

# Sparking Literacy



TOPLINE NEWS FROM READ TO ME PROJECT

JUNE 2022

## ANNOUNCING READ TO ME PROJECT'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *Welcome Julia!*

We are pleased to introduce you to Read to Me Project's new Executive Director Julia Foster.

The search began in January this year when Libby McMahon shared that she would be retiring in a few months. The executive search committee of board members and a strategic business consultant did a remarkable job to methodically and thoughtfully, yet quickly, find an *extra-extraordinary* person to fill the position.

You may already know of her work in the community. Julia Foster has more than a decade of experience working in non-profit organizations around Monterey County. She deeply believes in the power of literacy and the lifelong opportunities that it brings. Most recently, Julia was the Executive Director for the Foundation for Monterey County Free Libraries.



As a self-proclaimed "people person", Julia is passionate about connecting with those around her and building relationships. She holds a BA in Translation and Interpretation from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a MA in International Public Policies from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. In her free time, Julia enjoys reading with her kids, hiking, and wine tasting.

After 3.5 years with Read to Me Project, staff and board members bid Libby McMahon a fond farewell and best wishes for a happy retirement. Congratulations, Libby!



### INTERVIEW WITH A 4TH GRADER

This is Emma's first year participating in the Read to Me Project. She reads to her 4-year-old brother, Aldo. Emma also serves as a Read to Me Project (RtMP) book bin manager responsible for helping her classmates check books in and out every week and records the number of days each student had read to their little one at home over the prior week.

Here is an excerpt from the full interview with Emma to be featured in RtMP's 2021/2022 Annual Report that will be published in August.

### How is Read to Me Project helping the little ones?

*Aldo was always watching TV. When I started reading to him, he started identifying animals and tries*

to say the scientific names. He loves animals and books and singing with me. Aldo rejoices me. He loves being with me. Aldo is more adventurous now and is learning more. He's thinking about the new things he's learned and wants to do them. If we read a book with a firefighter, he wants to be a firefighter. Animals and firefighters are his favorite right now.

I want to be a role model for him, and he is protective of me. My mom and dad read to me before Aldo was born. I want Aldo to have the experience that I had.

### **How is being a book bin manager helping you?**

*It makes me a leader and organized. I'm not so shy and I'm more confident. I like interacting with everyone. I'm happy to be helping the little ones. I've always wanted to take care of little kids. When they're happy, I'm happy – it's the sweetest thing.*

### **As a book bin manager, you have a very important responsibility to help other students with the books. Would you talk about that?**

*It feels like they know that I'm here for them. When someone lost a book, I didn't put pressure on him. I talked to him privately and asked how the book got lost. People in charge can embarrass someone. I try to make the students comfortable. I want to be sure they are happy with their books too. It makes me happy when they're happy. Being there for them makes me happy and if the student does something wrong, I don't let it be a big thing.*

### **Is there anything else you would like to share?**

*It's an amazing project helping all the kindergartners be ready. It made me sad when Ms. Beverly (RtMP program coordinator) told us 7 out of 10 kids are not ready to be kindergartners. My mom and dad read to me and I want that for other children.*

## **MESSAGE FROM EMMA'S MOM**

"We started reading to Emma when she was a baby so she developed an early interest for learning and reading. She was eager to learn and loved her books. When Aldo came along he was not so interested in books at first and his attention span was not the same as Emma's. In consequence we didn't read to him as much and focused on books with few words and more of things he liked. Meanwhile Emma got involved in the Read to Me Project at school and started reading to Aldo every day. Now Aldo is four-years-old and he loves books. He pays attention to Emma as she reads the stories. I am happy that Aldo and Emma have that connection and that she worries about him being ready for kindergarten. She loves the program and we are grateful that Read to Me Project is part of the school activities." – Amelia

## **ERIK'S DELICAFÉ presents**

### **"DINE IN A DAY" Fundraiser for Read to Me Project**

Take out or dine in at Erik's DeliCafé, Salinas, on Wednesday, June 15th in support of early literacy and Read to Me Project's work against the alarming literacy lag among under-served children in the community. Proceeds from the day's sales will be donated to Read to Me Project.

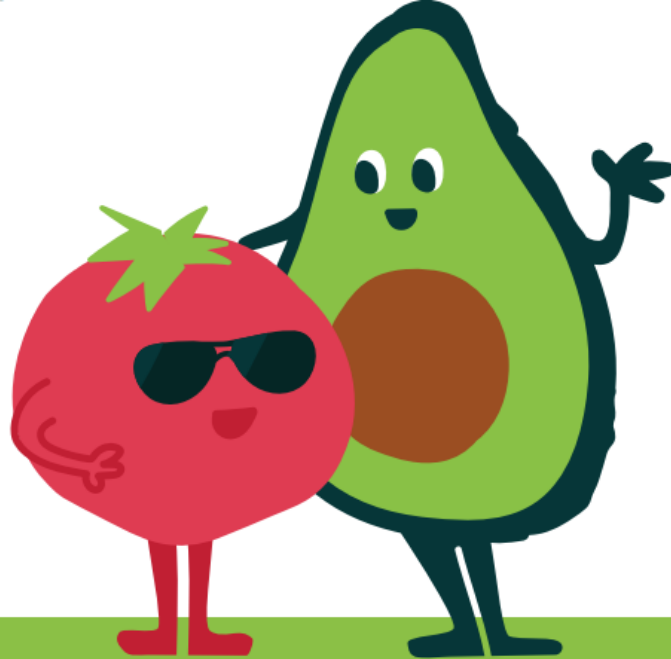
[Dine-in or order online at: order.eriksdelicafe.com](http://order.eriksdelicafe.com) and select the location: Salinas

**June 15, 2022**  
**10am - 7pm**

**ERIK'S**

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1980 N Main St  
Salinas, CA 93906  
order.EriksDeliCafe.com



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