

## Giant steps toward peace

Program teaches kids to take on issues peacefully.

By Karen Robes, Staff writer  
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LONG BEACH - A violence prevention youth program kicked off its national fall tour, "The PeaceBuilders Experience, See it, Feel it, Live it," Wednesday at Giant Steps Children's Center.

Several local city and school officials gathered at the 6951 Obispo Ave. campus to see in action a science-based program that teaches children how to approach issues such as bullying, violence and substance abuse by identifying and confronting problems in a non-retaliatory way.

Giant Steps, a school that serves children ages 2 through 6, implemented PeaceBuilders in May.

The center's program director, Renee Rivera, said PeaceBuilders has enhanced the school's curriculum.

"(The students) are excited about it and having fun with it while at the same time learning some basic social skills and applying the principles with their teachers and their families," she said.

PeaceBuilders participants follow six principles: praise people, notice hurts, give up put-downs, right wrongs, seek wise people and help others.

"Surprisingly, a lot of times, people think, 'Well, our school may not have a problem,' and they don't know if this is something they will benefit from," said Long Beach-based PeaceBuilders' Lisa Kammel. "But the contrary is that the more positive environment you can create, the more resilient the children will be."

Schools slated for the national tour will include PS 279 Herman Schreiber School in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Redmond Elementary School in Redmond, Wash.

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