

# Planting trees for this generation and for future generations

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*“One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.  
Keep a green tree in your heart, and perhaps a singing bird will come.”  
- A Chinese proverb*



Top two photos courtesy of Microsoft

These photos show several city officials and some of the volunteers who participated in the tree planting which took place at two East Palo Alto elementary schools on Saturday, May 7, 2011.



Above two photos courtesy of Michael Uhila

The above two photos show some of the trees that were planted and some of the tools that were used during the Canopy tree planting event in East Palo Alto on Saturday, May 7, 2011 in East Palo Alto.

On May 7, many volunteers gathered to plant 200 trees at two East Palo Alto elementary schools -- Green Oaks Academy and Cesar Chávez Academy. At the entrance to the adjoining schools, one could see a large banner that read, “Healthy Trees, Healthy Kids” and signs that read: Plant here.

The highly, organized event was the result of an initiative established by Canopy, a local non-profit, that is dedicated to adding healthy trees to both East Palo Alto and Palo Alto. The tree planting event at Green Oaks and Cesar Chávez, which lasted from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., was part of Canopy’s goal to plant 1,000 shade and fruit trees in both communities by 2015.

With this initial planting, Canopy's Healthy Trees, Healthy Kids campaign is more than one-fifth complete. Soon, more than 800 students, teachers and staff at Green Oaks and at Cesar Chávez will be able to enjoy the shade and fruit from the trees that were planted.

Canopy's tree planting goal is driven by a growing body of local, national and international research which suggests that a lack of proximity to nature may be associated with numerous health problems, such as asthma, childhood obesity and childhood diabetes. So, the tree planting program at the two schools was designed to prevent and relieve some of the associated health problems.

For Sid Espinosa, who is the Director of Corporate Citizenship for Microsoft and the Mayor of Palo Alto, the tree planting was the fulfillment of a dream. Espinosa said that it was his goal eight months ago to pull together technology companies,

philanthropists and volunteers for the tree planting event that was taking place.

The principal of Green Oaks, Arturo Flores, was one of the speakers at the ceremony which took place at the event. During his presentation, he said, “Trees have always been a part of my life.” Flores told the assembled group that when he was asked to help plant the trees to help Green Oaks have healthy kids his reply was “Heck yeah!”

In bringing the day’s 200 volunteers together, Canopy partnered with the City of East Palo Alto, the Ravenswood City School District and major Silicon Valley technology companies to plant the trees around the two schools.

Many of the volunteers, who planted the trees, were the employees of seven Silicon Valley technology companies, which included Microsoft, National Semiconductor, NVIDIA, REI, RHI, SanDisk and Yahoo.

As the volunteers arrived, they were assigned to a crew. Crew members told them what to plant and where to plant. They could also see a color-coded map of both Green Oaks and Cesar Chávez that contained the trees that were to be planted, with color coding to correspond to the map.

When he was asked for his thoughts about the event, East Palo Alto’s Mayor Carlos Romero said that without the collaborations of public and non-profit organizations, we’re sunk. Romero also said that he was there to work, and work he did. He could be seen shoveling dirt, planting trees and getting dirty alongside other volunteers.

Under Canopy’s sponsorship, the East Palo Alto Tree Initiative, has accomplished its goal of planting and establishing more than 1,200 new trees in East Palo Alto since 2007.

At the end of the tree planting at Green Oaks and Cesar Chávez Academy, it was evident that the volunteers, who planted trees around the two schools, planted them with the hope that their generation and the next generation would be able to enjoy all of the benefits the trees had to offer.

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