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California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom Visits With San Francisco Teens at San Francisco Public Library

The First Partner Promotes Arts-Based Literacy and Learning for Summer

SAN FRANCISCO, July 20, 2023 – California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom visited with 30 San Francisco teenagers today during an afternoon workshop of poetry, dance and creative maker-space activities at San Francisco Public Library's (SFPL) The Mix teen center.

Recognizing the importance of movement, creativity and the arts in summer learning, the workshops were led by experts from several local arts organizations including [ODC/Dance](#), [YouthSpeaks](#) and SFPL's own teen librarians. The teen participants also received copies of books selected from the [First Partner's Summer Book Club booklist](#). The Summer Book Club is an annual initiative in partnership with the California State Library to help children of all ages cultivate a love of reading and books. The Summer Book Club, along with San Francisco Public Library's [Summer Stride program](#), encourages kids and families to head to their local library for fun learning activities and great books to read all summer long.

"Rather than banning or limiting children's access to books, we're working through the First Partner's Summer Book Club to increase California children's opportunities for reading and creative expression," said First Partner Siebel Newsom. "Today's workshops were the culmination of our goal to integrate arts education into the First Partner's Summer Book Club. Literature and the arts are critical for children's mental health, social and emotional development, language mastery, and long-term academic achievement, and both provide an antidote to excessive time online. I look forward to a continued partnership with the California State Library as we scale this model to libraries across the state."

The First Partner was accompanied on her visit to San Francisco Public Library by Mayor London Breed, California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick, California State Librarian Greg Lucas, [California Arts Council Executive Director Jonathan Moscone](#), and San Francisco City Librarian Michael Lambert.

"I want to thank First Partner Siebel Newsom for including San Francisco and spending time with some of our teens today," said Mayor London N. Breed. "We are grateful for her continued leadership and contributions to elevate books that celebrate diversity, inclusion and equity, and help make them accessible to children and teens in San Francisco and throughout California."

“We were delighted and honored to host the First Partner at our awesome teen center as well as California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick,” said City Librarian Lambert. “This afternoon was a memorable celebration of the imagination, born out of the teens’ love of storytelling and free and authentic expression.”

The teens broke up into three groups to participate in three distinct creativity workshops:

- A poetry workshop with California Poet Laureate Lee Herrick with support from nonprofit organization Youth Speaks, led by its executive director, Michelle Mush Lee.
- The Mix maker space workshop, a hands-on creative craft project with The Mix manager, librarian Jason Hill.
- A dance and movement workshop with nonprofit organization [ODC](#) with Brandon "Private" Freeman and Colton Wall.

The Mix at SFPL is an innovative, teen-designed, 21st century connected learning space inside the San Francisco Main Library. It provides space and equipment for youth ages 13-18 to explore, create and develop digital media and computer skills, get involved in creative pursuits from crafts to music to creative writing, as well as discover and engage with the Library’s traditional books and materials.

Teens also had the opportunity to engage with the First Partner and with each other about the thought-provoking titles which appear on the First Partner’s Summer Book Club, including Caldecott Honor title *Ain’t Burned All the Bright* by Jason Reynolds and illustrated by Jason Griffin, the young adult edition of *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson, and Printz Award winner *We Are Okay* by San Francisco author Nina LaCour.

“This afternoon was really inspiring. I’m excited about the First Partner’s Summer Book Club list because all the books on it have their own special message, and we can learn more about the experiences they describe,” said Charlyze Becerra, a teen participant in the workshop, as she browsed through books on display.

This Summer Book Club list was curated by the First Partner in partnership with librarians across the state. The books highlight themes such as navigating mental health struggles, identity and belonging, and the importance of exploration and curiosity. The books range in reading levels from preschool to high school and are available for check-out at San Francisco Public Library and at most public libraries across the state.

In addition to promoting early and regular reading, the First Partner’s Summer Book Club also encourages California families to learn about and engage with programming at their local library.

Assets:

Book list by age and theme on the First Partner’s Summer Book Club website: www.gov.ca.gov/cakidsread

First Partner Siebel Newsom’s book club launch video in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

About San Francisco Public Library:

San Francisco Public Library is dedicated to free and equal access to information, knowledge, independent learning and the joys of reading for our diverse community. The library system is made up of 27 neighborhood branches, the San Francisco Main Library at Civic Center and four bookmobiles.