



AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Austin's Biggest Bilingual Celebration of Books, Reading, Culture and Family Learning **Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros**

Celebrate with us at the 7th Annual *Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros*, Austin's biggest bilingual celebration of books, reading, culture and family learning. The event takes place on **Saturday, April 30, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** at the **St. John Community Center in Northeast Austin (7500 Blessing Ave.)**

Día de los niños / Día de los libros 2005 will feature entertainment for all ages including hands-on educational activities, storytelling and a Teen Magnetic Poetry booth. Participants will learn to dance Salsa, and Merengue. Every child will receive at least one free book and families will receive English/Spanish dictionaries. Refreshments will also be part of the celebration. The event is free and the public is invited to attend.

Día de los niños or *Day of the Child* is an annual celebration throughout Mexico, which recognizes children, pays homage to their importance in society, and endorses their wellbeing. Pat Mora, a Texas native and nationally recognized author of children's books, first heard of this Mexican holiday in 1996. Mora saw a natural link between promoting literacy and supporting the wellbeing of children. After contacting several organizations, including the American Library Association and engaging the work of individuals and organizations, *Día de los niños~Día de los libros* became a reality on April 30th, 1997. This event is now celebrated throughout numerous libraries and schools in the United States.

Austin first celebrated this event in April 1998 and has continued the tradition each year at selected Austin Public Library sites, including Cepeda, Southeast and St. John Branch Libraries. Our event has three goals: 1) to promote family sharing of books, reading, and learning. 2) To increase family awareness of community resources that provide shared literacy/learning opportunities for parents and children. 3) To celebrate culture and heritage as powerful tools in promoting learning and communication within families.

Each year in Austin, over 2,000 children and parents attend this unique community celebration and over 2,500 new, free books are given to children to support reading in the home. Since 1998, over 50

community organizations, 450 volunteers, and 15 local schools have participated in the event.

Honored for its success as an innovative, collaborative community outreach project, Austin's celebration has received several awards: Highsmith Award for community collaboration, Hotho Award for model family literacy outreach, REFORMA'S Mora Award, and ALA/School Library Journal and Gale Group's Giant Step Awards, as part of Austin Public Library's overall children's outreach efforts to under-served children.

Please come and join us!

2005 collaborative agencies: AmeriCorps for Community Engagement and Education; Americorps ~ Communities in Schools Central Texas, Inc.; Asociación de Colombianos en Austin; Austin Independent School District's Bilingual Education Department; Austin Parks and Recreation; Austin Public Library; Child, Inc.; El Consulado General de México; Family Connections; Family Forward; Girl Scouts Lone Star Council; KLRU-PBS; Partnership for Science Literacy; J.J. Pickle Elementary School; Reading is Fundamental of Austin.

2005 Sponsors: 42-KEYE; 107.7 FM La Invasora; The Association for the advancement of Science; Austin American-Statesman ¡Ahora Sí!; Austin Public Library Foundation; Center for Mexican American Studies; City of Austin; Gamesa; The National Science Foundation; J.J. Pickle's Kid's Café; KLRU-PBS; Partnership for Science Literacy; Reading is Fundamental of Austin; and Univisión.

2005 Participating Organizations: 4 H CAPITAL -- Travis County; AISD Bilingual Education Department; AmeriCorps for Community Engagement and Education; AmeriCorps CIS Central Texas; Amerigroup; Asociación de Colombianos en Austin; Austin Public Library Youth Services; BESO: Bilingual Education Student Organization (UT); CMAS: Center for Mexican-American Studies (UT); Capital Area Reach Out and Read; Child Inc.-- Head Start; City of Austin: Shots for Tots; City of Austin Health and Human Services; Las Comadres; Community New Start; Consulate General of Mexico; El Corazón de Tejas-Central Texas Chapter of REFORMA; Family Connections; Family Forward; Gamesa Cookie Co.; Girl Scouts - Lone Star Council; Healthy Neighborhood Unit; Healthy Tots Project A/TCHHSD; KLRU-PBS; Latina Mami; Literacy Coalition of Central Texas; Mexican Community Center; J. J. Pickle Elementary; RIF: Reading Is Fundamental of Austin; Superior Health Plan; St. John's Recreation Center; St. John's Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC); Work Source Child Care Solutions. The Science Partners for Science Literacy include: Austin Children's Museum; Austin Nature and Science Center; Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; Lower Colorado River Authority; Texas Education Agency; Texas Memorial Museum; and Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve.

For more information, contact Elva Garza, Austin Public Library-St. John Branch, 974-7575, or visit www.main.org/ninos.

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