



News Release

For Immediate Release
April 10, 2013

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LIBRARY HONORS LATINO CULTURE WITH 2013 BIG READ

The Fresno County Public Library is proud to pay homage to the Central Valley's Latino culture with its seventh **Big Read, Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima***. The book, a coming-of-age tale of a young Hispanic boy in rural 1940s New Mexico, paints a rich tapestry of family, food, friendship, nature, beliefs, rituals, and religion.

The Big Read kicks off with a celebrity read-a-thon at Arte Américas April 24 from 11a.m. to 5 p.m. Celebrities include local media personalities and community leaders. The public is invited to bring copies of the book to read along with the celebrities.

Additional *Bless Me, Ultima* highlighted events from **April 24 to June 2** include:

- Live theater performances at The Severance Theater with a screenplay written by the novel's author.
- Día de los Niños event at Arte Américas featuring Mariachis, folklorico, storytelling, crafts, and free books for children.
- A bus trip to Olvera Street, which is part of the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument in the oldest part of downtown Los Angeles.

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- Many events with a focus on nature, including hikes, edible plant gardening, and a presentation from a curandero (traditional herbal healer). In addition, Arte Américas will host *Rituals of the Land and Spirit*, a photography exhibit that documents locations in the book.
- Cooking demonstrations that will teach participants how to make tortillas and salsa.
- Activities for children, which include owl pellet exploration, tissue paper flowers, an animal presentation from Chaffee Zoo, and bilingual storytimes.
- *The Life and Works of Rudolfo Anaya* presentation by visiting scholar Manuel M. Martin-Rodriguez.

A complete schedule of events is available at local branch libraries and online at www.fresnolibrary.org.

“While this is our seventh Big Read, this is the first book to feature Hispanic people and culture,” said County Librarian Laurel Prysiaczny. “We are thrilled to bring *Bless Me, Ultima* to life with nearly 200 events throughout Fresno County.”

The Library was awarded a \$15,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for *Bless Me, Ultima*. The Big Read gives communities the opportunity to come together to read, discuss, and celebrate one of 34 selected books from U.S. and world literature. The NEA presents The Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest. National support for The Big Read is provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, the Boeing Company, the Poetry Foundation, and the Ford Motor Company.

Local Big Read sponsors include The Fresno Bee, ABC 30, K-Jewel 99.3 FM, Valley Public Radio, La Preciosa 92.9 FM, California Arts Academy, and Arte Américas.