

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Patrick Henry High School Adopts Innovative Drought Tolerant Farming

ESCONDIDO, CA [January 6, 2016]-

ECO-Garden Grand Opening

Date: January 28, 2016

Time: 12:15pm

Place: 6702 Wandermere Drive
San Diego, CA 92120

While drought-stricken Californians have let their thirsty lawns go brown, local schools have had to get creative to minimize their water footprint - sometimes at the cost of education.

“We had to turn off the water in our school garden because of restrictions”, says Lara Dickens, Environmental Science teacher at Patrick Henry, “Our students were unable to water our plants, so our vegetable garden was left abandoned.”

Thanks to a generous gift from Kiwanis Club of San Diego, San Diego Kiwanis Club Foundation, and support of ECOLIFE Conservation; Dickens was able to see this issue as a powerful teaching moment. She happened upon the ECO-Garden Program, which involves using a water efficient form of agriculture, known as aquaponics, to inspire creativity in students to design a sustainable solution for growing produce. The ECO-Garden uses 90% less water and land than traditional agricultural methods, while allowing students to have project-based inquiry experiences.

In partnership with ECOLIFE Conservation, a local nonprofit, Dickens and several other teachers are now working with over 100 Patrick Henry students who have designed, engineered budgeted, and participated in building their school’s aquaponic system. The system will be used as a living lab, growing not only fresh vegetables and fish, but encouraging greater awareness of how sustainable technologies can better conserve our precious resources. Educational Manager, Kait Cole states, “I feel truly inspired to engage students in hands-on learning projects as well as educating our youth about the importance of living an eco-friendly lifestyle. The

ECO-Garden represents a real-life demonstration of how sustainable technologies can protect our environment.”

Along with the educational benefits that the ECO-Garden provides, this program has inspired students at Patrick Henry to take ownership and leadership through creating an aquaponics club, even spearheading another system in the coming semester. One student is starting her own system as a way of providing fresh produce for the low-income families in her area. The way the students care about the ECO-Garden proves that this is not a typical school project- this is a way for students to learn about sustainable solutions and the powerful impact that they can have on their communities.

Patrick Henry is the first of 15 schools to receive an ECOLIFE ECO-Garden, a program supported by the Kiwanis Club of San Diego, San Diego Kiwanis Club Foundation, and the Cox Cares Foundation.

ECOLIFE® is an organization dedicated to a world in which people and nature prosper together. We focus on integrating community health and environmental sustainability through simple-adaptive approaches.

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