

SHORTCUTS AT LARGE



Photo: Kelli Udall

Free Activity Boxes Engage Monterey County Families

BY RENEE BRINCKS

MY Museum Executive Director Lauren Cohen, with children Zachary and Emma Vershaw, display the free activity boxes created for the local community.

Helping children visualize six feet of social distancing space can be a challenge, especially for little learners.

"But give them a jump rope that's six feet long, let them play with it, and then tell a 4-year-old to stay a jump rope's length apart from others. Kids' eyes light up and they understand," says Lauren Cohen, executive director of Monterey County Youth (MY) Museum.

Distancing was one lesson built into 2,500 Shelter & PLAY Family Fun Boxes distributed by MY Museum this fall. First 5 Monterey County and several other community partners supported the packaging of jump ropes, make-your-own mask materials, recipe cards, DIY crafts and other bilingual activities.

Monterey County families facing the one-two punch of pandemic and wildfires embraced the Shelter & PLAY boxes. Now, MY Museum is partnering with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) to distribute a second round. The new release puts a playful spin on bicycle safety and neighborhood awareness.

"We're providing a gift of items that entertain kids and encourage family time. We've heard great feedback about older and younger siblings having fun together, and parents appreciate how simple items teach important safety lessons," says Cohen. "Families have been so grateful."

To learn more, or to support MY Museum outreach, please visit www.mymuseum.org.