



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Thousands of Area Kindergarten Students Mark a Rite of Spring by Visiting Area Colleges First KinderCaminata at Santiago Canyon College on March 16**

(Santa Ana)—This March, some 5,000 kindergarten students will get a glimpse of higher education during visits to four local community college campuses. The 14<sup>th</sup> annual visit hosted by KinderCaminata will take place at Santiago Canyon College, Santa Ana College, Cypress College and Fullerton College. This “children’s walk” opens the door to future possibilities for area youngsters: career choices, a college education, and support for their cultural heritage.

At Santiago Canyon College (SCC), located at 8045 E. Chapman in Orange, youngsters from Orange Unified School District will walk hand-in-hand through the campus from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on March 16. While visiting more than 30 career stations, the wide-eyed children will visit a mock court room and meet a real Orange County judge and her bailiff—the Honorable Carolyn Kirkwood, learn how to maintain a healthy heart by meeting cardiologist Dr. Renata Gomez, get the basics on how to make a speech about what they want to be when they grow up from SCC Forensic Team members and see themselves on camera talking about their dreams. Youngsters will also get acquainted with Orange County Sheriff’s Department officers and their Humvee, area firefighters, and officers from the Orange Police Department.

“One of my favorite events each year is KinderCaminata which was launched by our district to introduce kindergarten students to the importance of attending college,” said Edward Hernandez, Jr., Ed.D., Rancho Santiago Community College District chancellor. “The event is just as important for the parent volunteers who may never have stepped foot on a college campus and may be inspired to attend college themselves.”

KinderCaminata started in Orange County in 1994 and now includes four community colleges in Southern California as well as community colleges in central and inland California. In 1993, Galal Kernahan proposed the concept of KinderCaminata to Los Amigos of Orange County, a service organization dedicated to enhancing opportunities in the Latino community.

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The first KinderCaminata attracted 2,000 students to Santa Ana College on March 31, 1994. Since then, KinderCaminata has introduced more than 80,000 students to institutions of higher education.

They all come to college campuses with stars in their eyes pondering a single question, “What do I want to be when I grow up?” The children, many of them from immigrant, low-income families, proudly wear their dreams on placards around their necks—a teacher, a nurse, a firefighter, an astronaut, an ice skater and even president.

At Santa Ana College on March 23, the class of 2021 will learn life-saving techniques from firefighters, see uniformed California Highway Patrol officers and their motorcycle, and get up close and personal with (water bottle) rocket propulsion. Youngsters at Santa Ana College will be entertained by Relámpago del Cielo folkloric dancers and Tio Alecc from Family Reading, Inc., and his interactive songs. On March 30, the festivities close out at Cypress College and Fullerton College.

Approximately 5,000 wide-eyed kindergarten students from six school districts will tour four community colleges in Orange County from March 16 to March 30.

The dates and times of the Orange County events follow:

Santiago Canyon College	Friday, March 16	8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Santa Ana College	Friday, March 23	8:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.
Fullerton College	Friday, March 30	8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Cypress College	Friday, March 30	8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The annual children’s march is inspired by César Chávez’s perseverance and vision and is held near his March 31 birth date. On the day of the event, children are given caps with Chavez’s motto, “Sí, se puede” (Yes, you can) and can be heard chanting the motto throughout their college visit. KinderCaminata is a non-profit organization supported by its annual fundraiser, *Salute to Chancellors, Presidents, Superintendents*, and is governed by a volunteer board of directors composed of four Orange County community college district chancellors, university, business and community leaders.

For more information, please contact Teresa Mercado-Cota at (714) 480-7505.

**About the Rancho Santiago Community College District**

*The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCCD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.*

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