San Bernardino Public Library Supports Footsteps2Brilliance Countywide Early Literacy Program
Link to the Online Program Posted to Library Website

The San Bernardino Public Library (SBPL) has joined in supporting a new countywide early literacy program called Footsteps2Brilliance that is part of the San Bernardino Countywide Vision2Read literacy campaign, a collective impact initiative involving multiple agencies working collaboratively to increase literacy rates among children and families in the county.

The library has posted a link to the program on its library website at www.sbpl.org. Parents interested in signing up for the app for their children can go to https://www.myf2b.com/register/sanbernardinocounty as well.

"On behalf of our Library Board of Trustees, we're very pleased in promoting this wonderful effort to promote early childhood education and early literacy in our city” said SBPL Library Director Ed Erjavek.

The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, County Preschool Services, Children’s Fund and First 5 San Bernardino are partnering to deliver the new literacy program.

Footsteps2Brilliance is an innovative early learning mobile technology platform that provides free access to early literacy activities to all families with children birth through pre-K who reside in San Bernardino County. The program provides a comprehensive curriculum of more than 1,000 English and Spanish books, songs and games that are fun for children and address the vocabulary gap, according to the following press release from the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools.

"Literacy is a priority in our county. Early literacy skills lay the foundation for a child’s success from cradle to career,” County Superintendent Ted Alejandre said. "Children who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers."

In January 2017, a cohort of 1,500 students in county preschool programs were selected to use Footsteps2Brilliance and measure their literacy growth. To date, participating preschoolers have read 22,240 books and more than 5.1 million words. As part of the launch, Alejandre and program partners are encouraging all families with birth through pre-K children in the county to join a challenge to read an additional 3 million words by Sept. 1, 2017.

"Footsteps2Brilliance enables us to cross the divide between children who have a seat in a preschool and those who do not,” said Diana Alexander, director of Preschool Services for the county. "We get to provide all birth through pre-K children with an amazing literacy software program that will bring several modes of learning right into their home. This is an exciting time for San Bernardino County!"

Among the benefits of Footsteps2Brilliance is that the platform’s educational resources can be accessed from any smartphone, tablet or computer with or without an Internet connection. Research shows that more than 80 percent of parents own smartphones or mobile devices.
"Through the Footsteps2Brilliance platform, families, schools and the community have access to high-quality educational tools to accelerate vocabulary and literacy skills using the devices they already own," noted Karen Scott, executive director of First 5 San Bernardino.

According to Stacy Iverson – president and CEO of Children’s Fund – every dollar spent on quality early childhood interventions produces a $14-$17 return. “No single strategy offers a greater return on investment than providing children with the tools they need to read proficiently by third grade,” she said.

Research shows the greatest disparity of knowledge among children is the vocabulary gap – the number of words a child knows from birth through third grade. Children from low-income families hear 30 million fewer words before the age of four than their more affluent peers. This is compounded by the fact that 61 percent of low-income children have no books in their homes.

Approximately 20 percent of families in San Bernardino County live in poverty and 34 percent speak Spanish in the home (according to census data). Based on data from the California Department of Education, nearly 19 percent of school-aged students are classified as English Learners and more than 72 percent qualify for free and reduced lunch.

The San Bernardino County literacy partnership is unique and will serve as a blueprint around the nation to achieve early literacy success in dual language communities on a countywide basis.

“We are honored to partner with the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools to give all children equal access to high-quality bilingual English and Spanish literacy instruction. Already, we have seen this unique countywide collaboration bring the community together with a strong commitment and a plan to support all early learners. We believe this will be a powerful model for other districts across the nation to follow,” said Ilene Rosenthal, CEO of Footsteps2Brilliance.

About San Bernardino Countywide Vision2Read:
Vision2Read is a collective impact initiative involving government, education, health care, public safety, business and labor, community and faith-based leaders, and parents and families. Vision2Read supports the San Bernardino Countywide Vision and its regional educational goal of supporting the success of every child from cradle to career. It is designed to help improve literacy throughout San Bernardino County by connecting people to literacy programs. www.vision2read.com

About Footsteps2Brilliance, Inc.:
Footsteps2Brilliance, Inc. is the breakthrough early learning platform that accelerates early achievement by uniting the power of mobile gaming technology with the latest in cognitive research. Footsteps2Brilliance provides enticing, interactive, 24/7 learning experiences that digitally link school and home to give students the edge they need for success in school today and the world tomorrow. www.footsteps2brilliance.com

About San Bernardino Public Library:
The San Bernardino Public Library is governed by an autonomous administrative Library Board of Trustees as provided by Section 602 of the Charter of the City of San Bernardino. Library services are provided at four sites: Norman F. Feldheym Central Library, Paul Villaseñor Library, Dorothy Ingram Library, and Howard Rowe Library. In addition to www.sbpl.org, patrons are encouraged to follow the