



PEARSON BRINGS ITS CAMPAIGN TO STAMP OUT “WORD POVERTY” TO L.A.’s LARGEST FAMILY BOOK FAIR — *FERIA del LIBRO*

Leading Educational Publisher’s “Amazing Words” Meets City’s “Million Word Challenge”

Sacramento, CA (April 10, 2008) - Recognizing the overwhelming evidence pointing to the school success of children who read at home with their families, for the second consecutive year Pearson Education and the Pearson Foundation will be a sponsor of the Annual *Feria del Libro: A Family Book Fair* at Los Angeles City Hall on Saturday, June 7, 2008.

The *Feria del Libro: A Family Book Fair* is a community-wide event promoting a culture of literacy at home and academic achievement at school, while making quality culturally relevant books available to children of all ages and their families. The fair is the culmination of the *Million Word Challenge*, a literacy campaign promoting a culture of literacy at home and academic achievement at school.

Pearson Foundation president Mark Nieker said, “The heart of the message of *Feria del Libro* centers around the family and the importance of reading and vocabulary development. Research tells us that elementary school children should be increasing their vocabulary at the rate of seven words per day on average – that they should know a minimum of 8,000 words by grade three and an average of 45,000 words by high school graduation. Unfortunately, statistics confirm that struggling students are often not even learning one new word each day.”

“The book fair sprang to life to celebrate the love of reading and to give books to children and their families – many with no bookstores in their neighborhoods and no place to purchase books,” said Maria Casillas, president of Families In Schools. She added, “Again this year, we are grateful for the generous financial support of the Pearson Foundation and its recognition of the importance of family reading. The Foundation’s additional contribution of children’s books to *Feria del Libro: A Family Book Fair* helps to open up a world of reading to thousands of homes that may not own even one book for their children.”

Pearson Education vice president for California Vicky Bush cited a recent report from the U.S. Department of Education that indicates that three-quarters of California’s eighth-grade students score at or below basic level in writing ability. California schools fared worse than other states, according to the report, because it has so many students who learn English as a second language.

Bush said, “We know that one of the most effective ways to bridge the achievement gap is to address the vocabulary gap, or what we call ‘word poverty.’ We do this is through our *Amazing Words* learning strategy, which helps students’ reading comprehension while building their speaking vocabularies.” She added, “We see Pearson’s *Amazing Words* and *Feria del Libro*’s *Million Word Challenge* as the perfect partnership - both encourage a passion for reading and the love for learning new words.”

In addition to its ongoing financial commitment to *Feria del Libro*, the Pearson Foundation will offer its Family Book Night program to families at the event and will donate popular children's books from the Penguin Young Readers series and Longman English-Spanish dictionaries for students and for adults.

Bush noted, "We are 100 percent committed to working with the schools and teachers in California to address the issues around 'word poverty.' We are doing this not only through the intensive focus in our reading/language arts programs, but through the philanthropic work of the Pearson Foundation, which is equally dedicated to programs which build vocabulary in young children and set them on a path toward a lifetime love of reading."

In addition to *Feria Del Libro*, the Pearson Foundation, an international non-profit based in California, sponsors and takes part in initiatives for California families, students, and teachers, including the Foundation's own Family Book Nights and Digital Arts Alliance programs, the Pearson Teacher Fellowship, Jumpstart's Read for the Record Campaign, and other programs described at www.pearsonfoundation.org.

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