



Link: http://www.mercurynews.com/peninsula/ci_17234401?nclick_check=1

An especially memorable planting of a tree

By Janet Duca Norton
For The Daily News

Posted: 01/28/2011 11:32:55 PM PST

Updated: 01/29/2011 12:44:43 AM PST

A very Palo Alto project is the annual Mayor's Tree Planting and party. This year's 15th such event marked a significant milestone for the city's partnership with Canopy, the non-profit organization that looks after Palo Alto's trees.

It was a first-time collaboration with the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center at the Taube Koret Campus for Jewish Life in Palo Alto. Canopy's board chairwoman, Susan Ellis, welcomed more than 130 guests to the Jan. 20 event that featured the planting of a Cedar of Lebanon tree at the entrance to the new Center. The tree planting coincided with Tu Bishvat, the Jewish holiday for trees. We all know trees are valuable and have been an asset in every age; in the Holy Land they counted trees in biblical times for tax purposes.

Canopy's motto is "Healthy trees, healthy communities." During its 15 years, Canopy has planted more than 2,200 trees in Palo Alto and East Palo Alto, and has provided education and maintenance programs. Trees lining the streets in Palo Alto number 34,000.

Mayor Sid Espinosa had a lot of help from two generations of enthusiastic helpers -- former mayors Larry Klein, Pat Burt, Yoriko Yashimoto, Vic Ojakian and current Santa Clara County Supervisor Liz Kniss -- along with many young children from the Oshman Community Center.

Following tradition, awards were presented to community volunteers for their work in the care and propagation of Palo Alto's trees. "Out on a Limb" awards for going the extra mile for Canopy over the past year went to Fred Nichols, for his dedication to preserving the trees in both communities, and his work with native plants; and to Pierre Martineau, for creating the new state-of-the-art online Canopy Tree Library.

The prestigious Soforenko Award, named for Canopy's first treasurer, Arnold Soforenko, recognized contributors who made an extraordinary effort to preserve and enhance the city's urban forest. Landscape architects Mary and Ruth Gordon, who are mother and daughter, worked with the Palo Alto Unified School District to provide preservation of mature trees, and tree selection for new trees on the Palo Alto and Gunn high school campuses. Urban Planner Gloria Humble masterfully spearheaded the Palo Alto Urban Forest Master Plan. The design firm Ellis Partners, LLC and Trader Joe's gave top priority to incorporating preservation and planting of trees when they remodeled the Town and Country Village Shopping Center.

Founding member Bill Courington received the Chair's Award for his special contributions to Canopy since the beginning --storing Canopy's tools at his house, and years of planting and maintenance work. He came up with the name Canopy for the organization.

Darryl Sepulveda received the Student Forester Award for exceptional work in tree planting and maintenance. He trained 20 students in the Youth Staff Program for urban forestry jobs in East Palo Alto..

Guests included Ruth Soforenko, and advisory board members Jane Stocklin, Nancy Peterson and Carol Harrington.

There was buzz about the upcoming May 1 fundraising lecture-dinner, which is to feature author Richard Louv introducing his new book -- "The Nature Principle."

For information, call 650-964-6110 or go to www.canopy.org.