

**For Immediate Release
February 15, 2005**

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“Introduction of Handball to Fit For Gold Cadets”

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) and Gold’s Gym teamed up last year to introduce a new program called Fit For Gold. To add to the program, this year, through special training provided by Gary Cruz, Youth Program Coordinator and Regional Board Member of the U.S. Handball Association and several of his colleagues (Marcus Hough and Roy Harty), Fit for Gold Cadets can now help children stay fit and have fun by playing handball. Cadets were trained in a daylong session at the City of Hawthorne’s Betty Ainsworth Center, which features state of the art handball courts.

Fit for Gold Cadets work after school, three days a week assisting more than 1,500 elementary and middle school children develop healthy minds and bodies through homework assistance, physical fitness activities and nutrition information in 24 after-school programs throughout the South Bay. Cadets receive a stipend and school credits.

“Some things you cannot adequately put into words, but if you could have seen the before and after with these students it would warm your heart,” stated Gary Cruz. “By the end of the day, 72 cadets who knew nothing or very little about handball, were stroking the ball with both hands with a partner and keeping the ball in play. These Cadets will now be able to pass this information forward to others.”

In attendance at the event was City of Hawthorne Mayor Larry Guidi who stated, “Keeping children fit and healthy is just one of the goals of the Fit for Gold program. We are dedicated to providing unparalleled life skills to all students involved in this program.” Also in attendance was Hawthorne Councilwoman Ginny Lambert, Jan Vogel Executive Director of the SBWIB and Steve Tavera, President of Gold’s Gym, who since the program’s inception has provided certified instructors to train the Cadets on age appropriate exercise and nutrition.