KPBS recently recognized Imperial Valley campus staff members Monica Cortez and Norma Aguilar for their work in bringing the PBS KIDS Raising Readers program to families in the Calexico community.

"Monica Cortez and Norma Aguilar are visionaries in connecting the vibrant, bustling 50-year-old university with the community so that all Calexico residents see the school as a community center of education and learning," said Deanna Mackey, KPBS station manager, during the event honoring literacy outreach program partners.

The event, held June 3, recognized the station's community partners during the past four years of implementing the national Raising Readers program in San Diego and Imperial counties. Three other community partners were also recognized, including:

- YMCA Childcare Resource Service
- Athletes for Education
- Sunset Elementary School

**Implementing Raising Readers**

As a new partner last year, the two Office of Advancement staff members worked with KPBS and Imperial Valley's education leaders to support the literacy campaign that incorporates characters from popular PBS children's programming. Local events, including Families Stand Together and the Electric Company Circuit Tour, helped engage local families and highlight the campus' role in the community.
Cortez, development coordinator, and Aguilar, freshmen recruiter, also incorporated curriculum developed by PBS' *Electric Company* program into the campus' College Begins in Kindergarten tours.

**Kindergartners on campus**

College Begins in Kindergarten encourages kindergarten students to take an interest in higher education at an early age. The young students are welcomed to the campus by the dean, given a tour of the SDSU-IV campus and meet students, faculty and staff, followed by a visit to the campus library.

There, Aguilar reads a Dr. Seuss book aloud and children watch video clips from Electric Company, a PBS television program geared at increasing literacy in students K–3rd grade.

**About Raising Readers**

The Raising Readers campaign uses the popular and lovable characters from PBS programming, including *WordWorld, Word Girl, Sid the Science Kid, Electric Company* and *Sesame Street*, to surround children with fun engaging educational content.

Developed using proven, scientifically based reading research concepts, the program incorporates phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Raising Readers is funded by a Ready To Learn grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Raising Readers events, workshops and programs have touched the lives of thousands of families, educators and childcare, exposing them to effective and engaging educational tools to help children not only learn to read, but to enjoy it and to understand that any time can be learning time.

For more information, visit the [PBS KIDS Raising Readers website](http://pbskids.org/raisingreaders).