



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Judy Iannaccone
Director, Communications
Phone: (714) 480-7503
e-mail: iannaccone_judy@rscsd.edu

March 23, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

O.C. Kindergarten Students Get Their First Glimpse of College at Santa Ana College on March 26 ***Chancellor Edward Hernandez Serves as KinderCaminata Grand Marshal***

(Santa Ana)—Every year since 1994, kindergarten students from Central Orange County have made a pilgrimage to Santa Ana College (SAC). On Friday, March 26 for the 17th year, some 1,000 children, teachers and parents, will get what may be their first look at a college campus through the KinderCaminata program.

This year's event will be marked by Rancho Santiago Community College District's Chancellor Edward Hernandez, Jr., Ed.D., serving as the grand marshal of KinderCaminata "march." The outreach program was founded in 1993 by Los Amigos of Orange County, a service organization dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities in the Latino community. Since its inception, Santa Ana College has teamed up with the non-profit to bring this event to youngsters in the Santa Ana Unified School District. Hernandez, who will retire on June 30, has supported KinderCaminata since its beginning.

An event highlight will be an appearance by MacArthur Fellow and Santa Ana bookseller Rueben Martínez who will unveil his first book, *Once Upon a Time/Había una Vez*. He will read excerpts from the bilingual book that includes seven classic Latin American folktales from Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Spain. The storybook with artwork by Raul Colon was released by HarpersCollins on March 9.

"At Santa Ana College, KinderCaminata is one of the high points in our academic year," said Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D., SAC president. "Seeing the excitement on the children's faces is amazing as they explore their potential careers and the possibility of higher education. They can be *anything* they want—a firefighter, a police officer, a nurse, or even the U.S. president—through higher education. By targeting children of low-income families, KinderCaminata helps both the children and parents understand the value of higher education. It's up to us to keep higher education accessible to these families."

- m o r e -

2-2-2

Each youngster arrives at KinderCaminata wearing a name tag announcing his or her dream career and the day introduces them to additional career choices. The SAC hands-on career exploration booths will include:

- Comunidad Latina Federal Credit Union will bring a mock ATM to introduce careers in banking.
- The SAC fire technology program will show off a fire engine and encourage fire safety.
- The Santa Ana Police Department will bring a police car and a K-9 police dog.
- Orange County Children and Youth Services, along with SAC psychology interns, will use hand puppets to educate children about how to ask for help should they need it.

The annual children's march is inspired by César Chávez's perseverance and vision and is held near his March 31 birth date. At 10:15 a.m., 1,000 children march and chant Chávez's motto, "Sí, se puede" (Yes, you can) from the central campus career stations to the college's soccer field for lunch and entertainment. The "KinderCaminata" will be led by **Grand Marshal Chancellor Hernandez**.

Additional KinderCaminata events in Orange County also include Cypress College, which also takes place on March 26, and Fullerton College, which occurred on March 19.

About KinderCaminata

KinderCaminata is a non-profit organization supported by its annual fundraiser, Salute to Chancellors, Presidents, Superintendents & Community Leaders, and is governed by a volunteer board of directors composed of four Orange County community college district chancellors, university, business and community leaders. KinderCaminata coordinates the first-time visit by thousands of kindergarten students to colleges in southern and northern California.

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.

###