



Once Upon a Time at Fairyland

By C.J. Hirschfield

The power of partnering

One day next week, 2200 very special guests will be joining us at the park for a day that will celebrate community, literacy, and school readiness. We're opening our fairy gates to all of the families who participate in Oakland's Head Start programs, and it's one of our favorite – albeit wild and crazy – days of the year.

We love partnering with others in our mission to serve kids, and this year we hit the jackpot. Check out this all-star lineup:

- **Head Start and Early Head Start** will be offering free passes to the park, as well as lunch. These two child development programs for low-income families in Oakland foster school readiness and social skills in children, with an emphasis on positive health, good nutrition, and parental involvement

- **The Week of the Young Child** is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. This year's Week of the Young Child is April 22–28 and the theme is Early Years Are Learning Years.

- **Bring Me a Book** will be distributing 1,200 books - one per family. Their mission is to strengthen the language and emerging literacy skills of the growing number of California's under-served children.

By providing libraries with high quality children's books and read-aloud workshops to under-served communities, Bring Me A Book inspires reading aloud to children, the most important factor in determining a child's future success in reading.

- **Right to Literacy Campaign**, supporting UNESCO's Decade of Literacy that ends in 2012, will be hosting the appearance of A Right to Literacy declaration scroll, to be signed by participating supporters. The scroll has already been signed by 35,000 people.

- **Jump Start** will be conducting Dr. Seuss-themed literacy activities and performances throughout the day. Jump Start is a national early education organization that helps low income children develop the language and literacy skills they need to be successful in school, setting them on a path to close the achievement gap before it is too late. Since 1993, Jump Start has trained nearly 25,000 college students and community volunteers to deliver

its program to more than 100,000 preschool children nationwide.

- **Rogers Family Foundation** is helping underwrite the event and the purchase of. The mission of the foundation is to support organizations committed to the highest level of achievement and excellence with a particular emphasis in the areas of education and youth development in the city of Oakland and its immediate surrounding areas. Their vision is that all Oakland students will graduate from high school prepared to succeed in life, college, and career.

- The City of Oakland is producing a full week of events to honor The Week of the Young Child.

This is the third year that Fairyland is hosting this event, and we've added partners every year. In these challenging economic times, it makes more sense than ever to combine forces for the greatest possible impact, and I feel so proud of our community for pulling together on behalf of our families.

Because believe me, for so many of these kids, Fairyland is as big, if not bigger, than Disneyland.

For those of us on staff, the day is nonstop, and we're exhausted when it's over. It also recharges our batteries to see families having so much fun together, and it reminds us why we're in this crazy business.

Week of the Young Child? Heck, that's every week at Fairyland.

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