



For Immediate Release
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Contact:
Charlotte Orr
Office: (408) 794-6404
Cell: (408) 512-7300

SAN JOSE — What do you get when you combine a lineup of famous athletes, a live performance by a hip-hop train conductor, and books galore? You get a day of fun at Happy Hollow Park & Zoo for Kristi Yamaguchi's Reading Adventures, which took place Saturday, May 19.

Kristi Yamaguchi, winner of the Gold Medal at the '92 Winter Olympic Games, now spends much of her time raising her two daughters, writing children's books, and serving as a champion for early childhood literacy. The fifth annual event, hosted by Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream Foundation, brings together celebrities and authors who read their favorite children's books.

“Engaging parents with their child's every day learning is an important aspect of my Always Dream Foundation mission,” says Kristi Yamaguchi. “Reading Adventures brings together the entire family and Happy Hollow Park and Zoo is the ideal venue in the South Bay to partner with and promote the joy of reading, it's a great partnership.”

The festive, book-filled day had many highlights including story readings by:

- Kristi Yamaguchi, author of “Cara’s Kindness”
- Polina Edmunds, figure skater
- Meg Fleming, children’s author/illustrator of “Ready, Set, Sail!”
- Jennifer Fosberry, children’s author of the New York Times bestselling books “My Name is Not Isabella”
- Bret Hedican, Stanley Cup Champion, SJ Sharks TV Commentator read, “While the World is Sleeping,” by Pamela Duncan Edwards
- Tim McCanna, children’s author of “Barnyard Boogie”

Disney Jr.'s Choo Choo Soul also performed their child-friendly, high-energy hip-hop songs. The group is famous for making learning fun for preschoolers and parents alike.

The event is supported by Happy Hollow Foundation, as well as the Always Dream Foundation, which works to inspire underserved children to reach for their dreams through innovative reading programs and by advancing the cause of early childhood literacy.

Dozens of studies show the importance of early childhood literacy, yet the National Center for Education Statistics reports that only 53% of children ages three to five are read to daily by a family member.





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Books and reading are essential ingredients in a healthy and happy childhood," said Amy Pizarro, Executive Director of Happy Hollow Foundation. "We are thrilled to partner with Always Dream Foundation to tackle this important need."

Kristi Yamaguchi's Reading Adventures is just one highlight of the park and zoo's "Spring into Reading" month. This includes the unveiling of five new "Story Stations" located near benches throughout the park and zoo, providing comfortable places for families to read together, and books provided by the San José Public Library.

"The City's Education & Digital Literacy Strategy re-envision's City facilities and programs as classrooms that amplify the work done by schools," says Justin Long, Deputy Director of San José's Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services. "Facilities like Happy Hollow Park & Zoo offer a unique literacy experience, where children associate the act of reading with a place of play and fun."

Other activities from the event included book sales and signings, and craft stations provided by San José Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services, and San José Public Library. There was also youth participation in the event, including San José Youth Commissioner, Katherine Ho and the 'Through Teens Eyes' book authors, who attended with copies of their book that inspires teenagers to be creative and write.

Quick Facts:

Spring into Reading Month at Happy Hollow

- Kristi Yamaguchi's Reading Adventures celebrated reading with several celebrity authors on Saturday May 19.
- Happy Hollow installed five new, permanent story stations that are stuffed with books (in English and Spanish) for families to enjoy together.
- Animal and nature themed story times are taking place at 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays until the end of May, thanks to Early Education Services, San José Public Library

Happy Hollow Park & Zoo (HHPZ) has provided outdoor play to the Bay Area since 1961. HHPZ is a division of the City of San José Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services Department, and is supported by the Happy Hollow Foundation. The mission of HHPZ is to connect people to nature through play. Happy Hollow features a unique combination of family rides and amusements, a Puppet Castle Theater, nature themed play areas, special events for all seasons, an Association of Zoos and Aquariums-accredited zoo, and a robust animal education and wildlife conservation program with classes for all ages year-round. HHPZ also offers annual memberships for families and individuals. More information can be found at www.hhpz.org by calling (408) 794-6400.



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Happy Hollow Foundation (HHF) is a nonprofit organization, established in 1958 and dedicated to advocating, supporting, and enhancing the Happy Hollow Park & Zoo. The focus of Happy Hollow Foundation is to engage individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government agencies in helping to advance the park and zoo.

Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream Foundation

In 1996, Kristi Yamaguchi founded the Always Dream Foundation whose mission is to inspire underserved children to reach for their dreams through innovative reading programs and by advancing the cause of early childhood literacy. ADF has launched Always Reading in Title One classrooms in Northern California, Arizona, and Hawaii. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Always Reading Program will serve over 2,000 students in 87 classrooms. More information is available at www.alwaysdream.org.



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