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Press Release

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Stanislaus County Community Services to Offer Free Book Club

The Book Club: Free Library is a pilot project aimed at creating opportunities for reading by putting free books into the hands of every child who visits a Community Services Facility.

The project provides a book to each child when they visit Stanislaus County Community Services Facility (on Hackett Rd) for services. The facility is home to four County Departments (Community Services Agency, Department of Child Support Services, Workforce Development and Health Services Agency) which all work to improve the health, wellbeing and lives of children, families and fellow community members. This project is a collaborative effort among these county departments as well as the County Library and Chief Executive Office.

The Community Serves Agency helps residents with a safe place to live, access to food, health care and opportunities to work towards independence and self-sufficiency. Department of Child Support Services puts children first by helping both parents assume responsibility for the economic and social well-being, health, and stability of their children. Health Services Agency provides comprehensive clinical and public health programs and services that promote and protect the overall health and safety of the community. Workforce Development Provides access to a network of employment, training, and educational programs to develop a skilled workforce that strengthens business and contributes to the economic success of the community. The County Library offers access to information, knowledge and tools for innovation and personal development to all community members.

The Book Club: Free Library project was the brain child of County CEO, Jody Hayes. “Every day our County team engages with hundreds of families and children throughout the community. I am thrilled to see our departments come together and create new ways to engage and inspire the future leaders of our community, our children,” Hayes said. “This particular program is special to me. I once sat in the lobby of our County social services building as a child, waiting to receive support from a variety of County services. I look forward to walking through this lobby in the future to see children enjoying the inspiration of reading; you never know which one of them may be your future County CEO.”

The short-term goals of the program are to increase children’s access to books, encourage reading early and often, and encourage healthy parenting. Long-term program goals are to contribute to and reinforce the results of Cradle to Career outcomes for StanREADY (improved school readiness rates) and StanREADS (improved rate of reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade), to support the First 5 Stanislaus Talk, Read, Sing campaign outcomes to improve future learning, better preparation for school and life, and to continue Focus on Prevention’s Strengthening Families outcomes.

In February, the County hosted a book drive that collected over 1,000 new and used book donations. Ongoing funding will be provided by grants and various county program funding. A public celebration and project launch event will be hosted at the Community Services Facility StanWORKS Lobby (251 Hackett Road, Modesto) on March 4th @ 10:30 am.

The event will include remarks by County CEO and a Community Story Time with celebrity readers Sheriff Jeff Dirkse and Stanislaus County Board Chairwoman Kristin Olsen. Community members who would like to donate children’s books may bring them to the event.

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