health principles to child rearing is becoming mainstream, said Rebedeau, who now has a grandson.

Rebedeau and Arnos hope to replicate the event in other cities across the country. "This is something that's very close to my heart," Rebedeau said.

PCMA, Chapters Donate \$54,000 to Charities



■ PCMA Rocky Mountain chapter members Kelly Wright (left) and Susan Conder volunteer in a room full of Easter baskets collected for the Denver Department of Human Services.

The Professional Convention Management Assn. and its regional chapters have donated \$54,000 to charities across the nation and provided community service in several cities as part of their 2005 Network for the Needy program.

The program includes three initiatives: volunteer projects in-

corporated into meetings and tradeshow (including the PCMA Hospitality Helping Hands off-site volunteer event at the association's annual meeting); food and product donations from shows; and Party with a Purpose, a fundraising event held at the annual meeting that has raised more than \$1 million over the past 12 years.

Witnessing the efforts of the network program "come to fruition has been very, very rewarding," said John Patronski, executive vice president of industry development for GES Exposition Services, which founded the party event eight years ago and underwrites the overall network program.

"There's just a lot of sense in supporting a program like that," he added.

PCMA's Heartland chapter recently raised about \$6,000 for Operation Breakthrough, Mis-

souri's largest childcare center for homeless and impoverished children. Marsha Gillespie, development director for the Kansas City center, said the contribution "makes a huge difference here. We're so dependent on community donations."

The chapter's planned June zoo trip with Operation Breakthrough is appreciated, because otherwise, "these are kids that are not going to make it to the zoo or to a museum. They're just not going to get these kinds of experiences," said Gillespie.

Kelly Wright, convention sales manager for Denver's Colorado Convention Center and a PCMA Rocky Mountain chapter member, said she is "driven by the belief that even a small group of people with big hearts can make a difference. Helping to bring a smile and joy into the lives of others is truly a great feeling."

Jacksonville Hotel Becomes Hyatt Property

The Jacksonville, Fla., hotel currently known as the Adam's Mark Jacksonville will soon be reflagged by Hyatt Hotels & Resorts as the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront.

A \$10 million guestroom renovation of the 966-room hotel is currently under way and is due for completion by early 2006. The revamp will add such Hyatt amenities as self-serve automated check-in kiosks and high-speed Internet access throughout the hotel.

The Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront will offer meeting planners 110,000 square feet of meeting space, including a 27,100 sq. ft. grand ballroom and 30 individual meeting rooms that can accommodate as many as 4,300 attendees.

Jacksonville Waterfront Partners, a joint venture between San Francisco-based Oxford Lodging Advisory & Investment Group and New York-based Longwing Real Estate Ventures, a member of the Dubai Investment Group, purchased the waterfront facility from HBE Corp.

The hotel is Hyatt's 12th property in Florida, joining other buildings in Bonita Springs, Coral Gables, Fort Lauderdale, Key West, Miami, Orlando, Sarasota and Tampa.

Steve Goldman, executive vice president of development and acquisitions for Global Hyatt, described Jacksonville as "a key Florida convention market (that) continues to grow at a rapid pace."



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ESCA Begins Best Practices Initiative

Members of the Exhibition Services & Contractors Assn. are developing a best practices initiative that they hope will standardize accounts receivable, exhibitor service manuals, labor and collective bargaining and exhibitor lists.

According to Executive Director Susan Schwartz, the group is also examining its education and advocacy activities.

Ray Pekowski, president and CEO of The Expo Group and an ESCA member, said the organization is off to a good start, especially in education. He does, however, want it to be a stronger advocacy group and greater voice for members.

Pekowski also would like to see ESCA educate show organizers and lobby unions to develop a better understanding of the difference between skilled and unskilled labor. "I don't know anyone who believes it takes a skilled union laborer making \$30 an hour straight time to deliver a wastebasket or move an empty crate," he said.