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**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
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## DOCTORS ACADEMY STUDENTS REACH OUT TO HELP CHILDREN READ

- WHO:** UCSF Fresno Sunnyside High School Doctors Academy students have teamed up with the Reach Out and Read Program to promote early literacy as a standard part of pediatric care.
- WHAT:** Doctors Academy students recently held a book drive on campus and collected over 700 children's books, which they will present to physicians and children involved with the Reach Out and Read program.
- WHERE:** University Medical Center Children's Health Clinic, 4460 E. Huntington, corner of Barton and Huntington in Fresno.
- WHEN:** 9 a.m., Tuesday, February 27, 2007
- WHY:** Health professionals know that growing up healthy means growing up with the skills necessary to succeed in life. Early literacy skills better prepare children to enter school and succeed at reading. Parents value advice from doctors. As a result, physicians and other health professionals can promote early literacy by making books available and encouraging parents to read aloud to their children.

### Background:

Reach Out and Read is a national non-profit organization that promotes early literacy by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. Books and information are made available in pediatric exam rooms across the nation. The local program, funded by First 5 of Fresno County and the National Reach Out and Read Program, works collaboratively with various health centers and clinics throughout Fresno County to assist in early childhood preparation for reading. The local Reach Out and Read program was started several years ago by Shanna Traenor, former chief resident of UCSF Fresno's pediatric program. Drs. Melissa Aguirre and Lydia Herrera-Mata currently are co-directors of the local program. Aguirre is assistant clinical professor of pediatrics at UCSF Fresno and a practicing pediatrician at the Children's Health Clinic.

The Sunnyside High School Doctors Academy, which is sponsored by the UCSF Fresno Latino Center for Medical Education and Research, is a college preparatory academy for educationally and economically disadvantaged students interested in professional careers in health or medicine. Interaction with health professionals and participation in public service is a large component of the program.

"The Doctors Academy students have the opportunity here to give back to their community and learn the value of community service," said Sheryl Weaver, principal at Sunnyside High School. "In addition to collecting books, the students will volunteer as readers at health clinics throughout the Fresno area."

(More)

Weaver also praised the Sunnyside High School campus community for its support of the book drive.

For more details, please contact Diana Cantu with the Doctors Academy at (559) 241-7670, email [Diana.cantu@fresno.ucsf.edu](mailto:Diana.cantu@fresno.ucsf.edu) or Anne Adamson with the Reach Out and Read Program at (559) 269-0862, [aadamson@communitymedical.org](mailto:aadamson@communitymedical.org)

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