

Cambria and Cayucos Students Receive Forest Education

2018 was the fourth year that Greenspace – The Cambria Land Trust has partnered with the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust to connect students with nature. The Greenspace Environmental Education Field Program takes sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders out into the Monterey Pine forest for enriched education.

Led by Greenspace founder and Monterey pine forest expert Rick Hawley and under the supervision of their Santa Lucia Middle School teacher, Danielle Narzisi, the students spend a day in Strawberry Canyon, Greenspace's 21 acres of rare Monterey pine forest.

During the course of the day, the students learn about the Monterey pine forest ecosystem. They learn how this species of pine propagates, analyze the forest soil for macronutrients, gather, identify and draw forest insects, and enjoy a reflective time just listening to the forest



This way! Greenspace founder and Monterey Pine forest expert Rick Hawley leads the Santa Lucia Middle School Environmental Education class into the misty forest.

with their eyes closed. Post field-trip visits to their classroom have the students making paper from scrap paper and using it to do "Poet-tree," telling about their forest visit in a creative way.

The Forest Education Program uses nature to teach vivid lessons about the relationships between the forest, its animals and plants. The goal is to instill in young people the desire to protect and enhance the Central Coast's unique Monterey pine forest.

Greenspace board members volunteer their time and talents. Educator Ann Cichowski and her husband, Robert Cichowski, Greenspace Education Program Coordinator and retired Cal Poly professor, along with local artists Sara Blair Field and Art Van Rhyn and many others lead the students through the forest and the many lessons it teaches.

"It's wonderful to see the kids put down their cell phones and get engaged in nature," Hawley said.


The goal of the program is to impress upon the students the importance of the relationships among all the plants and animals, large and microscopic, which support the forest ecology and foster a healthy forest.

The Forest Education Program is the result of a partnership between Greenspace and the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust, which supported the education program with a generous grant. Projects to protect the environment are one of its six program focus areas. The trust funds projects involving environmental science, green technology, promoting open spaces, sustainable agriculture, and land preservation.

"Greenspace plans to continue to expand our education outreach in the North Coast of SLO County," said Mary Webb, President of the Greenspace Board of Directors. "We very much look forward to our continued partnership with the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust."

Videos showing the students and the forest are posted on the Greenspace website, <https://greenspacecambria.org/>.

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