



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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Samohi Students Grow Trees, Shrubs to be Planted on Campus

A unique project led by the Santa Monica High School gardening club will leave a permanent green footprint on campus when dozens of mature trees and shrubs are installed following the completion of the Discovery building

The Samohi Branching Out Tree Nursery will soon be home to 89 growing trees, mostly oaks, and more than 100 shrubs. The nursery, located at the southwest corner of the football field at Pico and 4th streets, was dedicated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 18th attended by students, parents, and school and district administrators.



The trees and shrubs will be planted on campus when construction of the Discovery building is complete in 2021. Current and future Samohi students, with adult support, will care for and nurture the plants until they can be transplanted.

The gardening club worked closely with Caroline Coster, the district's sustainability coordinator, who said the wider community helped bring the project to life. Tree People, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit, donated the acorns, and the City of Santa Monica has agreed to sponsor lessons for the students about whatever they need and want to know about raising trees and the environment in general.

"Our main goals are to make this a long-term learning tool and build student ownership of the campus and encourage school pride," Coster said. She said the idea for the nursery came out of a simple question when it was realized that trees would need to be replaced following completion of the new building: "Why don't we just grow our own trees?" With that, an idea was sprouted and the decision made to select drought-tolerant trees and shrubs to support the district's water-use reduction goals.

Molly McGee, a senior who leads the gardening club, said the students don't take the long-term responsibility lightly. "We're really excited," she said. "But we know there's also so much work left to do." She said it will be fun to see future generations of students shepherd the project. "We won't be students here any longer, but these trees will be here forever."

Samohi Principal Dr. Antonio Shelton said he likes the project for multiple reasons. “First, it’s an awesome use of space” on the 26-acre campus, he said. “Secondly, to see these trees and realize the students’ foresight to plant something now and their willingness to give up their time and put in the work — that’s inspiring.”

This project is in addition to the ongoing Samohi beautification committee work involving students, parents and community members throughout the year.



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Written by: Chris Clonts, Communications Specialist

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