

Newsflash: Contemporary musical to play one night at PAC

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## Early childhood literacy program receives community support



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Community members are showing significant generosity to a fundraising and awareness campaign, Adopt A Classroom, that was launched in April 2010 by the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation (SLOCCF) and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education (SLOCOE).

The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness and support for an award-winning, nationally recognized, early-childhood literacy program, Raising A Reader, which began in San Luis Obispo County

as an initiative of SLOCCF in 2003.

This multiple site program is managed by SLOCOE, and implemented through partnerships with Head Start, State Preschools, First 5, and community libraries. The program prepares preschool children of low-income families for school by training parents how to read with their children even if there are literacy challenges or if English is a second language.

The science behind Raising A Reader proves that a child's aptitude for learning must be nurtured during the critical window of brain development from birth to five years old. Research shows that incorporating the simple act of reading together into a family's lifestyle (called book cuddling by the program), is the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills children eventually require for learning to read; without it, a child will be left behind in academic achievement.

Seven years ago, Raising A Reader began in two classroom site locations in San Luis Obispo County, with 56 families participating. Today, the program operates out of 13 classroom sites in seven communities, and has served over one thousand families. Classroom sites are located in Oceano, Paso Robles, Shandon, Los Osos, Cambria, San Miguel and San Luis Obispo.

So far, the campaign has raised more than \$15,000 from private donors and local service organizations. Some of the generous Raising A Reader Classroom Adopters from San Luis Obispo include Lou Robinson, Mike and DD Patrick, and the SLO Exchange Club.

The Community Foundation is looking for other service organizations, companies, and individuals in the community who will join together with these Classroom Adopters to support Raising A Reader. Funding is needed for nine classrooms in order to continue next year. For a modest investment of \$2,500, one classroom is fully supported for one year.

"We are thrilled that some Classroom Adopters have chosen to support sites for multiple years, but any donation is appreciated by the Community Foundation and the grateful children and families who have the opportunity to participate in Raising A Reader" says Janice Fong Wolf, director of grants and programs.

Presentations about the program, and visits to the Raising A Reader classroom sites, are available and can be scheduled by contacting Pat Holley ( [pat@sloccf.org](mailto:pat@sloccf.org) ) at the Community Foundation.

For more information, or to make a donation, please contact the Community Foundation at 543-2323, or visit [www.sloccf.org](http://www.sloccf.org), and go to the Raising A Reader program page that is listed under featured programs.

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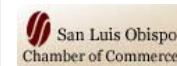
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