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Rheem Girl Scouts Contribute to Garden

By Lee Borrowman



Junior Girl Scout Troop 30072 (three girls not pictured) Photo provided

Two years in the making, plans for a garden at Rheem Elementary School in Moraga are finally coming to fruition.

Principal Elaine Frank writes, "I am thrilled with both the progress and the potential of the Rheem garden project. It's been inspiring to see the entire school community come together to promote its success. We are excited about how the garden will provide 'hands-on' learning opportunities in a variety of subject areas as well as expand students' understanding of the environment and their connection to nature."

Following an outpouring of parent support, hard work and generous donations from local businesses, the site is now being prepared for planting. This fall, students began soil testing with funding provided by a grant from the American Fertilizer Association.

One aspect of the garden, however, has already taken root. The fourth grade members of Junior Girl Scout Troop 30072 spent long hours preparing a hillside near the kindergarten playground and planting drought-tolerant native plants.

"We worked over four weekends removing asphalt and rocks from the area (60' x 11') and then planting a beautiful succulent garden surrounded by native plants that will soon grow to cover the chain link fence that is on two sides of the garden," said Troop Leader Lori Sherman.

5th grade teacher Alice Noyes, one of the driving forces behind the Rheem garden project, was on hand to guide and support the Troop's effort. "I was amazed at the energy and enthusiasm demonstrated by the girls," reflected Noyes, "they were on their hands and knees, tilling the soil and carefully planting each succulent. I know that as fifth graders, they will be rewarded for their hard work as they are able to watch the garden thrive."

Frank said, "The girls were so proud of their efforts, from the design and organization to the actual planting. The girls took me on a 'tour' (of the native plant garden) on Monday and it was so gratifying to see and hear about what they had learned and how hard they had worked."

The Troop would like to thank the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, which donated all of the succulents. Home Depot, McDonnell Nursery and Moraga

Garden Center gave the Troop generous discounts on other plants.

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