



For Immediate Release

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Oak View children and families receive expanded classes and preschool scholarships, thanks to grants received by First 5 Ventura County

First 5 Ventura County, recipient of two grants from the Ventura County Community Foundation, is using the funds to bring more early childhood education resources to a community impacted by the Thomas Fire.

(OJAI, Calif.)—Oak View children and families are benefitting from a pair of grants received by First 5 Ventura County (F5VC). F5VC has been able to expand the number of Parent and Child Together (PACT) classes and preschool scholarships available for Oak View Families through the Ojai Valley Neighborhood for Learning (OVNfL) thanks to grant funding from the Chris and Zelda Kunkle Oak View Community Foundation and the Bert M. and Mildred O. Dahl Fund through the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF).

First 5 Ventura County currently invests in Oak View children ages 0-5 and their families through OVNfL. “This grant funding is timely and especially significant because it allowed us to offer summer classes for the first time ever in Oak View, and increase our fall programming,” said First 5 Ventura County Executive Director Petra Puls. “Providing educational opportunities for our youngest Ventura County children is critical for their long-term academic success.”

The grant funding allows OVNfL to provide additional scholarships to Oak View families in need to assist with preschool tuition, and ensures local families have the continued educational support and resources to keep their children on track for the coming school year. Eight Oak View families received both spring and summer scholarships this year.

Francine Wyckoff of Oak View has been taking the Parent and Child Together (PACT) classes with her five-year-old daughter. Wyckoff says, “We are thrilled to have these wonderful science exploration and art classes. My daughter loves our time together making crafts, showing dad what we made, and getting to know other local families with children her same age. These First 5 classes are also about building community, and we’re grateful to have such quality programming here in Oak View.”

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The OVNfL, in collaboration with the Oak View library, has used the grant funds to offer PACT classes at no charge. PACTs provide an opportunity for parents/caregivers to engage in structured and unstructured play with their young children with the support of a teacher who models developmentally appropriate parenting techniques and provides education and coaching. The PACT classes also allow parents to receive valuable information based on the five protective factors regarding early childhood development -- parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social and emotional competence of children – as well as links to any needed services.

VCCF awarded the full request of \$26,800 to F5VC in February 2018, of which \$25,326 is designated for scholarships and PACT classes, and \$1,474 (or 5.5%) for F5VC administrative costs. “We are thrilled to partner with First 5 Ventura County to make this important investment supporting young children in Oak View,” said VCCF President & CEO Vanessa Bechtel.

F5VC will be eligible to receive funds for an additional two years, upon successful completion of annual reporting requirements.

For information about First 5 Ventura County visit www.first5ventura.org and for OVNfL classes for the fall visit www.ojavalleyneighborhoodforlearning.com, or call 805-640-4300x1062.

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). More information at www.first5ventura.org. ###

