

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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News Release

The Kern County Library Wants You Back & Will Wipe Your Fees (Seriously)

Mon. June 25 – Sat. June 30 & Mon. July 30 – Sat. August 4

For the first time ever, the Kern County Library is holding a one-time Amnesty Program during two weeks this Summer. Kids, teens, and adults will have the opportunity to receive a clean slate* by reading, donating, or returning materials at any of the Kern County Library's 24 branches or 2 bookmobiles.

The concept of Amnesty in libraries is not new. It has resulted in many successful programs across the country, and has helped systems promote the return of much needed library materials and the increased use of library services. Often, fees that were intended to encourage a prompt return of materials do the exact opposite of what they are intended to do. Instead, customers hang on to materials, for fear of financial consequences. In effect, fines become a serious barrier to access for many, especially for those who can least afford it. At this time, there are over 36,000 library card holders that are blocked from checking out library materials.

This Amnesty Program is a part of a larger effort to encourage the community to rethink public libraries. Andie Sullivan, Director of Kern County Libraries, states that "We are evolving as a public library system and responding to the families that we serve. We want to change our traditional image and foster a friendlier culture of goodwill in Kern County Libraries. Forgiving fines helps us be aware of our customer needs, while also supporting literacy, local food banks, and animal services. It helps us be more welcoming and supportive of learning for all."

Although this is the first time that the Kern County Library is offering Amnesty, the program is expected to recoup some of the County's investment in materials. More importantly, the program is expected to reunite a significant number of families with their local Kern County Library.

-----**Want to Participate? Here's How!**-----

KIDS & TEENS: Pick up our "Read As Much As you Can" Reading Log & turn it in during one of the identified weeks during the Amnesty Program.

ADULTS: Donate one library item, animal care item, or canned food from our donation list. A donation list is available online at kernlibrary.org.

LOST / UNRETURNED MATERIALS: Return your unreturned or lost books to your local Library branch. This option applies to all ages.

*The Amnesty Program offer does not apply to accounts in collections, and other exceptions may apply.

For more information, visit kernlibrary.org