



PRESS RELEASE

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Fleet Week Marines, Sailors and Coast Guard bring smiles to San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center Pediatric Unit Service members visit with kids and give out books

SAN FRANCISCO, CA –Marines, Sailors and Coast Guardsman today toured the San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center (SFGH) pediatrics unit giving out books, hugs and big smiles to kids. The young patients eyes lit up as the 21 service men and women made their first stop in the outpatient clinic that provides a range of services from well-child check-ups to urgent care for infants and children up to 18-years old.

“We treat young patients with anything from trauma injuries, to asthma or providing flu vaccines,” said **Elena Fuentes-Afflick**, Chief of Pediatrics at SFGH. “Our focus is on meeting the needs of our diverse patient population, the majority of whom are Latino, African American and Asian, through innovative programs.”

Kids received free books, had stories read to them and got to ask the service members about their jobs in the nation’s service. A 10-year old patient named **Diego** was particularly interested in hearing about the life of a sailor. “They all do different things like repairing the ship or making food for other sailors,” he said.

Mabel Chan, MD, Director of Inpatient Pediatrics, led the group to the inpatient ward where kids ranging from toddlers to young teens got to spend quality time reading and talking with their uniformed visitors. The tour of SFGH was one of many community outreach activities the group had planned for Fleet Week.

“It’s fun to have the opportunity to interact with the patients,” said U.S. Navy Chaplain Jason DiPinto. “It’s as exciting for us as it is for the kids. We really want to keep community relationships strong as part of our readiness for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.”

After all the books had been given out, the tour stopped in the Birth Center where around 1,200 babies are delivered each year. As the only hospital in the city certified by the World Health Organization as Baby Friendly, most babies were staying with their mothers, a reflection of the policy that encourages breastfeeding and mother-baby bonding.

Fleet Week and SFGH are natural partners. The annual event serves as a reminder of the important role of the General as the only trauma center in the city, and the critical connection with the U.S. military in the case of an emergency that requires federal disaster response in San Francisco.

SF General is the city’s pediatric trauma center and provides inpatient and outpatient pediatric services to more than 34,000 patients each year, specializing in the treatment of diseases that disproportionately impact children from low-income families.

See attached photo: (A sailor reads to a pediatric patient as San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center)