



June 8-12, 2022
Back & Bigger Than Ever
35th District Agricultural Association



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Danielle Griffin | (559) 967-3604

Merced County Fair Partners with Valley Children's Healthcare, Merced County Library and First 5 Merced County to Create the Early Childhood Literacy Partnership

Focus is on empowering children to read and helping create a foundation to foster a love of reading

MERCED, CALIFORNIA, June 9, 2022...As the Merced County Fair returns this year after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the focus is all on the children in the Merced County community. As such, the Merced County Fair has partnered with Valley Children's Healthcare, the Merced County Library and First 5 Merced County to form the **Early Childhood Literacy Partnership** whose mission is to empower children to read, as well as foster a love for reading. As an exciting kickoff for this new partnership, the Merced County Fair will host the Library Bookmobile on **Friday, June 10 through Sunday, June 12**. Children at the fair will be able to pick a free book to take with them, as well as sign up for the [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#) and get their own [Merced County Library](#) card. A great way to provide resources to encourage reading this summer.

"Children's health is much more than just their physical well-being, it's their mental well-being too," said Todd Suntrapak, President & CEO, Valley Children's Healthcare. "By cultivating a love of reading in our children, we help develop their imaginations, create curiosity, teach life lessons and provide a strong foundation for continued learning. We are excited about this partnership to further serve the children of Merced County – creating all-around healthier children."

Valley Children's Healthcare has served the Merced community for more than a decade with their NICU unit at Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center and their Olivewood Specialty Care Clinic – providing top-level pediatric care. Valley Children's commitment and service to the region continues to grow – currently plans are underway to develop a new Specialty Care Center similar to their expansion into Fowler and Bakersfield.

"We are so excited about this new partnership and working together to encourage reading – especially as we kick off the summer break," said Teresa Burrola, CEO, Merced County Fair. "Reading truly opens up doors for our children; it's the foundation to begin to explore, dream and learn. We are grateful to launch this new partnership with this free book giveaway at our fair!"

At the center of this effort is the Merced County Public Library that provides a host of reading opportunities for youth and adults alike. The library has developed a summer reading program, "Read Beyond the Beaten Path," with a variety of activities to encourage reading among youth, plus its Read & Succeed Program, eBooks and of course, traditional hard copy books available for check out.



June 8-12, 2022
Back & Bigger Than Ever
35th District Agricultural Association



“By fostering a love of reading at a young age, we are giving our children one of the greatest gifts,” said Amy Taylor, Merced County Librarian. “Reading enhances lives and by developing a foundation of reading, a love of reading – we are giving them a great addition to their toolbox that will serve them throughout their life.”

First 5 Merced County focuses on the first five years of life, building a strong foundation for children so they can reach their full potential. First 5 Merced County is focused on increasing awareness of and support for high-quality early childhood education, as well as increasing the percentage of parents who support learning in their homes by actively engaging in early development activities with their children, including reading to them.

About The Merced County Fair:

The Merced County Fair, first founded in 1891, represents the 35th District Agricultural Association. The fair’s mission statement outlines that it “*promises to meet the needs of our community by providing a fun, safe venue to celebrate our area’s agricultural heritage, discover new technology and be entertained.*” This year marks the 131st year of operation for the Merced County Fair, after two years of modified operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Roughly 70,000 people from throughout Merced County and beyond to attend the five-day Merced County Fair each June. Members of the Board of Directors include: President, Kim Rogina; First Vice President, Vicky Banaga; Second Vice President, Luis Lara; Mark Erreca; Lori Gallo; Emily Haden; Mark N. Pazin; and Carol Sartori-Silva. Teresa Burrola heads up the daily operations in her role as CEO. The 2022 Merced County Fair will return to an in-person event June 8-12 with all the beloved fair traditions – livestock, concerts, grandstand entertainment, carnival rides, competitive exhibits and more. For more information about the Merced County Fair, please visit www.MercedCountyFair.com. Connect with the Fair on Facebook (@mercedfair), Twitter (@Merced_CA_Fair) and Instagram (@mercedcountyfair).