



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Branching Out: Samohi Celebrates Arbor Day with New Tree Nursery

Happy Arbor Day! Santa Monica High School is celebrating Arbor Day by introducing *Branching Out*, the student maintained tree and plant learning nursery on campus.

The goal of the nursery is to engage student groups to grow the majority of the trees and high value shrubs from seeds and seedlings that will eventually be planted throughout all phases of the 25-year campus plan. "The campus plan is a rejuvenation of the entire campus to create a modern learning facility that better utilizes the limited space on campus and creates a sense of belonging," described Alan Braatvedt, director of Santa Monica High School projects.



The nursery is a learning tool for the students and will be used by the science related courses for data collection on soil, tree health, propagation, pH levels, microorganisms, water, ecology and urban forestry.

The Gardening Club, led by junior Molly McGee, has already sprouted 50 native California live oaks from acorns that were donated by the TreePeople, a Los Angeles non-profit organization.



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These California live oaks will be grown and cared for by students in the nursery and will be planted during future phases of the campus.

The nursery will grow 45 of the 79 trees planned for landscaping of the Discovery building, the first and second phase of the campus plan. The species include climate appropriate California sycamore, Swan Hill olive, apple gum and Brisbane box. The students will be caring for these trees until they are mature and the size ideal for planting at time of building completion in 2021.

The location of the main portion of the tree nursery is on the south west corner of the football field with planter beds for seedlings and shrubs located throughout different locations.

“Branching Out will root the students within the Samohi campus and future building projects for long-term engagement and school spirit,” Samohi Principal Dr. Antonio Shelton said. “Generations of students, families and community members will benefit from this ongoing program.”

To find out how to get involved, please contact Caroline Coster, Sustainability Coordinator ccoster@smmusd.

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