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Media Release

Summer Enrichment Program Provides Crucial Learning Opportunities for Gilroy Children

Super Power Summer Camp leverages combined resources of the school district and partnering community- based organizations to meet the needs of Gilroy children even in tough economic times

Gilroy, CA: Today, June 21, is not only the first day of summer, it's also National Summer Learning Day. Here in Gilroy and across the country, summer learning and enrichment programs are kicking off another summer of crucial academic and enrichment activities for children and youth. National Summer Learning Day is a time for celebration, but it also offers an opportunity to call attention to the importance of summer programs for children and youth—especially children from disadvantaged and low-income communities. This year, with state and local agencies across California facing dire budget cuts, innovative and resourceful summer programs such as Gilroy's Super Power Summer Camp have more reason than ever to celebrate their ability to provide enriching experiences that help children avoid summer learning loss. Super Power Summer Camp will offer programs in academics, literacy, nutrition and physical fitness, and outdoor activities for seven weeks of summer.

Gilroy Community Joins Forces to Provide Summer Learning Opportunities in the Face of Statewide Budget Cuts

Super Power Summer Camp is a joint project of the Gilroy Unified School District, the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA) and the YMCA of Silicon Valley. The program is also supported by funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and receives technical assistance from the Partnership for Children and Youth, based in Oakland. This year, from June 21 through August 6, the seven-week program will serve more than 800 K-8 students at three school sites. Defying tough economic times, this year's program will manage to serve roughly 300 more students than in 2009.

More

Mandy Reedy, program administrator of Gilroy Unified School District's Power School, is grateful to once again work with a group of resourceful collaborators to make the summer camp a reality for Gilroy youth. "I think it's testament to the Gilroy community's dedication to its children, especially our disadvantaged youth, that these agencies have come together in these challenging times to serve more than 800 students with much-needed summer enrichment programs," Reedy says.

Avoiding Summer Learning Loss

All children need summer learning opportunities in order to stay on course academically. Without ongoing summer opportunities to reinforce and learn skills, children—especially children in low-income communities—fall behind dramatically in many areas of academic achievement. Research spanning 100 years shows that children experience learning loss when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer. "The summer achievement gap affects low-income children disproportionately," says Rocio Reyes of MACSA. "For many of the kids who attend our camp, summer school was their only opportunity for productive summer activities, but budget cuts have taken away many of those options," she says. Luckily for those kids, Super Power Summer Camp will once again offer programs in academics, literacy, nutrition and physical fitness, and outdoor activities for seven weeks of summer.

"National Summer Learning Day is a celebration, but it's also a call to action," says Andrea Nicolette of the YMCA of Silicon Valley. "Summer is such an important time in the lives of our children. I think we owe it to them to do everything we can to make sure that all kids have opportunities for enrichment and growth not only during the school year, but all year round."

A 2009 report by the National Summer Learning Association revealed that a significant gap exists in California between the number of slots available for low-cost summer programs and the number of low-income school-age children. Results of a California poll published in 2010 by Public Agenda found that nearly two-thirds of all parents (65%) say they wish they knew about more summer programs that fit their budget.

More Information about Summer Learning

For more information on National Summer Learning Day, summer learning loss and resources for summer program planning, please contact the National Summer Learning Association (summerlearning.org) and the Partnership for Children and Youth (partnerforchildren.org).

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