

For Immediate Release

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Take 5 And Read To Kids! Campaign Kicks Off May 5th

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On Thursday May 5 at 10:00 a.m., over forty celebrity readers will be reading to young children throughout Ventura County to kick off the **Take 5 and Read to Kids** campaign. The impressive lineup of readers who have committed to taking time out of their day to promote the importance of reading early to young children includes Sheriff Geoff Dean, Supervisors Kathy Long and Steve Bennet, County Executive Officer Mike Powers, Ventura County Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen, CSUCI President Dr. Richard Rush, Ventura County Office of Education Stan Mantooth and several others.

“Early literacy begins at birth,” said First 5 Ventura County Executive Director 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 and 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.

“Falling behind in education impacts our economy,” said Ventura County Star Publisher Shanna Cannon. “We want parents and everyone in the community to become champions of early

literacy and all it takes is to read with a young child for a few minutes each day. That's what Take 5 is about – take 5 minutes today! Reading early and often can give Ventura County children the start they need to succeed – in school and in life!"

Event Details

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

What: Take 5 Celebrity Reader Story Time

When: Thursday May 5, 10 a.m.

Where:

- E.P. Foster Library, Ventura
- Pacific View Mall, Ventura
- Thousand Oaks Mall – Open Book Store, Thousand Oaks
- Camarillo Public Library, Camarillo
- Blanchard Community Library, Santa Paula
- Over 35 preschools throughout the county

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).

About Ventura County Star

The Ventura County Star has been the undisputed local news leader in Ventura County since 1925. Its award-winning website, VCStar.com, and award-winning daily newspaper provide comprehensive coverage of local news, sports, business, arts and entertainment, and opinion with an emphasis on local news. The Star is at the forefront of creating new niche products that focus on the individual needs of the community.