

## Thomas Starr King Beautification Project

by Mary Rodriguez

Since the beginning of the 1998 school year the students, parents, teachers, administration and members of surrounding community associations (Franklin Hills, Los Feliz & Silver Lake) have been meeting on a monthly basis and working on the re-landscaping of the school grounds.

**November 18th** - The 6th graders, their teachers, and parents worked together with the LA Conservation Corp. to plant 17 Crape Myrtle and Magnolia trees around the exterior perimeter of the school. FHRA supplied a delicious snack as a thank you. It was a great kickoff to our project.

**December 12th** - 20 volunteers helped clear the weeds & debris and to mulch the grounds on Fountain Ave. between Myra Ave. & Manzanita St.

**January 23rd** - 100 volunteers helped prune back the overgrown and neglected shrubs on Fountain Ave. between Myra Ave. & Bates Ave. The grounds were also heavily fertilized.

**February 13th** - 70 volunteers helped clear the grounds between the entrance staircases on Fountain Ave. Sunflowers and wildflowers were sown until the irrigation is replaced and permanent landscaping installed.

Beautiful Pansies, Primroses, Snap Dragons, Calendulas, Dusty Miller, and Purple Daisies were planted in the 1926 tiled fountain.

**March 20th** - 12 full grown pink Azalea bushes were do-

nated to the school by a Los Feliz resident and planted on the slope at the back of the school on Sunset Drive.

**April 17th** - 18 volunteers planted Australian Tea Trees, Lavender, Rosemary, Mexican Sage, Indian Hawthorn and Violet Geraniums around the open amphitheater in the middle of the school where performances take place throughout the month of May with the 7th grade annual Renaissance Faire.

We will continue planting monthly for the remaining school year and begin our efforts again in the Fall. We do need help keeping the trees and the plants watered throughout the hot summer months. Anyone that would like to contribute to this project is encouraged to call me. We will be needing healthy Aloe Vera, and other succulents for our landscaping around the 1936 WPA Indian Chief Statue which we are still trying to get restored.

Currently the school is engaged in discussions with LAUSD about the air conditioning units that have been installed at the front of the school on Fountain Ave. and the huge ugly cages that have been erected around each one. Four more AC Units and cages are planned for installation. They make the facade of the building more unattractive than ever. The grant received for this project was to enhance the front of the school. Irrigation was put on hold until Prop. BB construction was completed, but there was never any indication of a time line from the contracting company. Support from the community is needed to make a change for the better.

This project was made possible by the Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant from the City of Los Angeles and contributions from John Aaroe and Associates Charitable Foundation, Silver Lake Improvement Association, Franklin

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