



February 2nd 2009

Dear [name of local dignitary],

I wanted to let you know about a very special community wide event. The community of Hayward has been honored by National Endowment for the Arts to participate in the nationwide reading program known as The Big Read. The goal: to bring Hayward together to read one book as a community. The purpose: to revive the love of reading for fun and enjoyment across America. The featured book, selected by local Hayward educators, is the modern classic, *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines.

Hayward is shifting into high gear as we prepare for this exciting month-long series of events and activities, which begins with "The Big Read-a-Thon" a kick-off event on March 5, in which local authors, students, educators, community leaders, and other members of the Hayward community take turns to do cover-to-cover public reading of our featured Big Read title.

I would like to cordially invite you to participate in the Big-Read-A-Thon event on Thursday, March 5th at Eon Coffee in Hayward, by reading a few pages from the book. We would be honored to have your participation in this unique community event. It will take only ten minutes of your time. The event takes place between 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. We are scheduling readers now, and I am holding a spot for you. I do hope you will join us.

Here's a brief sampling of other Big Read events in March 2009:

- Several hundred free copies of the featured book, paid for with the NEA grant, are being distributed to Hayward schools for use in the classroom during The Big Read. (As of January 20, over 700 Hayward area students are confirmed classroom participants);
- Three headline author appearances (Lalita Tademy, Ernest Gaines, and Brian Copeland);
- A special VIP Hayward engagement of performance troupe Word for Word.
- Visit The Big Read website for complete information: www.haywardbigread.wordpress.com.

It's going to be a big month of March for reading in Hayward! Program partners include Chabot College, Cal State East Bay, Hayward High School, Moreau High School, East Bay Arts High School, Friends of the Library, and Hayward Literacy Council.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions and to schedule a time slot. Thank you.
Sincerely,

Sean Reinhart, Adult and Literacy Services Manager
(510) 881-7976, sean.reinhart@hayward-ca.gov