



PRESS RELEASE

06-403

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS RAISES RECORD AMOUNT FOR HEART ASSOCIATION

San Bernardino - Employees from Caltrans District 8 raised over \$15,000 for the Inland Empire Heartwalk. The Walk was held at Fairmont Park in Riverside on October 1 as part of the American Heart Association's fundraising efforts. The \$15,000 raised is nearly five times more than last year's effort. "This accomplishment far exceeds the goal of \$10,000 that District 8 set for this year," proudly stated Caltrans District Director Mike Perovich. It is also the single largest amount raised by any State agency. Out of all the private/public sector companies raising money for the Heart Walk, Caltrans District 8 ranked #4. All of the money raised in this Heartwalk remains in the Inland Empire to fight heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular disease.

Heart Walk coordinator Darlene Lott showed amazing dedication as she was determined to recruit eight teams with ten walkers each for a total of 80 Caltrans participants. She wanted to keep the Walk in the forefront of everyone's mind and her strategy worked. She encouraged participation with regular enthusiastic e-mails, prizes for team leaders, and the rallying cry, "Let's see a sea of orange shirts at the Heart Walk." She motivated Caltrans employees to not just meet, but to far exceed the 2006 goal of \$10,000 by over 50%. A total of 94 walkers encouraged their fellow employees to contribute donations. A Book Fair was also held in the San Bernardino State Government Center in September that raised additional funds until a total of \$15631.70 was raised. When asked what she thought was a major contributing reason for this year's success, Darlene replied, "The support from Director Mike Perovich was a large factor to our success. Increased awareness of the walk brought many more Caltrans participants".

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On the day of the Heartwalk, Caltrans' "sea of orange" was a very visible part of the staging area in Fairmont Park. All along the Heart Walk route people were wearing Caltrans orange. The large amount of donations raised by Caltrans earned the agency the privilege of displaying Caltrans public outreach materials to educate motorists of projects and programs. Olin Prentiss, son of Illeen Prentiss was on hand as the Cone Kid. He danced, entertained and put a smile on everyone's face with his fancy footwork.

The Walk was an upbeat and positive event. Caltrans Safety Officers Hector Ceballos and Terrilee Robb led the team in warm-ups prior to the Heart Walk on Sunday morning. Deputy District Director Paul Engstrom showed up bright and early to inspire all by having a big Caltrans logo painted in the middle of his forehead. Everyone had fun and is already talking about next year's event. Darlene has set a goal of 120 walkers and \$20,000 in donations which she is confident can be reached in 2007.

Caltrans walkers flooded Fairmont Park on October 1 with their "sea of orange" showing the community that these public servants have gone above and beyond what their job description requires of them. They not only work in this community, they care about it and contribute. Caltrans District 8 employees have definitely shown that they have a heart.

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