

United Way of Merced County

658 W. Main Street, Merced, CA 95340

(209) 383-4242

www.unitedwaymerced.org

(A 501 (c) (3) Organization—Donations are tax deductible)



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August 21, 2017

To: Merced City Recreation and Parks Commission

United Way of Merced County (UWMC) would like the Merced City Recreation and Parks Commission to consider allowing UWMC to install a Born Learning Trail within the confines of Stephen Leonard Park. UWMC intends on receiving a mini-grant from First 5 of Merced County to fund this pilot project. We refer to it as a pilot project, as we would like it to serve as an example of a wonderful park and walking trails added-value to be had throughout our city and community parks should the commission and city council warrant it to be applicable. Below is a brief excerpt describing what Born Learning Trails are, in addition to the many benefits it provides to both the community and park aesthetics. Lastly, included is also a number of images providing the commission with a visual aid as to the process and end result of installing Born Learning Trails.

Born Learning Trail(s) Summary:

The Trail is a series of 10 interactive signs that offer fun, active learning activities for young children and their families. It helps parents, caregivers and communities create quality engagement opportunities when out on a stroll or visiting a local playground. The trail features age-appropriate, simple-to-construct activities that can be set up outdoors. Ten games on engaging signs that are placed along the trail help parents and caregivers create learning opportunities for a young child. One of the things that makes Born Learning so unique is the rich, research-based content that is consistently delivered across the trail. Its playful design and bold colors visually link the entire mobility and cognitively stimulating activities throughout the Born Learning Trail.

Whether it is in a local park, at a childcare center or school, in a library or next to a children's museum, the trail can be a valuable community resource for early learning because it promotes learning in a fun and interactive way – important components of early childhood learning. The trails help young children boost language, reading, problem solving and critical thinking skills. They offer families a place to be active, elevate awareness of early childhood education, and are a visible symbol of the community's commitment to young children.

It is my hope that the commission recognizes the value this type of project can bring to parks and neighborhoods. The first five years of a child's life serve as pivotal years concerning cognitive and mobility skills development. Born Learning Trails create the opportunity for children and their parents to engage in behavior allowing for growth in these areas, while also encouraging play, physical activity, and inherently, a healthier lifestyle.

Should you have any further questions or request that I present on this project, please feel free to contact me at 209-383-4242, or email jeremy@unitedwaymerced.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J Martinez", written over a horizontal line.

Jeremy Martinez
Chief Executive Officer
United Way of Merced County

Photos of Born Learning Trails (In Process & Complete; inclusive of signs)

1) Signage to encourage interaction with stencils (Will be available in English and Spanish)



2) Picture of the process and community involvement



3) Picture of a completed trail



4) Picture(s) of trail activities, stencils, etc.

