



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **First 5 San Bernardino Brings 'Gift a Kid a Book' to Potter the Otter Birthday Party at the Chino Youth Museum**

*Local preschool children celebrate birthday of First 5 mascot with free books, cake, interactive play, and help commemorate museum's 25th anniversary*

**CHINO, Calif. (September 30, 2025)** – [First 5 San Bernardino](#), in partnership with the [Chino Youth Museum](#), hosted a birthday party for the children's book character Potter the Otter to celebrate early literacy and encourage families to *Gift a Kid a Book* for life's milestones. The birthday party also coincided with the Chino Youth Museum's 25th anniversary, honoring its role as a cherished space for family play and learning, and hundreds of birthday parties.

The event brought together more than 30 children ages 0–5 and their families for a morning filled with free books, birthday cake, singalongs, crafts, and hands-on play through the museum's interactive exhibits. Children unwrapped books as birthday gifts and were joined by Potter the Otter, the First 5 San Bernardino mascot, and entertainer Markus Law led story time and sing-alongs.

"Any of your child's milestones, like celebrating a birthday, their first day of school or losing a tooth, is a reason to celebrate with a new book," said Scott McGrath, Deputy Director of Systems and Impact at First 5 San Bernardino. "Reading builds stronger brains, gets them ready for school and builds meaningful family connections, which is why it's important to introduce them to books at an early age. The excitement these kids feel unwrapping their own books is priceless."

The celebration was part of First 5 San Bernardino's [Gift a Kid a Book](#) campaign, now in its third year, which encourages parents and caregivers to remember books for birthdays, holidays and other milestones. First 5 San Bernardino has provided more than 10,000 books to San Bernardino County families with children under age five through *Gift a Kid a Book*.

"Partnering with First 5 San Bernardino to celebrate early literacy reminds us how powerful books can be in shaping a child's future," said Chino Mayor Eunice Ulloa. "For 25 years, the

Chino Youth Museum has been a beloved place to celebrate milestones, inspire curiosity, and foster a love of reading through programs like 'Letter Learners.' I encourage everyone to visit and experience the Chino Youth Museum for themselves."

Research shows that 90 percent of a child's brain develops in the first five years of their life, making early learning experiences critical. Reading together supports brain growth, language development and positive family connection while also offering a healthier alternative to screen time.

*Gift a Kid a Book* is First 5 San Bernardino's reminder for parents, grandparents and caregivers to make books the go-to gift for birthdays, milestones and celebrations. To explore age-appropriate book recommendations, download a free bookmark, and access more resources for building early literacy, visit [first5sanbernardino.org/reading](https://first5sanbernardino.org/reading).

For more information on the Chino Youth Museum or to book a birthday party, visit [chinoyouthmuseum.com](https://chinoyouthmuseum.com).

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### **About First 5 San Bernardino**

First 5 San Bernardino's distinct purpose is to improve the lives of young children and their families by giving them the best possible start in life. For over 25 years, First 5 San Bernardino has been working dynamically through strategic partnerships to promote, support and enhance the health and early development of children prenatal through age 5, their families and communities. Funded through the 1998 voter-approved initiative, California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues), First 5 San Bernardino has evolved into a system where stakeholders and services are integrated, coordinated and sustainable, and one that families experience as accessible, inclusive and equitable. For more information, visit [First5SanBernardino.org](https://First5SanBernardino.org).

### **About the Chino Youth Museum**

The Chino Youth Museum's mission is to foster a better understanding of tomorrow through interactive learning and the appreciation of yesterday and today. Celebrating 25 years as a vibrant nonprofit educational hub, the Museum serves nearly 10,000 children and family members each year by offering a dynamic, hands-on environment that promotes curiosity, creativity, and community engagement. The Museum features eight hands-on exhibits designed to spark imagination and learning. Modeled after a small town, these exhibits invite children and families to explore a variety of real-world roles and environments. Visitors can discover the importance of water conservation, experience life on an energy-efficient farm, perform on stage in a theater, learn about local heroes in the fire and police departments, manage money in a bank, experiment in a science center, report news in a newsroom, and engage their senses at the colorful sensory wall. Each experience is crafted to reflect the unique history, culture, and spirit of the Chino community. For more information or to book a birthday party, visit [chinoyouthmuseum.com](https://chinoyouthmuseum.com).

