

Local organizations come together for Encinitas community garden project



Luke Harold

Volunteers gathered for a community garden project in Encinitas to benefit the local residents experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.



Nearly 100 volunteers assembled 10 raised garden beds at Encinitas4Equality's Multicultural Collective & Community Center on June 26, with produce from the garden to be donated to San Diego County residents who are experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.

"We have space here and we have people in the community who want to be part of the solution and caring for our unhoused community and people suffering from food scarcity," said Mali Woods-Drake, Encinitas4Equality co-founder.

A number of local organizations were also involved in the community garden project, including Encinitas Fill-A-Belly and Changing Tides Foundation. The harvested produce will be donated to Humanity Showers, and Oceanside Homeless Resource. Another partnering organization, Grandma Lulu's Table, is serving pre-packaged vegetarian meals for residents who are food insecure.

Woods-Drake said Encinitas4Equality, which emerged last year in the aftermath of the police murder of George Floyd, said the various organizations came together out of a common purpose.

"In many ways the building of this garden from scratch, and growing it and nurturing it, is a lot like building the sort of community and society we want to see," she said. "It's going to take a lot of patience and a lot of care, but together I think we can do really incredible things."

According to the group's website, the Multicultural Collective & Community Center, located at 1900 N. Coast Highway 101, serves as a co-op for businesses owners who are Black, Indigenous and people of color.

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Vanessa Graziano, founder of Oceanside Homeless Resource, added that “our hearts were in the same alignment.”

“We realized we needed to do more, and we stand for the same things,” she said.

Encinitas4Equality provided all the pre-cut wood and other supplies. Volunteers were asked to bring certain plants and seeds to grow in the garden. Sea & Soil farmer, Greg Reese, of the nonprofit Sea + Soil, was in charge of the garden design, irrigation and planting.

“This is why our community is such a special place,” said San Diego County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, who volunteered at the event. “People come together to give back.”

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