



**PRESS
RELEASE**

Bassett Unified School District

on the move

904 North Willow Avenue ■ La Puente, CA 91746 ■ (626) 931-3000 ■ (626) 931-3020 ■ www.bassettusd.org

For Immediate Release

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Bassett Unified Elementary Students Connect Classroom Learning to Nature

LA PUENTE, CA – More than 20 Don Julian Elementary fourth-graders harvested crops and explored nature conservation over eight weeks at Hacienda Esperanza, a private Bassett ranch where students learned the health and wellness benefits of being outdoors and became advocates for conserving the local San Gabriel Mountains.

The school's Lions Leadership Academy's Nature for All project focused on environmental lessons each week, including harvesting vegetables, interacting with farm animals and practicing yoga in nature.

"With this program, we want to build a base of support to ensure every student – no matter where they live – has equitable access to the benefits nature can provide," Nature for All project leader Alejandra Sandoval said.

Sandoval, a Don Julian alumna, earned a bachelor's in health education from Cal State Long Beach and wanted to share with students the resources available at Hacienda Esperanza as well as provide an opportunity for students to explore nature.

Families and Bassett Unified Interim Superintendent Debra French joined students as they celebrated the end of the program with a graduation on March 20 at Hacienda Esperanza, featuring a tour of the ranch and student presentations on what they learned. Students received certificates for completing the program and copies of Sean Covey's motivational book, "The 7 Habits of Happy Kids."

"I had a lot of fun learning and I enjoyed the gardening the most," said Don Julian fourth-grader Ariana Ruiz, who was recognized for growing the largest plant from a seed. "I used the greenhouse at my home, and my plant kept growing."

Students were taught the benefits of balanced nutrition and how to tend the vegetable garden. These lessons expanded on healthy living by incorporating mindfulness and mental health activities such as destressing through yoga and equine assisted learning. Students also learned the impact they have on the environment and ways to preserve natural landscapes through the principles of Leave No Trace, which include respecting wildlife, disposing of waste properly and minimizing campfire impacts.

Sandoval hopes to continue the program at Don Julian and include a curriculum that fits with daily instruction.

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Nature for All connects classroom lessons with hands-on work outdoors as part of project-based learning, a form of instruction that allows students to have immersive experiences relevant to their classroom learning.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to learn and practice important life skills that they can share with their families,” French said. “We are so thankful to Alejandra for giving our students the opportunity to learn outside the classroom with lessons that they can use for the rest of their lives.”

PHOTOS:

041318_BASSETT_DJNATURE1: More than 20 Don Julian Elementary fourth-graders harvested vegetables and interacted with farm animals over eight weeks at Hacienda Esperanza, a private Bassett ranch where students learned the health and wellness benefits of being outdoors. Families joined students as they celebrated the end of the program with a graduation ceremony on March 20.

041318_BASSETT_DJNATURE2: Don Julian Elementary fourth-grader Ariana Ruiz (right) was recognized for growing the largest plant from a seed during the Nature for All graduation on March 20.

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Bassett Unified School District Mission – Working collaboratively with all stakeholders, the Bassett Unified School District will provide engaging and rigorous learning opportunities, using integrated technology in state-of-the-art learning environments, to graduate College and Career Ready students.

Bassett Unified School District Vision – We are a community committed to educating and empowering our students to think creatively, act responsibly, and communicate effectively in order to be successful members of society and make a positive impact on the lives of others.