

PCI's Strong Healthy Empowered (SHE) is a group of ambassadors who dedicate their efforts, time, energy, skills, and "hands on experience" as volunteers to benefit and support PCI programs throughout the world. The members reach out and support PCI's programs in the local community, and have the opportunity to participate in vision trips, volunteer internationally, as well as attend locally hosted educational events and social occasions.

For the past 3 years, the SHE members have come together to help in PCI California Border Healthy Start's community baby shower in October and Santa Day in December. They have provided a fun and educational day for over 600 pregnant and postpartum women and their children and sent them home with gift bags filled with handmade baby blankets, diapers and baby outfits. The women and children enrolled in the PCI program are within 200% Federal Poverty Level and live in areas with the highest levels of infant mortality in San Diego.

Each of the women has taken leadership roles in the organization of the event and in raising money for the event. This year, one of the women organized the showing of an original surf movie to raise money for diapers. Enough money is usually raised for the venue rental and some of the gift bags.

They have also invited other friends who are now involved in this project. Some paint the children's faces during the event; some distribute the gifts and one provided Spanish translation for the children. Others have also volunteered for this event and have found it very inspiring. They helped serve lunch to the women and children.

They organized different activities to raise money and gift bags. One group had several women making handmade baby blankets. One male friend donated his time as disc jockey and played music throughout the event. A photographer was always available and took pictures of the moms with their children, and prints of these photos were also provided to the women after the event.

PCI provided for the educational sessions for this event and organized other organizations to provide health services (dental exams for the children and weight and Body Mass Index testing for the moms).

We believe these events have fostered an empowering experience for the mothers and children and helped instill volunteerism in the community. We have brought an opportunity for community service.

It is the joy of serving the community and seeing the smiling faces of the children and their mothers that keep the SHE volunteers coming back each year.

The joy of volunteerism is at the core.