

**For Immediate Release**

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## Take 5 & Read to Kids! Campaign Visits the California Strawberry Festival this weekend

*Ventura, CA – May 18, 2016*

Local celebrity readers are coming to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual [California Strawberry Festival](#) on May 21 & 22 to read with young children as part of “Take 5 & Read to Kids”! The impressive lineup of readers who have committed to taking time from their day to promote the importance of reading early to young children includes: Police Chief Jeri Williams, Ventura County Public Health Officer Dr. Robert Levin, Family Practice Physician Dr. Lisa Solinas, Harbor Commissioner Mary Ann Rooney, and Supervisor Kathy Long. Families joining the story times will have a chance to win a bag of books to read together at home!

“Early literacy begins at birth,” said First 5 Ventura County Executive Officer Claudia Harrison. By age four, 90% of a child’s brain development is complete, laying a foundation for school, work and life. Words build that foundation – even before a child can talk, words help their brain grow.”

Take 5 & Read to Kids! is a partnership between the Ventura County Star and First 5 Ventura County to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood literacy. Take 5 encourages parents and caregivers to talk, read, and sing with young children ages 0-5 to support their early language and literacy development.

“Being introduced to books in the home and reading to a child before they enter school has been shown to be the strongest predictor of school success. And yet, in Ventura County, nearly a third of children are not read to everyday,” Harrison adds.

Economic research shows that early investment in children can produce lifelong dividends to those children and to the taxpayers supporting those investments. Early investment is far more effective and less expensive than remediation to help teenagers and young adults catch up later on.

**Event Details**

**Who:** Parents and caregivers with young children ages 0-5

**What:** Take 5 Celebrity Reader Story Time at the California Strawberry Festival

**When:** Saturday, May 21 (12:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.) and Sunday, May 22 (12:00 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.)

**Where:** [California Strawberry Festival](#) (Strawberry Meadows of College Park, Oxnard) in the Arts & Crafts area at the Macaroni Kids booth.

**About First 5 Ventura County**

Research shows that a child’s brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child’s growth will have a significant impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on tobacco to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Ventura County distributes more than \$10 million each year to programs and services that support children’s health, learning and families, including the 11 community based Neighborhoods for Learning (NfLs).