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San Mateo Celebrates! A Weeklong Festival Honoring National Library Week

Festival Underscores Importance of Libraries as California Faces Literacy Challenges

San Mateo, CA (March 31, 2025)— The City of San Mateo is thrilled to announce **San Mateo Celebrates!**, a vibrant weeklong festival from **April 6 to April 12, 2025**, in honor of **National Library Week**. This series of events underscores the indispensable role of libraries in fostering literacy, education, and community engagement, especially during a time when California faces significant literacy challenges.

Libraries are more than books—they're a vital safety net, offering education, resources, and a place to connect. From literacy support to job help, they strengthen communities at every level. Cultural programs further enrich this role, fostering understanding, creativity, and a shared sense of belonging. San Mateo Celebrates! honors this impact, reminding us that when our library thrives, so does our community.

Addressing the Literacy Crisis

This is especially vital right now, when California is grappling with a literacy crisis:

- **Low Reading Scores:** A substantial number of students, particularly in low-income communities, are not meeting reading proficiency standards.
- **Third Grade Literacy:** Only 3-in-10 third graders from low-income backgrounds are reading at grade level.*
- **Adult Literacy:** Approximately 3 out of 10 California adults struggle with basic reading skills.**
- **Pandemic Impact:** The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, with school closures and remote learning contributing to declining reading scores.
- **Disparities:** Literacy gaps are notably pronounced among low-income and minority students, highlighting inequities in educational opportunities.

In light of these challenges, **San Mateo Celebrates!** aims to spotlight the myriad resources and programs our libraries offer to support literacy and lifelong learning.

Festival Highlights

The festival boasts an array of events designed to engage and inspire attendees of all ages:

Festival in the Library

April 6, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

A family-friendly kickoff featuring:

Welcome & Storytime: Special guests, including local dignitaries and the Paws for Tales program.

- **Author Judd Winick: Creator of the "Hilo" graphic novel series shares his creative journey.**
- **Steve the Magic Guy: Captivating magic show and balloon creations.**
- **Ukulenny: Ukulele jam session—bring your own or use one provided.**
- **Fratello Marionettes: Performance of "Jack & the Beanstalk"**
- **The Reading Bug: Onsite book sales.**

San Mateo Shakes: "Romeo & Juliet"

April 7, 4:30 PM – 5:30 p.m.

The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival presents a 1960s-themed rendition of the classic tragedy, exploring themes of love and generational conflict.

Refreshments by Hawaiian Breeze Shave Ice.

San Mateo Chats: AI in Healthcare



April 8, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Stanford Associate Professor James Zou discusses his groundbreaking research on AI's role in scientific discovery and patient diagnosis.

San Mateo Delights: SUDAMERICANTO Performance

April 9, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Music at Kohl Mansion presents SUDAMERICANTO, a Pan-Latin quartet taking audiences on a journey through South American and Caribbean traditions with a Brazilian jazz twist. Refreshments by Cuban Kitchen.

San Mateo Reflects: 'Dress Codes' Discussion

April 10, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Stanford Law Professor Richard Thompson Ford explores how fashion laws have influenced history, based on his book 'Dress Codes'.

San Mateo Knows: Trivia Night Benefit

April 11, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

An engaging trivia challenge hosted by expert librarians. Ages 21+. Ticket purchase required; proceeds benefit the San Mateo Public Library.

iSan Mateo Juega!

April 12, 12-4 p.m.

Bilingual educator and performer José-Luis Orozco headlines an afternoon of community fun, including a resource fair and announcements of contest winners.

A Call to Action

Libraries have historically been centers of resilience and community support. During the Great Depression, not a single library closed its doors, underscoring their unwavering commitment to public service. Today, as we navigate contemporary challenges, our libraries continue to stand as welcoming and safe spaces for everyone. **San Mateo Celebrates!** is more than a festival—it's a reaffirmation of our dedication to literacy, learning, and community unity.

Join Us

We invite all community members to celebrate the invaluable contributions of our libraries and explore the resources available to support literacy and lifelong learning. For more information and a detailed schedule of events, please visit

www.sanmateocelebrates.com. Get your **[tickets here](#)**.

**As stated in California Assembly Bill AB1121 2025*

***EdSource 2024*



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