

Published May 15th, 2019 Del Rey Elementary School installs colorful shade sails courtesy of a grant By Sora O'Doherty

Former Orinda dermatologist Maryam Mandana Asgari, MD, FAAD, was instrumental in obtaining a grant from the Academy of Dermatology, which was used to install shade sails at Del Rey Elementary School. She was joined by OUSD Superintendent Carolyn Seaton and board member Cara Hoxie. Photo Sora O'Doherty Thanks to the dedication of a former Orinda dermatologist and the ingenuity of Orinda Union School District's Director of Facilities Stuart House, Del Rey Elementary School has installed shade sails to create an outdoor learning space adjacent to the school's new modular classroom buildings. The OUSD was the recipient of a \$8,000 grant from the American Academy of Dermatology.

At a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new shade installation, House explained that most shade structures are installed with structural connections to the ground. Unfortunately, such structures start at about \$20,000 and require additional expenditures for architects and soil engineers, he said. In order to use the grant to install some shade, House came up with the idea of shade sails that would be attached to the buildings and not the ground. The colorful sails which now form a permanent shade structure over the outdoor learning space came in at about \$8,100.

Del Rey Elementary was one of only four organizations in California to receive a grant this year from the AAD's Shade Structure Program. There were 26 recipients

nationwide. Board President Hillary Weiner noted, "On behalf of the Orinda USD board of trustees, I thank the AAD for this generous grant that has provided attractive and protective shade structures at Del Rey Elementary School. Having this shaded area available gives Del Rey teachers increased flexibility to use outdoor learning spaces as a natural extension of the curriculum while ensuring student safety from overexposure to the sun."

Children and teens are especially vulnerable to the damaging effects of the sun because of their time spent outdoors. Seeking shade is an easy way to reduce the risk of skin cancer. In addition to seeking shade, the Academy recommends everyone protect his or her skin from the sun by covering up and wearing broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.

While skin cancer is highly treatable when caught in its earliest stages, it can be deadly. Melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is now the most common form of cancer for young adults 25-29 years old, and the second most common form of cancer for adolescents and young adults 15-29 years old. The Shade Structure Program is part of the AAD's SPOT Skin Cancer campaign to reduce the incidence of skin cancer by educating the public about effective skin cancer prevention tips.

Principal Kirsten Theurer expressed her appreciation to the Academy of Dermatology and to Dr. Maryam Asgari specifically for making the grant possible. Former Orinda dermatologist Maryam Mandana Asgari, MD, FAAD, a member of the Academy, sponsored the grant application. Asgari recently moved to Boston, Mass., to practice surgical dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital, but flew back from Boston to cut the ribbon at the dedication ceremony.

Before the ribbon was cut, Sam Cao, a fifth-grade student at Del Rey, performed a beautiful violin solo for the assembled guests.

Info: To learn more about the Shade Structure Program or for ways to prevent and detect skin cancer, visit www.SpotSkinCancer.org.

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

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