



Press Release

For Immediate Release:
November 4, 2014

Contact: Selina Ayala-Patlan
Valerie Martinez
(909) 445-1001

MUSD Student Gardeners Continue to Champion for Health *Quarterly Farmers Market Highlights School-Based Gardening, Promotes a Healthy Community*

BELL GARDENS, Calif. – Student gardeners from 11 Montebello Unified elementary, intermediate and high schools gathered to sell fresh, organic produce and herbs grown on their campuses during this year's third installment of the MUSD Farmers Market on Saturday, Nov. 1 at Bell Gardens Intermediate. The quarterly marketplace serves to provide a low-cost alternative to grocery store-bought fruits and vegetables, while promoting health throughout MUSD's communities.

"We are so proud of our students, advisers and garden club volunteers for hosting another Farmers Market in our District, which brings our school communities together for an important purpose," said Montebello Unified Board of Education President David Vela. "The success of these events continues to mark our dedication to the health and well-being of our students and families."

Students from Bell Gardens, Cesar Chavez, Garfield, Suva, Wilcox and Winter Gardens elementary schools; Bell Gardens, Macy and Suva intermediate schools; as well as Bell Gardens High, and new student garden club members from the Applied Technology Center sold tomatoes, celery, onions, leafy greens, fruits and herbs, as well as school spirit items to support their garden clubs.

"For over seven years, the student garden movement has grown significantly in our District, beginning with one school garden and expanding to 19 schools, including the Bell Gardens High School's GREEN pathway, which incorporates the science and necessity behind urban and community farming," said Montebello Unified Board of Education Member Lani Cupchoy, who helped spearhead MUSD gardens. "It is our goal to see student gardens in every school within the District, and we are closer than ever before. It is fantastic to see this movement really take root in our schools."

More than 2,000 students at 19 schools are involved in gardening programs throughout Montebello Unified, and the District and its partners have sought grants to expand their programs, incorporate gardening activities into their curriculum, and promote principles of sustainability and water conservation. Additionally, Bell Gardens High is home to the Globally Responsible Environmental Education Network (GREEN) pathway, which prepares students for careers in the urban agriculture, renewable energy and environmentally-friendly technologies.

--more--

The District aims to implement student-run gardens at all 30 schools to create a healthier school district, and in turn, a healthier community by spreading awareness of healthful eating at school and at home.

Saturday's event also featured free health and wellness services by Family Health Care Centers of Greater Los Angeles and planting demonstrations from Home Depot. Entertainment was provided by 2013 Bell Gardens High alumnus DJ Sweet Baby J (Juan Herrera, Jr.) and the Bell Gardens Intermediate Generation Dance Team under the direction of Jesse Mendoza. The Culinary Hospitality Opportunities Pathway -- also known as CHOP -- at Bell Gardens High, run by Chef Elsa Helm, also participated sharing culinary dishes made from produce and herbs from student gardens.

The last Farmers Market of the year is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 13.

“Our farmers markets have come to be events in which our local communities rely upon to get seasonal produce, while promoting health,” said Montebello Unified Superintendent of Schools Cleve Pell. “We thank our teachers, staff, volunteers and students for making this event a staple each season.”

Photo Captions

Farmers Market1: Students pose with their families and volunteers from Garfield Elementary School in front of their seasonal harvest at the Montebello Unified Farmers Market on Saturday, Nov. 1.

Farmers Market2: Two boys from Macy Intermediate's 4-H and Garden Clubs smile at their booth during the Montebello Unified Farmers Market on Saturday, Nov. 1.

###

Montebello Unified School District is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone's efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District's number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at www.montebello.k12.ca.us.