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For Immediate Release

DATE: March 8, 2017

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Francine and Murray Farber donate onsite libraries at Fresno Housing properties in honor of their son

Fresno, CA– More than 200 children in kindergarten through third grade will have access to two new on-site libraries, thanks to a personal donation from Francine and Murray Farber. Mike's Books, a free library opening this year on-site at two Fresno Housing Authority developments, was created in memory of the Farbers' son. Michael Farber was an avid reader and advocate for low income and homeless causes in the Bay area.

The first library opens on Tuesday, March 14 at 3:30 pm at Cedar Courts, an affordable housing community in Southeast Fresno.

These libraries will contribute to the vision of Fresno Housing and the Farbers to promote reading skills among children living at affordable housing communities. A room has been designated within the Cedar Courts Community Center. for the installation of carpeting, book shelves and colorful child-friendly furniture and artwork.

Part-time assistant librarians and volunteers will staff the new mini-libraries. Books and volunteers have been provided through the Housing Authority's partnerships with United Way, Reading Heart and other agencies.

The Farbers know that research has demonstrated the importance of learning to read in the early school years. "If children don't learn by third grade, they may face difficulties with academics throughout their lives and impact potential careers."

Previously the Farbers have focused on scholarships to encourage middle school students as well as a theater arts program for fifth graders, and now wanted to help even younger children.

Preston Prince, Executive Director of the Fresno Housing Authority, noted the on-site libraries with service to children are a break-through concept that can become a model for other housing authorities.