

"For Locals, by Locals" Newport Beach Independent

Nature Preschool Receives \$1M Donation, City Certification

By **Newport Indy Staff**
September 12, 2019



A toddler rides a tricycle on the ENC nature preschool bicycle path for the first time on Sept. 6. — Photo courtesy ENC

The Environmental Nature Center is on track to open its new preschool in the near future, following recent city certification and a \$1 million donation from a local couple.

On Friday, ENC officials shared an announcement that the nature preschool building received its certificate of occupancy from the city of Newport Beach.

“Looking forward to students coming soon!” the message reads.

In a Sept. 3 press release, ENC officials announced that Lido Isle residents Frank and Joan Randall made the significant contribution to help open the school at 745 Dover Dr., which will educate up to 72 children daily through hands-on experiences with nature.

“The Randalls are visionaries, and we are grateful for their generous support of the ENC Nature Preschool,” ENC Executive Director Bo Glover said in a prepared statement. “The school will serve as a model nature preschool and provide a research forum on early childhood and environmental education. Their donation will be far-reaching.”

ENC Assistant Director Lori Whalen said last week that construction crews were putting the finishing touches on the new building.

The nonprofit hopes the new facility will earn a platinum-level designation by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system, the national standard for environmentally-sustainable design and construction.

According to a 2015 study published by the National Institute of Health, “access to active play in nature and outdoors — with its risks — is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings.”

The ENC nature preschool and nature play area will be an “integral addition” to the community, officials commented in Friday’s message, and will make an essential impact on the next generation.

For more information, visit encnaturepreschool.org or contact ENC Executive Director Bo Glover at (949) 645-8489 ext. 101 or bo@encenter.org.