

NEWS

Huntington Beach celebrates Arbor Day by planting 19 trees



Mesa View Middle School eighth-graders Jay Nesor and Nathan Boyce plant a tree on a hillside during an Arbor Day celebration at Central Park on Friday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

BY MATT SZABO | STAFF WRITER

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The Huntington Beach Tree Society wants to [plant 50 replacement trees in Central Park this year](#), to celebrate the massive park's 50th anniversary.

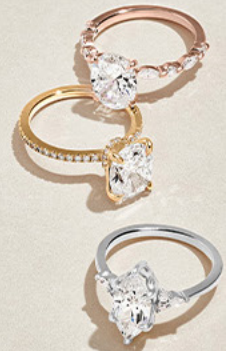
On a sunny Friday morning, they got a good start on that objective.

Huntington Beach's city Arbor Day celebration included a final mulching and watering of a restoration grove in the picnic meadow at Central Park East, near Gothard Street.

The 19 trees, acquired and placed by West Coast Arborists, included jacaranda, Chinese pistache, sycamore and dawn redwoods. flowering, native pollinator ceanothus — commonly known as California lilacs — and toyon were planted up on the nature plateau.

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Jayden Pluma from Mesa View Middle School, plants a tree during Friday's Arbor Day celebration at Central Park in Huntington Beach. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

"It's so great to have them in the park," [Tree Society](#) volunteer Sheila Holliday said. "They're the pollinators, and they bring so much color. Those toyons will have red berries in the fall, and the ceanothus has these beautiful blue lilacs in the spring. We'll kind of have something going all year ... Color is always nice. We don't want a monotone green."

Volunteer Steve Engel said a group of 10 Torrey pine trees is also being prepared for the east side of the park.

The trees were purchased as Chevron has gifted the park with \$50,000 for 50 trees, Holliday said, through a grant proposal written by herself, Juana Mueller and Tree Society President Jean Nagy.

"That was a big amount to ask for, we thought, and they responded, which was really, really nice," Mueller said.



Mesa View students listen to John King, a volunteer from Huntington Beach Tree Society, during Friday's Arbor Day celebration. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

More than 20 California Junior Scholarship Federation eighth-graders from Mesa View Middle School also were on hand Friday to help at Central Park, the largest city park in Orange County.

“Jean reached out to me a couple of years ago and now we have this wonderful partnership,” said [Mesa View teacher Sarah Roberts](#), the CJSF group advisor. “This is how they fulfill part of the service aspect of being a member of this club.”

Mesa View is very close to Central Park, though the school is displaced this year as [the campus undergoes modernization](#).



park particularly because this is their park, right? It's a part of their community, which makes it really special for them to get to give back.”

One group of Mesa View girls, Jacqueline Le, Noelle Kim and Sydney Lam, stopped for a quick interview as they looked for some mulch to aid their efforts.

“Walking into this, we didn't really know what we were celebrating, but then we learned about Arbor Day and stuff,” Kim said. “It makes me feel a lot happier to be helping out here because it's such an important cause to help out our nature.”

Mayor Gracey Van Der Mark, Mayor Pro Tem Pat Burns and City Council members Natalie Moser and Rhonda Bolton were some of the other public officials at Friday's event, as well as director of community and library services Ashley Wysocki.



A tree character mascot stands ready as part of Friday's celebration at Central Park in Huntington Beach. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)