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LET'S PLAY BALL

Kids' ball drive gets off to good start



Rich Archbold
COLUMNIST

The best part of 9-year-old Jonathan's day is playing dodgeball with his friends at the gym at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Long Beach.

"It's more fun throwing a dodgeball and hitting someone," he said with a big grin last week, "than sitting at home playing video games."

Jonathan is just one of thousands of kids who benefit from athletic programs at various Boys & Girls Club locations throughout Long Beach, as well as the Harbor Area and elsewhere — and, club officials say, those programs also help keep kids off the streets by allowing them to participate in healthy activities.

But to adequately offer these athletic programs, the youth organization needs sports balls, including dodgeballs for Jonathan, as well as basketballs, soccer balls, footballs, softballs and volleyballs for other kids.

That's why the Press-Telegram and the Daily Breeze, along with their weekly sister

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Members of the Long Beach Boys & Girls Club display some of the balls collected in the Press-Telegram's "Let's Play Ball" holiday campaign on Dec. 23, 2025. **PHOTO BY HOWARD FRESHMAN**

THANKSGIVING

Shoppers feel pinch of higher food prices



Tommie Shepherd, a 72-year-old retired maintenance worker with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in Los Angeles, has just wrapped up shopping at a Food 4 Less along Lake Avenue in Pasadena, but didn't buy turkey to load into her car this year. "I don't celebrate the holidays. It's just me and my sister," she says. **PAT MAIO — STAFF**

Ahead of the holiday, SoCal residents say their wallets are feeling lighter

By Pat Maio
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Southern Californians are choosing their groceries carefully as the holiday season kicks off with a surge in food buying.

Shoppers across the region — whether at Aldi in Tustin or an Asian market in Chino, a Food 4 Less in Pasadena or the newly opened Vallarta Supermarkets in Rancho Cucamonga — say they're feeling the sting of higher food prices caused by tariffs, inflation and gas prices caused by the U.S.-led war in Iran that began nearly nine months ago.

For those already struggling with poverty, rising inflation has only added to their food insecurity. Food banks across the region are seeing

See **FOOD** on Page A8



Bruce Nance, a volunteer for New Life Church Food Bank, helps Rosaria Tapia with a box of food for the holidays in Pomona on Thursday. **KAREN TAPIA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

PORTS OF L.A., LONG BEACH

Union, PMA reach a deal

250 watchmen reach tentative pact with shippers, terminals' representative, averting strike

By Chris Haire and Donna Littlejohn
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEWS GROUP

A local union representing about 250 watchmen at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have struck a tentative, eleventh-hour labor deal with the employer group the Pacific Maritime Association — averting a work stoppage.

The PMA, which represents shipping lines and terminal operators at West Coast ports, announced the tentative agreement with the International Long Shore and Union Works, Local 26, early Saturday morning — about three hours after a final negotiating deadline was set to pass.

"This agreement provides certainty for the

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LOS ANGELES

Raman names advisory panel

Mayor-elect's 30-member committee gathers variety of leaders from outside City Hall

By Teresa Liu
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Mayor-elect Nithya Raman is bringing together an eclectic group of Los Angeles figures — from tenant organizers and labor leaders to real estate executives, Hollywood personalities and tech entrepreneurs — to help shape her incoming administration.

The 30-member advisory group, dubbed "A Committee for the City," will help identify candidates for administration positions and city commis-

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