



United Way of
San Luis Obispo County



What's raised in SLO County stays in SLO County!

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NEWS RELEASE

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UNITED WAY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY LAUNCHES *BORN LEARNING TRAIL* AT OCEANO ELEMENTARY TO PROMOTE EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

San Luis Obispo, Calif. – United Way of San Luis Obispo County will dedicate a trail at the entrance of Oceano Elementary School at 1:00 p.m. on December 10, 2009 as part of an innovative public engagement campaign called Born Learning, designed to help parents, caregivers and communities provide young children with early learning opportunities. The Born Learning campaign is designed specifically to help young children prepare for and succeed in school.

The Born Learning Trail at Oceano Elementary features ten bilingual stations along the sidewalk surrounding the school that suggest activities that encourage everyday, teachable moments with young children. It is a fun, interactive series of outdoor games on colorful engaging signs which help adults and children explore and learn together, turning an ordinary outing or daily walk to school into fun learning opportunities. The trail encourages the caregiver to follow the child's lead, building the child's curiosity and confidence and reinforcing the learning already underway. Based on the latest early childhood research and approved by national early learning experts through United Way Worldwide, the Born Learning Trail is designed to help adults interact with children to boost language and literacy development and to help caregivers understand how to best support early learning in everyday, outdoor moments.

"We're taking part in the Born Learning campaign because we want to do all we can to help parents and caregivers prepare young children to succeed in school," said Rick London, CEO, United Way of San Luis Obispo County. "We are especially pleased to have the opportunity to install another trail in SLO County, after the first trail installation in Mitchell Park proved to be such a success."

"The Bank of America Foundation has been supporting United Way's Success by 6® program since 1999 and is pleased to see the establishment of a second Born Learning Trail in SLO County," said Greg Bland, Market President Central Coast, Bank of America.

According to research gathered by United Way Worldwide, many parents undervalue their role in preparing young children for school. Parents and caregivers don't know exactly what actions to take, or feel like they don't have time to do what's needed. The proof is in the numbers: 46% of today's kindergarteners start school behind, however children entering kindergarten with skills they need to succeed are more likely to graduate from high school.

"We hope the Born Learning Trail will help meet parents' need in this community to get young children off to the right start," said Susan Hughes, Executive Director, First 5 San Luis Obispo County. "Kindergarten readiness is key to our children graduating from high school on schedule."

The trail is made possible through collaboration between PG&E, First 5 San Luis Obispo County, Bank of America, the San Luis Obispo County Child Care Planning Council, San Luis Obispo Child Abuse Prevention Council, Lucia Mar Unified School District, Home Depot and United Way of San Luis Obispo County.

For more information about Born Learning, visit www.bornlearning.org.

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This news release is available on the United Way of San Luis Obispo County website at <http://www.unitedwayslo.org/News/index.html>