



Media Contact:
Julie Du Brow, Communications
julie@usgbc-la.org, 310-922-1301

US Green Building Council-L.A. Selects 2019 LEGACY PROJECT, the “Regenerative Learning Garden” at Arroyo H.S. in San Gabriel Valley, Highlighting Career Pathways and Green Space

First Public Volunteer Dates are February 16, March 30

LOS ANGELES (February 6, 2019) The [U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles](#) (USGBC-LA) Chapter is proud to announce the 2019 Legacy Project: Regenerative Learning Garden (RLG) located at Arroyo High School in El Monte, CA. Proposed by Eco Urban Gardens, the RLG was selected as the USGBC-LA’s fourth Legacy Project due to the area’s need for increased access to garden and green space, combined with environmental/resilience education, and active student and community workforce development.

USGBC-LA is providing \$20,000 in funding, along with design, strategy and project management support, and a regular callout to membership for volunteer opportunities. The beneficiaries of the project will be Arroyo High School students and the wider El Monte community, with a vision for the school campus – home to the largest opportunity for a green space in its school district - to become the model for other area school garden programs.

“Beyond the standard benefits of any garden located on a school site, such as exposure to natural systems, increased access to healthy foods and community building, I am most excited about the correlative benefits thoughtfully and deliberately built into this project by Eco Urban Gardens and its partners,” notes Legacy Project chair Maya Henderson of Kilroy Realty Corporation. “Career Technical Education (CTE) programs will be offered by the high school and the El Monte Union High School District, designed to provide students and the community marketable skills and workforce development opportunities.”

The funds and additional resources from USGBC-LA will allow Eco Urban Gardens to renovate about 12,000 sq. ft. of the 32,000 sq. ft. garden space. The project includes:

- Installing a low water garden with swales and berms
- Instituting different plant communities that include medicinal and edible native plants
- Remodeling the garden’s labyrinth
- Planting a variety of fruit trees, fence-line trees, and one central tree in the labyrinth
- Placing benches around the space for student classes and relaxation
- Installing pathways to entry gates

The greater Regenerative Learning Garden is hoping to combat air quality issues and a high heat index in an area that is primarily surrounded by concrete and freeways, even though it is

uniquely situated next to Peck Park, a mini-estuary and the only green park space in North El Monte and Temple City.

Eco Urban Gardens provides educational materials, curriculum and instructors focused on health and wellbeing. They offer an environmental education program for students and the surrounding community that is not available elsewhere. The end goals for the Regenerative Learning Garden include:

- Growing organic food, and educating the community on how they can reduce their carbon footprint by purchasing local produce or growing their own produce (behavior change)
- Demonstrating and teaching the use of low water California native plants in a garden setting (living demonstration lab)
- Reducing water use and cost in maintaining a green space, as well as providing a habitat for native fauna (eco-system support)
- Increased carbon sequestering in a community with a lot of paved surfaces (climate action)
- Providing outgoing students choices for environmentally-friendly careers. Proposed CTE pathways include: (a) regenerative landscaping and agriculture, and (b) environmental science and health

“We are thrilled to have received this grant from the USGBC-LA to help refurbish the RLG with the community and students. The students have already shown great interest in garden boxes, and are eager for more (career pathway) education and a natural space to study,” says Marianne Zaugg, Executive Director of Eco Urban Gardens. “Also encouraging is that 75% of community members surveyed expressed wanting a farm stand at the school where they can purchase inexpensive organic produce. They would also participate in a weekly CSA program, and they want to learn about various agro-ecological farming techniques.”

The first volunteer opportunities to work at the garden are:

- [Saturday, February 16](#) – harvesting crops, preparing meadow for wild flowers
- [Saturday, March 30](#) – celebrating Cesar Chavez Day by seeding crops and planting California native plants

The Legacy Project is an annual gift from the USGBC-LA to a local community to help install a permanent project providing an enduring means of service and education. The Los Angeles Chapter decided to continue awarding annual projects following the first project in 2016, EcoTech Makerspace in Gardena. Following its successful community impact, the Veggie Bus Project in South Central LA, and most recently, the Discovery Garden in Simi Valley, followed suit.

“The RLG is a holistic project, taking into account so many aspects of how this garden can have a positive impact, and we’re thrilled to have it as this year’s Legacy Project,” notes Ben Stapleton, USGBC-LA Executive Director. “From workforce development and community learning to developing an important green space in a region that has some of the nation’s worst air quality, we believe in this model’s ability to inspire through access, education, and there being no substitute for getting your hands dirty. We’re proud to be part of the truly committed group of project partners Eco Urban Gardens has pulled together and are looking forward to getting our local chapter members engaged.”

For more information on the Legacy Project and to volunteer, please visit www.usgbc-la.org. If you’d like to contribute to this project or any other sponsorship support, please email ben@usgbc-la.org.

###



About U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles

USGBC-LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to creating a prosperous and sustainable future within one generation. Our mission promotes sustainability in LA County's built environment by delivering access to knowledge, resources, recognition and networking. (www.usgbc-la.org)

About Eco Urban Gardens

Eco Urban Gardens is a nonprofit dedicated to educating communities about the connection between agriculture, health and environment.

The mission of Eco Urban Gardens is to improve the health and wellbeing of all by bringing farms and gardens to your door. It is our goal to build healthy communities by cultivating edible gardens and installing regenerative gardens with California native plants, while conserving water and creating thriving ecosystems. Eco Urban Gardens offers an in-depth Farm to School program for students to learn about organic farming and Grow Gardens to build regenerative gardens. (ecourbangardens.org)