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Front Row: Krista Riggs, Deborah Ledford, Nicole Settle, Misha Hacke, Robin Lopez, Rocky Vang, Lisa Lindsay, Susan Smith
Back Row: Supervisor Buddy Mendes, Supervisor Brian Pacheco, Chairman Sal Quintero, Supervisor Nathan Magsig

NBA Player Donates to Library's Summer Reading Challenge

Fresno, California -- Robin Lopez, Fresno native and current center for the Chicago Bulls basketball team, has given the Fresno County Public Library \$8,000 to support its Summer Reading Challenge. He was joined in this effort by his mother, longtime Fresno County schoolteacher Deborah Ledford.

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The donation was accepted at the July 10 meeting of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. Chairman Sal Quintero recognized Lopez and Ledford and thanked them for their support of the Challenge.

Originally, Ledford had planned to donate \$8,000 worth of books that her children and grandchildren had enjoyed. After discussions with her son and Library staff members, the decision was made to donate the money and allow the Library to utilize its expertise and purchasing power to purchase books for children participating in the Summer Challenge. The donation increased that program's budget by 73 percent and putting more books into local children's hands.

Standing at 7 feet tall, Lopez was impossible to miss as he and his mother waited their turn during the Supervisors' meeting. When the donation came up on the agenda, Lopez was accompanied to the podium by FCPL Development Director Susan Smith and FCPL's Public Information Officer Rocky Vang.

Lopez explained how he developed a love of reading at an early age. His great-grandmother was a librarian and both his grandmother and mother were schoolteachers. He grew up surrounded by books. He recalls being in his grandmother, Inky Ledford's home library with his siblings and spending hours reading. Lopez remembers how he and his mother read the *Harry Potter* books out loud to each other—even after he became a student at Stanford University.

Throughout his professional career, Lopez has supported literacy programs enthusiastically. While playing for the Portland Trail Blazers in 2013-14, he received the team's Maurice Lucas award for helping support the Portland Public Schools' "Read Big" campaign. Lopez's donation allowed every student at three elementary schools in Portland to pick out a book to keep during the Scholastic Book Fair. The award is given annually to a Trail Blazers player who not only excelled on the court but also provides extraordinary community support.

"The Fresno County Public Library is grateful to have champions like Robin Lopez and Deborah Ledford helping get books into the hands of children," said County Librarian Kelley Landano. "Putting a book in their hands is the first step in getting children to read."

For more information about Library programs, services, and specific branch hours, please go to www.fresnolibrary.org or call the Library at (559) 600 – READ (7323).

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Chicago Bulls player Robin Lopez, stands next to a pillar at the Fresno County Public Library's Doris Gates Room that lists children participating in the current Summer Reading Challenge.

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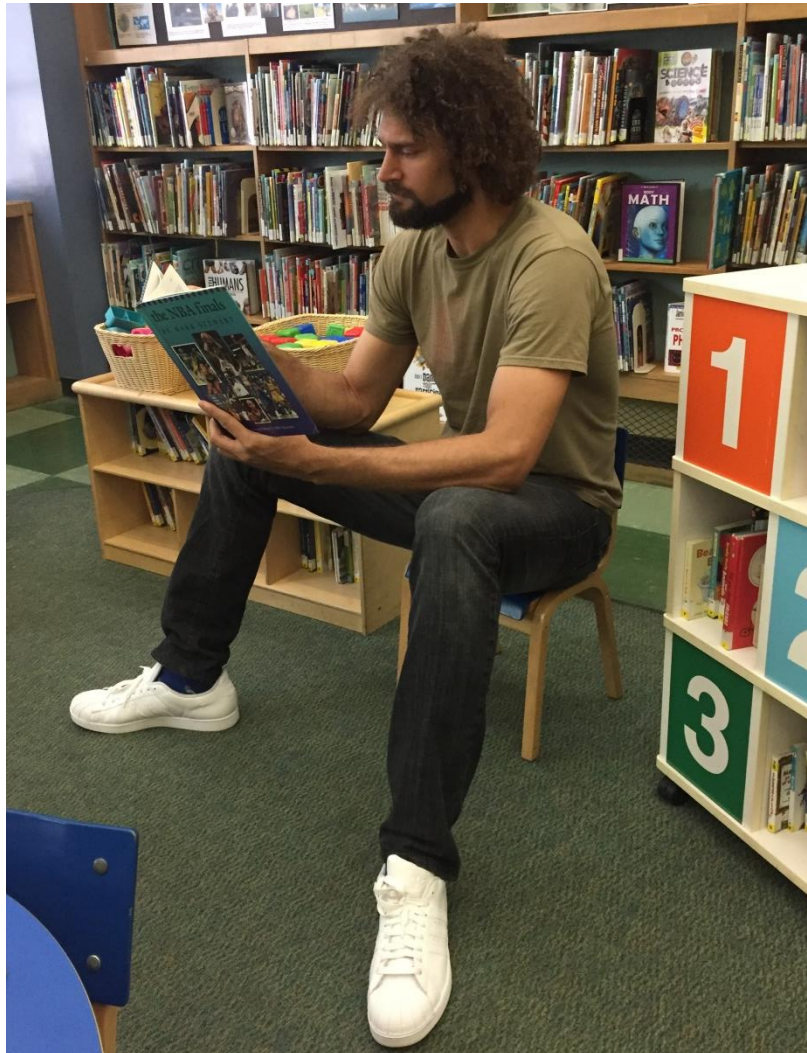
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Robin Lopez reads a children's book at the Fresno County Public Library's Doris Gates Room.

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From left, standing: Congressman Jim Costa greets Robin Lopez and FCPL's Rocky Vang and Susan Smith at the Board of Supervisors meeting on July 10.

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