

# 900 New Children's Books Given Away at Local Campus

*Every Student at Fullerton Elementary School in Addison Received a Book; Distribution Made in Commemoration of National Literacy Month in September*

**ADDISON** – Students at Fullerton Elementary School are going to be spending some time over the next days and weeks reading brand new books. That's because a total of 900 children's books — enough for every student plus extra for the library — were given away at the public school that serves high-need, low-income households in Addison.

The distribution event, which featured colorful story and activity books for a range of grades and ages, took place Sept. 19 during a special morning activity at Fullerton, a 527-student K-5 Title I campus with a significant Hispanic and English learner population. Students are expected to use the books as materials for recreational reading and family learning time.

The Molina Foundation, in partnership with Addison School District 4 and Change Healthcare, locally based in Lombard, sponsored the event as part of its Book Buddies campaign, a literacy initiative taking place in designated regions of the country around the time of National Literacy Month in September. The initiative is designed to promote out-of-school learning and help students recover the academic ground lost during the “summer slide” vacation break — a loss that can be more significant for economically disadvantaged families.

Dr. Carrie Stange, Fullerton School Principal, said that sending children home with books to keep is an action step that reinforces a campus-wide literacy message. “We have consistently been telling our students just how important reading is,” Stange said. “We, as a school community, always encourage families to build libraries at home.”

Each student at the school received an age-appropriate book. Many of the books featured fun characters and themes, including “Doc McStuffins,” “Paw Patrol” and “Big Hero 6.” As part of the event, book readings and learning activities were held in some of the classrooms.

“The education of our children is the single most important preventative step we can take to ensure their success later in life,” said Foundation President and Founder Dr. Martha Bernadett about the giveaway at Fullerton. “Simply having books in the home increases a child's chances of success enormously. The Molina Foundation is grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with schools and teachers in their work to help educate our communities.”

Change Healthcare, a corporate supporter of the Foundation, provided about a dozen employees from the corporation's local offices who served as volunteers to help with the giveaway and reading activities.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ADDISON SCHOOL DISTRICT 4

**FULLERTON SCHOOL Book Event Photo 3:** Tina Azar, an employee of Change Healthcare who served as an event volunteer, reads to kindergarten students at Fullerton Elementary School in Addison on Sept. 19. The activity was part of a special giveaway event sponsored by The Molina Foundation that featured the distribution of a new book to each student at the K-5 campus that serves many low-income families.

“Change Healthcare is honored to participate in local events to support literacy and help students progress,” said Kurt Anderson, Senior Vice President & General Manager Payment Integrity for Change Healthcare. “Our core values of stewardship and community tightly align with The Molina Foundation's praiseworthy programs of supporting children and families in local communities.”

So far this year, the Book Buddies program has distributed more than 300,000 new children's books to 57 agencies, schools and community organizations in California and 16 other states, including Texas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Florida and West Virginia. Last year, program book distributions totaling 304,091 were made to more than 200 groups in 22 states. The books had a total estimated value of \$2.3 million.

The Molina Foundation is dedicated to the mission of reducing disparities in access to education and health. Since its inception in 2004, the Foundation has partnered with more than 2,000 organizations and schools around the country to promote literacy and wellness. In addition, it has donated more than 5 million new children's books in English and Spanish, and hosted hundreds of free workshops and programs for educators, families, and children.



**FIRST-GRADE STUDENTS** are excited about the new books they just received during a special giveaway event at Fullerton Elementary School in Addison on Sept. 19. The event, sponsored by The Molina Foundation with volunteer assistance from Change Healthcare, featured the distribution of a new book to each student at the campus that serves many low-income families.