



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

First 5 Fresno County Sends Off their Airstream Trailer to New Literacy Adventures with Reading Heart

Fresno, CA – First 5 Fresno County (F5FC) has released ownership of their Airstream trailer that was launched in 2010 as the Breastfeeding Friendly (BFF) Express. The BFF Express was a mobile breastfeeding unit that raised awareness and support for breastfeeding as the healthiest start for babies and normalized support for lactating persons and their families at home, work, and community events. The BFF Express offered a comfortable, private space for up to 4 breastfeeding persons to nurse their babies while attending large outdoor community events. It also accommodated families with diaper-changing stations. Over the years, as California has implemented more legislation to protect and enhance breastfeeding support in various settings, the journey of the BFF Express has come to an end. General lactation support has increased and spaces have been permanently established at prominent locations like the Fresno Yosemite Airport, Fresno City Hall, Fresno Chaffee Zoo, and during the Fresno Fair. The Airstream trailer will now move on to new adventures to continue supporting young children in Fresno County.

"We are proud of the awareness and education that the BFF Express helped to bring over the last decade, and are thrilled for the new life it will have in support of another critical factor in the healthiest start of a child: early literacy," states Fabiola González, Executive Director of First 5 Fresno County. "Re-investing one of our assets to continue supporting young children and families in new ways is a win-win for our community," said Supervisor Pacheco, the Chair of the First 5 Fresno County Commission.

Reading Heart is a local organization that spearheads a book donation program dedicated to serving children in hospitals and areas with limited access to books. Danay Ferguson founded Reading Heart when she was eight years old because "she wanted to share her passion for reading and the joy of escaping in a good book with other children." Eight years later, Reading Heart has grown immensely while continuing to promote literacy and help children fall in love with reading. They now have book drop-off locations throughout Fresno, have collected over 1.2 million books, taken journeys on book tours, and visited 254 schools to gift children access to books.

"With this new trailer we'll be able to expand our adventures, truly making our reach as limitless as a child's imagination," says Danay Ferguson, founder of Reading Heart.

The former BFF Express will venture onto a new adventure and join Reading Heart's fleet of vehicles, including "Reada the Reading Ram" and "Booker", their book trailer. In the coming weeks, the BFF Express will be converted into a mobile tutoring lab and library to help get books to children throughout Fresno County. The new mission of the BFF Express, or rather, the "Book Baby," is set to launch later this spring.

WHAT: Press conference to celebrate the transfer of ownership from First 5 Fresno County to Reading Heart to support early literacy throughout Fresno County. The media will be able to tour the trailer before it transforms from the BFF Express to the "Book Baby" in the coming weeks.

WHEN: Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 11a.m.

WHERE: Lighthouse for Children, 2405 Tulare St, Fresno CA 93721

WHO:

- Danay Ferguson, Reading Heart Founder
- Brian Pacheco, Fresno County Supervisor & First 5 Fresno County Commission Chair
- Fabiola González, First 5 Fresno County Executive Director

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About First 5 Fresno County: At First 5 Fresno County, we know children develop in the context of their families. First 5 Fresno County was created after the passage of Proposition 10 in 1998 which instituted a .50 cent tax on tobacco products to support the early development of children from prenatal to age five. First 5 Fresno County has invested more than \$300 million in local programs and services over the last two decades.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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