



**Environmental
Nature Center**

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Press Release

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ENVIRONMENTAL NATURE CENTER NATURE PRESCHOOL PROJECT WILL BREAK GROUND IN NOVEMBER

Newport Beach, Calif., January 23, 2018 - The Environmental Nature Center (ENC) will celebrate the official groundbreaking of its highly anticipated state-of-the-art Nature Preschool on February 15, 2018. The ENC Nature Preschool will be the community's first nature preschool and nature play area. The preschool will be located on 1.3 acres bordering the Nature Center's Redwood Forest, at 745 Dover Drive.

Nature Preschools are popular in countries such as Germany and Finland, and are gaining popularity in the US. These innovative schools teach the building blocks of a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) education by providing young children with the opportunity to become familiar with the natural world by playing – and learning – while surrounded by nature.

Qualified early childhood educators and environmental educators will teach the basics of a typical preschool and more. Indoor spaces will be warm, welcoming and conducive to learning, but the majority of the day will be spent learning outside.

"It is becoming increasingly evident that nature-based preschools are more effective in terms of learning and health benefits," said ENC Executive Director Bo Glover. "Our Nature Preschool will provide quality education and nature exploration opportunities for preschool children, and help them develop into environmentally literate adults, which is needed today more than ever."

The ENC is aiming to achieve a Platinum Level LEED Rating on the new facility. The US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. It is also the ENC's goal to achieve certification through the Living Building Challenge.

The preschool was already awarded a citation from the American Institute of Architects Orange County Chapter (AIAOCC) in 2015. The ENC's Nature Preschool was one of eight projects selected to receive an award out of the 56 projects that were entered into the design competition. It was the only project to receive an award that was not a completed project; meaning the jury saw great potential in the building. It was noted during the award ceremony "that the site design and building worked seamlessly and a great deal of thought was given to the creation of a learning environment where nature was the focus."

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“The ENC’s Nature Pre-school will have play areas but no playgrounds,” said ENC Nature Preschool Director Sue Bierlich. “Students will spend the majority of the day outdoors, where they will have ample time for unfacilitated nature experiences.”

The ENC Nature Preschool will also engage parents in active learning, serve as a model nature preschool, and provide a research forum on early childhood and environmental education.

“I truly believe that this Nature Preschool and Nature Play Area will be an integral addition to the community making an essential impact on the next generation.” said Rick John, long-time Newport Beach resident and ENC Board Member. “We are urgently seeking community members to join us in supporting the ENC Nature Preschool.”

For more information or to donate to the ENC’s Nature Preschool, visit encnaturepreschool.org or contact ENC Executive Director Bo Glover at 949-645-8489 ext. 101 or bo@encenter.org.

About the ENC

Founded in 1972, the ENC is a fascinating combination of 15 California native plant communities, wildlife habitat, walking trails, and sustainably designed, LEED Platinum certified learning center. For 45 years, the ENC has been shaped and caressed into a 3.5 acre landscape for learning, a sanctuary from life’s pressures and a place of preservation and instruction. Serving over 27,000 students and thousands of visitors annually, the ENC is recognized as a leader in science and social science education providing opportunities for increasing our community’s knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the natural world.

With a mission of providing quality education through hands-on experience with nature, the ENC inspires all generations to protect the natural world by serving as our community’s foremost authority on ecological responsibility, sustainable practices and environmental education. The ENC is a non-profit 501(c)-3 public benefit corporation. For more information call 949-645-8489, or visit www.ENCenter.org. The ENC is located at 1601 16th Street in Newport Beach.

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