



**Media Contacts:**

Carolyn Gray Anderson – (408) 310-8211  
[canderson@treepeople.org](mailto:canderson@treepeople.org)

Caryn Bosson – (805) 798-1226  
[cbosson@treepeople.org](mailto:cbosson@treepeople.org)

## **NATIVE OAK TREES TRANSFORM BLACKTOP SCHOOL YARD**

**On December 15, TreePeople and Telfair Avenue Elementary School initiate phase 2 of the campus greening effort, a new oak tree grove tied to California State classroom curriculum and replacing 2,726 square feet of asphalt.**



Los Angeles, CA—Saturday, December 15, 2012: TreePeople begins phase two of a comprehensive project to bring nature back to the campus of Telfair Avenue Elementary School in Pacoima. Telfair students, their parents and teachers, and volunteers from the community will break ground to remove 2,726 square feet of asphalt. In its place they will plant 26 new trees, including Coast Live Oaks, Valley Oaks, and Western Redbuds—all California natives. The grove is designed to provide beauty, shade, and cooling to the playground, as well as slow and filter storm water and other runoff from the largely concrete school grounds.

This planting represents another significant step toward creating a natural oasis in this urban school. A thriving butterfly garden, planted by 140 children, teachers, parents, and other volunteers, was unveiled at Telfair in October. It replaced 5,000 square feet of blacktop and provides a living laboratory for the 1,000 students enrolled at the school.

Principal Alfonso Jimenez said, “Our vision is to provide our students with a parklike atmosphere, not only to beautify the school, but because greener campuses are shown to enhance learning.”

To link the campus greening to the classroom, TreePeople is introducing the new Oak Tree Explorers curriculum, a Service Learning Program unit for the 4th grade. Lessons are designed to support mastery of specific California state standards for the Life Science Strand and will integrate the oak tree planting with classroom instruction, scientific investigation, and experimentation.

Fourth-grade teachers at Telfair accompanied their classes to TreePeople's Coldwater Canyon Park campus for a curriculum-based field trip to help care for young oak trees, gather science data to be used in the classroom, and see first hand the importance of oak trees as part of the Southern California ecosystem. TreePeople provided the students with bus transportation.

"The health and well-being of our children and communities are dependent upon access to safe and green space," said Councilmember Richard Alarcon of the 7<sup>th</sup> District. "The new oak grove is a big win for our community, as it will provide an educational opportunity for the students on the importance of protecting our environment and provide opportunities for families to enjoy the outdoors together."

For every collaboration with a LAUSD school, TreePeople helps assemble a campus Green Team to identify and implement a sustainable plan. Green Team members ensure that planting is done properly and that maintenance will continue. As they learn, the students will also be directly involved in the trees' care.

The next phase of TreePeople's project to improve the health of Telfair's landscape will take the form of an extensive nature walk, located in the southwest corner of the campus, where now only barren blacktop exists.

Support for this project was provided by California ReLeaf, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, with funding from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006.

Additional funding was provided by the Max Factor Family Foundation. Scotts Miracle-Gro offered generous in-kind donation of materials.

Community partners include Pacoima Beautiful and the office of LAUSD Board Member Nury Martinez.

**Telfair Avenue Elementary School** is located at 10975 Telfair Ave., Los Angeles, CA 91331-2821

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### **About TreePeople**

TreePeople is an environmental nonprofit that unites the power of trees, people, and nature-based solutions to grow a sustainable future for Los Angeles. For nearly 40 years, TreePeople has worked with communities to plant and care for trees and has provided environmental education for an estimated two million LA area children. The greening campaign at Telfair Elementary is one of the 35 LAUSD projects that TreePeople has spearheaded in the past 5 years. For more information on TreePeople, visit [www.treepeople.org](http://www.treepeople.org).