



*Thoughts While We Celebrate
the*
FIRST NATIONAL BOOKMOBILE DAY
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2010

Since April, 1905, Bookmobiles and direct-delivery outreach services have played a vital role in fulfilling the mission of libraries and bringing the resources of libraries and the expertise of librarians directly to rural, urban, and suburban communities.

On Tuesday, June 16, 2009, a new chapter of the Bookmobile story began to unfold in San Benito County. As I reflected upon this event and how our new Bookmobile was joining the over 930 Bookmobiles throughout our nation, I remember what a Bookmobile meant to a 10 year old boy, when family and cultural resources were in abundance, but, *material resources were not.*

My teacher would talk about the Public Library as a wonderful learning resource; however, it was more like a landmark to visit someday. Then, one morning, I had an amazing experience; a unique vehicle was parked outside my elementary school. Climbing up the stairs and going inside was incredible for me—it took my breath away. There was a person who told me about how the Bookmobile worked—my parents could sign me up for a library card and then I could check out any two books I wanted! It was like a new world opened up for me. Now, as an adult, I recognize and value those who made it happen for me. They truly cared about learning and sharing that love of learning. Reading allowed me to dream and to expand my horizons beyond my school, my neighborhood and my community.

And so, today, our Bookmobile story is continuing to be told with:

- 3,000 miles driven to bring its rich resources to areas such as our rural schools, mobile home parks, housing projects, shopping centers, skilled nursing facilities and the Community Center, among others.
- The 1,000 new and renewed library cards issued to our children and adults.
- Over 2,700 academic and leisure multi-media offerings in English and Spanish.

The lasting value of the Bookmobile cannot begin to be estimated; however, I know that it has provided me with many wonderful memories and provides everyone with hope for the future- a future embracing the vision of a young father or mother asking their young child, who is holding a new library card, “Did I ever tell you about the day that the Library’s new Bookmobile came to San Benito County?”

In closing, during a recent graduation address, students were reminded to look forward to all the lives they would touch and to all the places they would go. So much of this journey into the future starts with learning and realizing that you can access the world - one book at a time.

In celebration of the nation’s first Bookmobile Day, I encourage all residents to visit our San Benito County Free Library and its many resources brought directly to you through your Bookmobile.

April 12, 2010

Mike Sanchez
San Benito County Superintendent of Schools

