

**Kids Discovery Station (KiDS)**

350 W. Yosemite Ave, Merced, CA 95348

(209) 580-4070

[admin@kidsdiscoverystation.org](mailto:admin@kidsdiscoverystation.org)

Primary Contact: Mayya Tokman/Executive Director



**KIDS DISCOVERY STATION**

RECEIVED

MAR 4 2022

MERCED CITY COUNCIL  
& CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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To: **Merced City Council**

Re: **Application in response to City of Merced RFP to support nonprofit organizations with ARPA funds**

**INTRODUCTORY LETTER:**

**Kids Discovery Station's Mission and Background**

**Mission:** Merced city and county are vibrant communities that offer many unique opportunities for further growth and development. With new investments coming to our area, Merced's appeal as an attractive place to live and work, and its potential are growing. **Kids Discovery Station (KiDS)** is a nonprofit organization focused on further improvements on the quality of life for Merced's children and their families through expanding educational experiences and opportunities. **Kids Discovery Station** recently opened a children's museum which provides a unique in Merced County environment where children can engage in a wide range of activities that stimulate and nurture their intellectual, social-emotional and physical development. KiDS offers a combination of interactive exhibits and educational programs designed to spur curiosity and imagination, to promote the love of learning and to explore our world in all of its diversity. At present there is no organization or establishment similar to KiDS in Merced County. The nearest children's museum is the Fresno Discovery Center which is more than 60 miles away.

**History and Background:** KiDS started its operation in 2018 when using mini-grants from First 5 Merced County, funding from UC Merced and UC Berkeley CalTeach programs and Merced County Fair, it organized three pilot children's exhibits: (i) Merced Multicultural Arts Center (May 26 - June 9, 2018), (ii) Merced County Library (August 1 - 21, 2018), (iii) Merced County Fair (June 5 - 9, 2019).

The events proved very popular with families and attracted **over 6,000 visits** from local residents. Attendance data collected during the exhibits and additional research and financial projections allowed KiDS to develop a rigorous business plan and to begin building a permanent children's museum.

KiDS opened the doors of the permanent children's museum (350 W. Yosemite ave, Merced, CA 95348) to the public on September 26, 2021. To date the museum

- received **over 5,800 visits**;
- sold nearly **200 family memberships**;
- hosted **over 330 students** from local preschools and elementary schools on field trips.

To maximally broaden participation and to extend the benefits of the children's museum to all members of our community KiDS started a **Family Access and Inclusion Program** which provides free annual memberships to families with challenging economic situations, families caring for children with disabilities and other disadvantaged populations. In addition, KiDS became a partner in the Museum4All initiative and is providing \$1 admission tickets to families that receive assistance through EBT or SNAP programs.

**Community Support and Current & Future Projects:** In addition to being broadly praised and appreciated by the local community, KiDS enjoys wide support by the businesses, individuals and government organizations which has made the museum in Merced possible. Twenty organizations and individuals contributed funds and/or significant in-kind donations and became Founding Partners of the museum, this list includes First 5 Merced County, Webcor Builders, Merced County Office of Education, Community Foundation of Merced County, Merced Breakfast Lion's Club, Golden Valley Health Centers, California High-Speed Rail Authority, STEMPlug LLC, University of California, Merced, CORE HR Team, Legacy Construction, Merced County, Hilmar Cheese Company, Central Valley Community Foundation, Fluetsch and Busby Insurance, Frances & Vinton Thengvall, City of Merced, Dr. Vikram & Priya Lakireddy, MIG

Construction and El Capitan/Mainzer. Additional organizations such as Merced Rotary Club, Merced Sunrise Rotary Club, Elks Lodge and Waste Management chose different sponsorship levels that carry a variety of benefits to the donors. Some of the Founding Partners chose to support particular exhibits and KiDS has successfully designed and built these projects, in particular:

- *Golden Valley Health Clinics* provided \$35K to sponsor Health Center exhibit (Figure 1) which opened on 09/26/22. At the Health Center exhibit children are able to explore medical professions, learn about how the human and animal bodies work, see the microworld through a real microscope and experience the joy of pretend play and enriching friends and family interactions.
- *First 5 Merced County* funded Little Explorers Planet exhibit (Figure 1) for children ages 0-5 with a grant of \$100K. The exhibit opened on 09/26/22 and has already proved to be one of the most popular places at KiDS. A four-story high spaceship maze enables children to develop their gross motor and problem-solving skills. A crawler space lets the youngest visitors of the museum to explore different surfaces, textures and sounds. An Explorers Cantina and Supply based is a café/kitchen/produce store exhibit where children can prepare meals for their families and learn about healthy eating in the process.
- *The Innovation Island* exhibit was sponsored by UC Merced (\$35K) and STEAMplug LLC (\$50K) and brings children and their parents into the world of technology and science. From learning about topography by playing with the augmented reality table to traveling through space and time at the green screen exhibit or being introduced to coding a real traffic light, children and their families are able to experience and learn about the natural world and latest technological advances.

**Figure 1:** Little Explorers Planet and Health Center Exhibits



**Educational Programs:** In addition to the interactive exhibits sampled above, KiDS also started its educational programming (Figure 2). KiDS already hosted eleven field trips and formed a partnership with Merced City School District and the UC Merced CalTeach program that will bring every 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class in the district to KiDS for a field trip in March and April 2022. The field trips brought children from all parts of Merced to KiDS and exposed them to engaging learning activities and experiences.

KiDS also started building the Explorers Academy which will include inquiry and experimentation-based classes on a variety of subjects ranging from technology to art. The Young Scientists' Academy's classes started on 03/01/22 in collaboration with UC Merced's Teacher Preparation Program. The Young Artists Academy started on 03/02/22 in collaboration with Tonia Hemme's Fine Art and Creations. More offerings are underway.

**Figure 2:** Field trips at Kids Discovery Station



**Proposal Justification:** While KiDS has persevered and succeeded in establishing a children’s museum in Merced, the global COVID-19 pandemic had dramatic economic and logistic impacts on the nonprofit and to this day requires KiDS to make significant investments to account for the new public health and educational realities. In particular, KiDS has experienced the following financial and administrative challenges since the start of the pandemic:

- 1) the original opening date for KiDS was changed from May 2020 to September 2021. The organization had to do everything possible to survive in these conditions since the projected revenues did not materialize for over a year, KiDS was still incurring operational expenses such as staffing, insurance, utilities, construction materials, etc. Additionally, while field trips were projected to be a significant revenue stream, the shortage of bus drivers and pandemic restrictions reduced the number of field trips to 11 in the first 5 months of operation. Similar challenges limited our ability to host birthday parties and special events, which is another significant revenue source for the museum. Finally, the pandemic brought fundraising to a virtual halt for a large number of nonprofits including ours. In total the pandemic resulted in approximately \$250K revenue loss for KiDS;
- 2) increased costs of building materials and labor shortage resulted in additional expenses in building renovation and exhibit fabrication and installation, we estimate that an additional \$45K had to be spent by the museum due to these price increases;
- 3) once opened to the public, the museum had to incur additional costs to mitigate public health risks such as PPE for staff and visitors, more frequent and thorough cleaning services as well as experienced lower attendance than would be possible without a raging pandemic; these measures resulted in additional projected \$30K losses.

In accordance with the Department of Treasury regulations on the ARPA Funds Program the proposed project is focused on enabling our nonprofit organization to address community public health and economic impacts brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic through:

- making capital investments that will enable KiDS to implement COVID-19 prevention and mitigation tactics by developing an outdoor space for educational and enrichment experiences for children and families (*page 64, Department of Treasury’s Final Rule for ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Program*)
- expanding educational opportunities to mitigate learning loss for preschool and elementary school age children (*page 101, Department of Treasury’s Final Rule for ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Program*)
- promoting healthy childhood experiences through development of children and parent-focused enrichment programs with a focus on disproportionately impacted populations (*page 94, Department of Treasury’s Final Rule for ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Program*).

The proposed project would allow KiDS to both mitigate challenges incurred by our community due to the pandemic and build up much needed services for children and families of Merced.

### INDIVIDUAL STAFF EXPERIENCE:

The project will be led by Dr. Mayya Tokman who is both an Acting Executive Director and the President of the Board of Directors of Kids Discovery Station. Dr. Tokman is the founder and the leader of the organization and all activities undertaken by KiDS since its inception. She is also a Professor of Applied Mathematics and a Faculty Director of the CalTeach program at UC Merced. Dr. Tokman has over 30 years of experience in education, she taught extensively at the undergraduate and graduate level as well as designed and administered a number of educational programs targeting both higher education and K-12 schools.

Ms. Karrie Moua will serve as an Operations Manager for the project. Ms. Moua has been working with KiDS since January 2020 and has demonstrated herself as a highly skilled, creative and responsible individual. Ms. Moua has a BA in Communications with Concentration in Public Relations from CSU Fullerton and worked in sales and at Irvine's Pretend City Children's Museum. Ms. Moua will assist with coordination, management and administrative support of the project.

The KiDS Board of Directors will provide the guidance and oversight for the project which will benefit from the diverse expertise and experience of its members. The KiDS Board of Directors is comprised of the members of our community actively engaged in the life and development of our city and county including (in alphabetical order):

- *Annissa Fragoso*, owner of the Farmers Insurance Agency and President of the Board of Directors of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Merced;
- *Eric Gieling*, financial advisor at Ameriprise and Treasurer of KiDS.
- *Lee Lor*, former elected Merced County Supervisor for District 2, an administrator with extensive experience in education and government and KiDS co-founder and chair;
- *Matt Migliazzo*, owner of M-MIG Construction Inc.;
- *Rick Marchini*, partner with the law firm of Robbins, Browning, Godwin & Marchini;
- *Lauren Marks-Royer*, realtor with Keller Williams Westland Realty;
- *Eduardo T. Villarama*, local physician and one of the Regional Medical Directors of Golden Valley Health Centers in the Central Valley.

KiDS will be hiring several design, fabrication, installation and construction contractors to complete different components of the proposed project.

## PROPOSED PROJECT & SCOPE OF SERVICES:

As outlined in the Introductory Letter the main goals of this proposal are:

- to make capital investments that will enable KiDS to implement COVID-19 prevention and mitigation tactics by developing outdoor space for educational and enrichment experiences for children and families
- to expand educational opportunities to mitigate learning loss for preschool and elementary school age children and
- to promote healthy childhood experiences through development of children and parent-focused enrichment programs with a focus on disproportionately impacted populations.

To achieve these objectives KiDS proposes:

- I. to create outdoor exhibit "Our City" which will enable the museum to both (i) provide children and families with a safe environment with minimized risks of viral infection and (ii) promote active play essential for healthy child development;
- II. to expand educational programs such as field trips and "Explorers Academy" offerings and broaden participation in these programs with particular focus on disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and disadvantaged populations;
- III. to create "The World of Jobs" program which introduces children and their families to a broad spectrum of careers through interactive displays, invited talks and associated educational activities.

Below we will detail each of these three components of the proposed project.

### **Outdoor Play Space:**

**Rationale:** The indoor area of KiDS is limited to 4,300 square feet while its potential outdoors space is over 11,000 square feet. Numerous studies since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic showed that the spread of the COVID-19 virus is slowed significantly in the outdoors setting. On the other hand as the data we presented in the Introduction Letter indicates the pandemic had a devastating effect on our ability to fundraise and the flow of donations came to a near halt in Spring 2020 just as we were starting to plan for the outdoors exhibit. While building up the outdoors area became crucial to mitigate public health concerns, our financial ability to create the outdoors exhibit was dramatically harmed by the pandemic since just like for many nonprofits our fundraising stalled.

In addition to pandemic-related rationale for building up the outdoor space it is also important to appreciate the value of such exhibit in a broader sense of healthy active life for families in our city. Increasing physical activity and outdoors play for children has become a crucial and challenging goal in improving life of families according to many recent studies and reports (e.g. Bento & Dias: *The importance of outdoor play for young children's healthy development*, 2017; Cohen et al: *Playground features and physical activity in U.S. neighborhood parks*, 2020).

It is a particularly difficult task in cities which experience harsh weather conditions such as high summer temperatures in Merced. While the residents of our city have the pleasure to enjoy beautiful walking paths, parks and several playgrounds in a good weather, outdoor play opportunities for children and families as the temperatures approach high marks or in the dark hours of winter months are quite limited. Our proposal is to create a well-shaded well-lit outdoor play space that will be accessible to children and families from all over Merced all year round including the hottest summer months. Additionally, this space will include both playground structures that enable kids to engage in active physical play as well as promote learning, engagement and spark imaginations through pretend play.

**Project Description:** The proposed outdoor exhibit “Our City” will include the following main features:

- *Play structures* that allow children to engage in active physical play;
- *Water and sand* play area;
- *Free play* space that would be utilized for a range of activities including gyrocart riding, playing traditional games like hopscotch, ball, etc, children-led performances, and holding family-friendly events such as movie nights and concerts;
- *Pretend play exhibits* including Fire Station which will house 2 firetrucks and a High Speed Train Station exhibit;
- *Learning Garden and Farm* exhibit which will facilitate both entertainment and educational activities that teach children about different aspects of agriculture and natural world.

The outdoor space on the whole will be designed to promote healthy child development as well as positive child-adult play and interactions. While exact design and size of each of these structures will be developed with contracted designers, fabricators and installers, Figure 3 presents a rough artistic renditions of some of the elements in the Our City outdoor exhibit.

Note that some of the components of this exhibit have already been funded by other sponsors. In particular, the High Speed Rail Authority provided KiDS with \$45k grant to build the High Speed Train mock-up and Hilmar Cheese Company funded a portion of the Learning Garden and Farm exhibit with a \$35k grant. KiDS is expecting that continuing fundraising efforts will enable construction of outdoor space elements beyond what is proposed in this grant. For example, KiDS is currently building a partnership with Merced College which will enable the museum to receive in-kind donation of landscaping services from students of the Horticulture Program at MCJC.

If successful, the present proposal will bring to the City of Merced a unique in the area high-quality outdoor play space that can be utilized year-round by all families of our city irrespective of their social or economic status (see Inclusive Access Program described below), a space which will serve as both the backdrop for healthy, stimulating free play as well as organized entertainment and educational activities that promote positive interactions between children and adults and benefit the whole family.

**Figure 3:**  
*Play structures and water & sand play area*



*Free play space*



*Train station*



*Fire station*



*Learning Garden and Farm*



**Explorers Academy:**

Children under the age of 13 in the United States spend on average about 26 hours per week in daycare or school (Hofferth & Sandberg 2001). Thus, significant amount of time is open to learning in an informal environment. This fact led to a rapidly growing interest among researchers, policy makers and educators to different venues that offer learning opportunities in an informal setting (e.g. Anderson, Lucas, Ginns, & Dierking, 2000; Putman & Walker, 2010; Tofield, Coll, Vyle, & Boldstad, 2003). The topic became particularly important in the context of the learning losses over the past two years spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Children's museums in general have been shown to be conducive to informal learning. Studies demonstrated a relationship between children's learning levels and their behaviors in the museum exhibits (Borun, Chambers, and Cleghorn, 1996). When children engaged in behaviors such as making observations and asking and answering questions, they learned more than they would have if they did not



engage in these behaviors. Additionally, more learning occurred when children interacted with adults rather than only exploring on their own (Crowley et al., 2001; Crowley & Galco, 2001; Puchner, Rapaport, & Gaskins, 2001). In fact, it has been shown that educational opportunities for children and their families offered in the context of a children's museum can serve as catalysts and conduits for changing behaviors in the community such as for example improving eating habits and encouraging healthier lifestyles (Ackerman, 2016).

The main goal of the Explorers Academy is to provide a variety of educational and enrichment experiences for children and their caregivers in a format that is more structured than regular unsupervised admission and play time at the museum. KiDS space, exhibits and staff form a base for the museum to be able to develop an effective program that complements formal education children receive in elementary and middle schools and to provide resources for caregivers on effective parenting approaches, tactics for positive and enriching engagement with children and health-related issues. The model of Explorers Academy consists of regular classes and workshops with experts that are able to work with children in a variety on subjects ranging from science, technology to arts and those who are able to provide valuable information to caregivers.

KiDS has already started a pilot the Young Scientists Academy which is the first component of the Explorers Academy as a partnership between UC Merced Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) and the museum. As part of the Young Scientists Academy pre-service teachers in training work with their TPP instructors and the museum's staff to develop informal education curriculum that is aligned with California teaching and learning standards and introduces children and their caregivers to inquiry-based science exploration on a variety of topics.

We propose to expand the Explorers Academy to include Young Engineers Academy and Family Workshop. The Young Engineers Academy will introduce children to a variety of topics and problems arising in fields ranging from agriculture to mechanical and computer engineering. For example, children will be engaged in hands-on inquiry based learning on how machines are designed and used in agricultural technology, what issues an engineer faces in designing resilient sustainable buildings or cars, how computer coding is used to control various devices we use in every-day life from traffic lights to sensors.

All Explorers Academy programs will bring both children and their caregivers to the museum. This gives us a unique opportunity to offer engaging educational opportunities to adults as well as children. The Family Workshop will provide accompanying adults with a chance to receive expert advice from experts in child's development and health, to find out about effective parenting and pedagogical approaches, to get new ideas for fun activities they can do with their children. Family Workshop will involve instructors and guest speakers who will be working with parents while their children are participating in the Explorers Academy activities.

Providing equitable access to *all families of Merced city* irrespective of their socio-economic situation or location is at the core of Kids Discovery Station's mission. That is why a large portion of the requested funds will be used for our Inclusive Access Program which enables low-income families, families caring for children with disabilities, and other families experiencing socio-economic challenges to visit the museum and participate in the museum's activities free of charge.

While we are asking for seed funding to jumpstart this program it is fully anticipated that KiDS will be actively fundraising to further expand it. The affordable cost structure of this program for families which do not need Inclusive Access benefits as well as our partnerships with local educational institutions such as UC Merced, Merced College and others will enable us to make this program sustainable in the long run.

### **World of Jobs:**

Our city has experienced significant staffing challenges even before the COVID-19 pandemic with the last two years making these difficulties even more felt and present. Conversations with a wide range of agriculture-related and other business, government agencies, medical facilities and educational institutions quickly reveal the challenges they all face in recruiting highly qualified personnel from the local community. Essential services such as fire and police departments and attracting sufficient health care personnel from the local community. The impact of this human resources challenges are widely varying from the shortage of medical professionals in the area to challenges fire or police departments are experiencing in recruiting and retaining personnel. These difficulties also have a negative effect on resident retention rates and create problems for our city and county.

One of the major goals of Kids Discovery Station is to introduce children early to various career opportunities and open their minds to different employment possibilities. Introducing the World of Jobs component to many of our exhibits will allow KiDS to help children learn about the plethora of important careers and employment opportunities in our region. For example, the Fire Station exhibit will house two fire trucks (City of Merced's donation and an antique fire truck), costumes and props that will facilitate pretend play and introduce them to the important jobs of a firefighter, police or medical emergency personnel perhaps sparking a life-long interest in these professions and helping our city raise our own heroes in these important fields.

The World of Jobs funding will enable us to add interactive displays that outline job opportunities in different fields and invite guest speakers and organize events around various career options. For instance, the Learning Garden and Farm exhibit will be augmented by large displays that describe different professions in agriculture and inform children and adults alike about professional, financial and social advantages of these jobs. In addition, we will collaborate with local agriculture-related business and organizations like Farm Bureau to organize community events, e.g. Farm Day, which highlight these fields and job opportunities in agriculture.

The Fire Station Exhibit will include interactive displays about a variety of jobs in the essential services field and through collaborations with the local fire and police departments and essential services we will organize educational activities and events for the community. Similar programs and partnerships can be created in the hospitality area through our collaboration with El Capitan/Mainzer project and other partners.

It is important to note that programs proposed here as well as other KiDS programs and projects will be cross-beneficial, e.g. our collaboration with Hilmar Cheese Company on the Home Valley/Learning Garden and Farm exhibit will enable us to better leverage resources and to create and to strengthen intersectional partnerships and collaborations.

**Project Timeline & Deliverables:**

<b>Phase 1: 07/01/22 – 09/30/22</b>	
<p><b>Work Description:</b></p> <p>Recruitment of designers, architects and landscapers and development of outdoor space plans; getting the necessary approvals and permits for construction; obtaining quotes for outdoor space components.</p> <p>Development of plans for Explorers Academy and Family Workshop; instructor recruitment and curriculum creation; expansion of Inclusive Access Program and associated advertising.</p> <p>Recruitment of designers and business sector partners and development of plans for the World of Jobs interactive displays; planning of events highlighting jobs in different industries.</p>	<p><b>Deliverables:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed and approved plans for the outdoor space and inventory of necessary component purchases</li> <li>• Educational plan for Explorers Academy and Family Workshop.</li> <li>• Plans for the World of Job interactive displays; business partner network.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2: 10/01/22 – 02/28/22</b>	
<p><b>Work Description:</b></p> <p>Hiring contractors and completing surfacing and landscaping of outdoor space; purchasing and installing shade structures.</p> <p>Purchasing and installing outdoor space components such as playground equipment, commissioning designers and fabricators to create water and sand play area.</p> <p>Advertising and recruitment of participants for the Explorers Academy and Family Workshop classes; starting initial sessions.</p> <p>Design, fabrication and installation of the World of Jobs interactive displays.</p>	<p><b>Deliverables:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of outdoor space construction</li> <li>• New Explorers Academy and Family Workshop classes</li> <li>• World of Jobs interactive displays</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3: 03/01/22 – 06/30/22</b>	
<p><b>Work Description:</b></p> <p>Purchasing and setting up movable components of outdoor exhibits, such as picnic tables and benches, gyrocart, costumes and props for the fire station, and sail shades.</p> <p>Assessing the effectiveness of the Explorers Academy and Family Workshops through participant surveys and data collection, adjusting curriculum and plans accordingly and expanding the program to more subject areas.</p> <p>Developing the schedule for World of Jobs family events; hosting initial events in collaboration with business partners.</p>	<p><b>Deliverables:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully operational outdoor space exhibits</li> <li>• Improved and expanded Explorers Academy and Family Workshops classes</li> <li>• World of Jobs-themed family events</li> </ul>

**PROGRAM BUDGET**

<b>Program component</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Purchase, shipping and installation of play structures	\$78,000
Design, fabrication and installation of water and sand play area	\$25,000
Play area surfacing (concrete, soft turf)	\$30,000
Design, shipping and installation of shades over play spaces	\$35,000
Landscaping (design, materials, installation)	\$15,000
Design and construction of Fire Station carport-type shade	\$30,000
Explorers Academy instructors salaries	\$15,000
Scholarships for Inclusive Access memberships and educational programming	\$30,000
The World of Jobs: displays design and fabrication	\$15,000
The World of Jobs: educational activities, guest lectures, events	\$10,000
Advertising and marketing	\$2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$285,000</b>

**REFERENCES**

Enclosed with this proposal are three references from the organizations KiDS has worked with including First 5 Merced County, Golden Valley Health Centers and Community Foundation of Merced.



**GOLDEN VALLEY**  
HEALTH CENTERS

737 West Childs Avenue, Merced, CA 95341 (Corporate Office)  
2926 G Street, Suite 201, Merced, CA 95340 (Administrative Office)  
1.866.682.4842  
[www.gvhc.org](http://www.gvhc.org)

2/23/2022

Mayya Tokman  
Kids Discovery Station  
459 E. 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340

Dear Ms. Tokman,

On behalf of Golden Valley Health Centers, we are honored to offer this letter in support of the application that Kids Discovery Station is submitting to the City of Merced to sponsor the outdoor exhibit space.

Since opening in September 2021, Kids Discovery Station has delivered on its promises and is making a significant impact in the community. I was delighted to learn that over 4,700 guests have visited the beautiful, interactive exhibit, and this is despite the attendance limitations imposed by the ongoing pandemic. We appreciate the dedication that Kids Discovery Station has committed to support our local community, especially the children. As a community health center, Golden Valley Health Centers has been excited to get involved and become a sponsor of the "Health Center" portion of the exhibit. Kids Discovery Station exceeded our expectations, and we were impressed with the quality of the work they delivered. I have no doubt this exhibit will continue to spark joy in the children and their parents for many years to come.

The proposed outdoor exhibit space is crucial for Kids Discovery Station to enable more people to visit the museum and to participate safely in your educational activities. We believe that the early years of childhood development are some of the most important. Health education starts early, and we feel there is tremendous value that this exhibit will bring. We are fortunate to be able to participate in this project, and we proudly offer our support for the outdoor exhibit space.

Thank you,

Tony Weber  
President and CEO  
Golden Valley Health Centers

**YOUR HEALTH IS OUR PRIORITY**



February 23, 2022

Mayya Tokman  
Kids Discovery Station  
459 E. 21st Street  
Merced, CA 95340

RE: Letter of Support for Kids Discovery Station

Dear Ms. Tokman,

It is with great pleasure that First 5 Merced County submits this letter in support of the application that Kids Discovery Station is submitting to the City of Merced for support to 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations in the City of Merced.

We are fortunate to have Kids Discovery Station to support our families and children. Additionally Kids discovery Center is working to make our community strong, helping our youngest children learn and prepare for Kindergarten. Kids Discovery Station is an exciting educational opportunity for Merced County children and their parents. The Kids Discovery Station has met or exceeded the objectives and goals of the projects with First 5 Merced. Additionally the Kids Discovery Station has completed these projects in a high quality manner.

First 5 Merced and Kids Discovery Station have partnered on multiple projects to help improve the early childhood education in Merced County. This includes pop-up events and the installation of the Little Explores' Planet Exhibit.

Sincerely,

Scott Waite, M.A.  
Executive Director  
First 5 Merced

260 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95341-6216  
(209) 385-7337 Phone  
(209) 724-4006 Fax  
[www.first5mercedcounty.org](http://www.first5mercedcounty.org)

**COMMISSIONERS**

Supervisor Josh Pedrozo  
Commission Chair  
Board of Supervisors, District 2

Yvonna Brown, EdD, MSW,  
Director  
Human Services Agency  
Behavioral Health and  
Recovery Services

Genevieve Valentine, Director  
Behavioral Health and  
Recovery Services

Salvador Sandoval  
County Health Officer

Aaron Lequia  
District 1 Representative

Cindy Diblee  
District 2 Representative

Shirley Brown, R.N.  
District 3 Representative

Eva de Long  
Commission Vice-Chair  
District 4 Representative

Paula Smith  
District 5 Representative

Equal Opportunity Employer



**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
MERCED COUNTY**

P.O. Box 3846 Merced, CA 95344 209/201/4113 [www.MercedFoundation.org](http://www.MercedFoundation.org)

March 1, 2022

Kids Discovery Station  
459 E. 21st Street  
Merced, CA 95340

Dear Kids Discovery Station,

It is with great pleasure that the Community Foundation for Merced County submits this letter in support of the application that Kids Discovery Station is submitting to the City of Merced for ARPA Funds. We support the continuation of The Kids Discovery Station bringing enrichment and learning opportunities to families in Merced. Specifically, we support their latest efforts to provide scholarships and programs to families in challenging economic and health circumstances. This would allow KiDS to mitigate both public health and economic impacts of the pandemic and extend their educational services to wider population.

Since its inception, KiDS has created a unique space where families and children can learn and play together, while using their imagination and creativity to guide them. The Community Foundation granted funds so the Kids Discovery Station could be started, and they have met all requirements for the project they submitted to us in a timely manner. We strongly recommend funding their scholarship, education and outreach programs.

Daniel Royer  
Board President  
Community Foundation of Merced County