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IDRA Provides Bilingual Books to Young Learners in San Antonio School Districts to Diminish Digital Divide Effects Exacerbated by COVID-19

San Antonio, May 7, 2020 - For many years before the COVID-19 outbreak, IDRA has worked with schools and communities to close digital divide for the most vulnerable students. With assistance from San Antonio Area Foundation and the United Way of San Antonio this week, IDRA will provide its popular **Semillitas de Aprendizaje** bilingual storybooks to families who have no access to online education.



According to the Digital Inclusion Alliance San Antonio, one in four households in San Antonio does not have internet access. Students of all ages from low-income households without devices or connectivity are most at risk for interruption of their schooling that will have a long-lasting impact on their future. Nowhere is this most worrisome than with pre-K and kindergarten students who thrive on solid educational practices and culturally-sustaining resources.

"IDRA knows from our research on best practices in early childhood education that hard-copy books and interactive learning best build solid literacy foundations for young learners," said

IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno. "We are proud to partner with the San Antonio Area Foundation to counter the devastating digital divide that has left this vulnerable population with little to no access to books or resources as schools scramble to find solutions."

"We celebrate the important role parents are playing to make distance learning work for children," Moreno added. IDRA will provide over 1,000 sets of its Semillitas de Aprendizaje bilingual books to families in the Southwest and Edgewood school districts through the districts' food distribution, communication and paperless lesson delivery systems. IDRA also will provide webinars, classroom sets and teacher's editions to districts for use with students once school commences in the fall.



"We are impressed by IDRA's commitment to meeting the educational needs of young children and their families during this crisis," said Marjie French, CEO of the **San Antonio Area Foundation**. "Good books and great stories inspire learning and hope, which are not only key ingredients for successful students, but for resilient communities."

This distribution is made possible by grant from the COVID-19 Response Fund, a community fund jointly managed by the San Antonio Area Foundation and the United Way of San Antonio. The fund is comprised of nearly 30 caring businesses, donor advised funds, philanthropic foundations, and government entities.

Edgewood ISD Superintendent Dr. Eduardo Hernández said, "We value the collaboration with IDRA and are grateful for the support to our bilingual students through the Semillitas de Aprendizaje storybooks."

Southwest ISD Superintendent Dr. Lloyd Verstuyft said: "This generous donation of books will provide parents an array of engagement activities for our prekindergarten and kindergarten students while enhancing learning opportunities for our young learners. Thank you to IDRA and San Antonio Area Foundation for their donation to SWISD."

With support from the U.S. Department of Education and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, IDRA developed the education materials, which have been in use in classrooms in Arizona, Texas and New York. Each set contains 10 books and a set of 20 letters, or cartitas, for parents with activities related to the stories. The cartitas include sections on celebrating heritage and culture with activities to do at home.

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We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.