



California Arbor Week 2019

Sponsored by Edison International

**CALIFORNIA RELEAF FINAL REPORT
NOVEMBER 2019**





Numbers represent Edison-sponsored events only

WITH 95% OF THE POPULATION NOW LIVING IN URBAN AREAS, urban trees and green space are critical to the health and well-being of Californians. Climate change threatens natural disasters, higher urban temperatures, and decreased quality of life. Protecting our urban forests is vital to community resilience. Fostering community knowledge, appreciation, and advocacy at the local level is a vital to protecting our urban forests.

The California Arbor Week Grant Program is an important gateway to urban forest activism, motivating new community groups to plant trees in their neighborhoods, while the resulting co-benefits then inspire a new wave of “tree folks”. Co-benefits include visible, tangible results, empowerment to act locally on climate change, and deeper community connection. Program sponsorship funds are directly invested in small communities throughout the state. Edison International’s support made deeper outreach possible in San Bernardino and the High Desert.

Edison’s 2019 funding covered the cost of the trees, supplies, signage, handouts, two incubator workshops, as well as some of the organizing expenses. This sponsored 252 trees planted across 27 events! Grantees passed along many stories and statistics from their events, highlights of which are shared here.

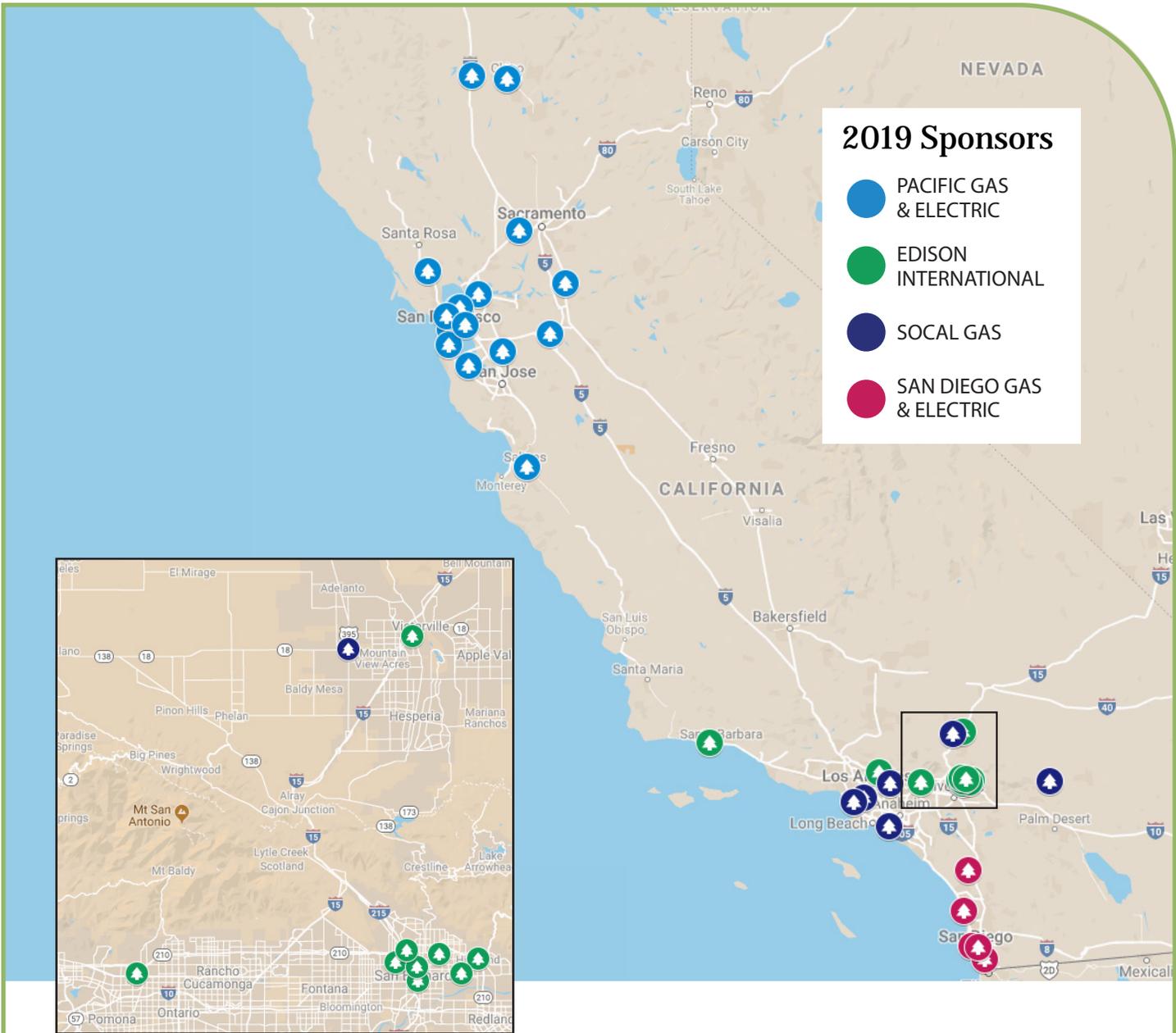
“The weather was gorgeous, the smiles were abundant, and the trees a symbolic gift of giving back to our future kids and families”

– ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OPSETH, ALTA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL



Akoma Unity Center, San Bernardino

Cover photos– Left: Akoma Unity Center; Top Right: Amigos de los Rios; Bottom Right: Second Chance, A Place for Hope



2019 Edison Grantees

1. Akoma Unity Center	San Bernardino	9. Second Chance A Place for Hope	San Bernardino
2. Aloha Ohana Academy	Highland	10. SisterWe	San Bernardino
3. Alta Vista Innovation H.S.	Hesperia	11. Sustainable Claremont	Claremont
4. Amigos de los Rios	Altadena	12. Urban Conservation Corps / Southern California Mountains Foundation	San Bernardino
5. Community Health Action Network	Victorville	13. Your Children's Trees	Goleta
6. Hands of Stone Youth Club	San Bernardino		
7. Highlanders Boxing Club	San Bernardino		
8. Perris Hill Neighborhood Association	San Bernardino		



Second Chance A Place for Hope, San Bernardino

▲ *“One of the children said, now that he knows how to plant trees, he’s going to plant trees all over the world. Several of the residents after seeing the tree planted in the community said it lifted their spirits and asked, ‘When will more be planted down street, because they want some in front of their house.’ The statement that moved me the most was the young girl confined to a wheelchair that said planting a tree was the best fun she had ever. And then she cried. Her way of saying, ‘Thanks for letting me help.’”*

–SECOND CHANCE A PLACE FOR HOPE

▶ *“A mom and her two children were on a walk and stopped by our event to see what was going on. We told them about our program and the tree planting and they asked if they could help! We, of course, said we would love for them to join us! After planting, they walked around the Fair, potted succulents and learned more about our programing! At the end of the event, the mom came up to our Planting Season Intern and expressed how happy they were that the City was working with us to plant the trees. She said they walk on Baseline Road often, and she couldn’t wait for the trees to grow and provide more shade on their walks. The family said they will definitely join us for another planting in the Fall!”*

–SUSTAINABLE CLAREMONT



Sustainable Claremont



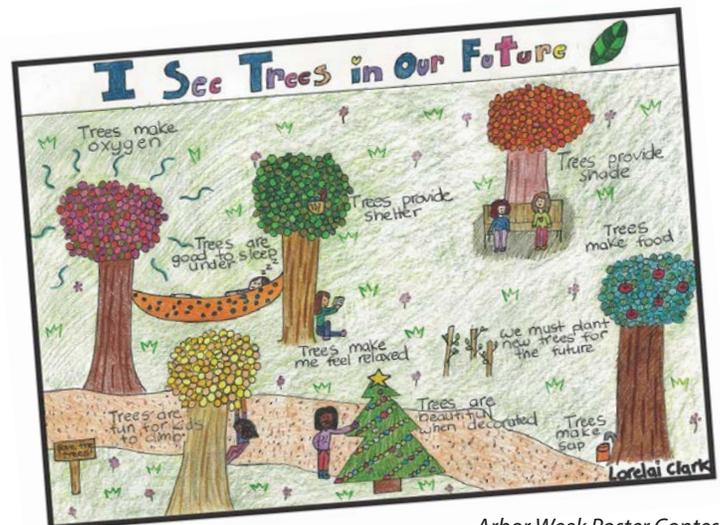
Amigos de los Rios, Altadena

Education

The primary goal of Arbor Week celebrations is education. Residents and schoolchildren learn why trees are so incredibly important in our cities and neighborhoods, how to plant and care for trees, how time spent in green spaces is good for their health and well-being, as well as what they can do to support their communities with trees.

Most Arbor Week events were done in collaboration with local schools, providing students the opportunity to get their hands dirty, learn the benefits of trees, feel pride in their work, and enjoy green spaces in their campuses and communities for years to come.

Arbor Week celebrations also included the annual Arbor Week Poster Contest, co-sponsored this year by Northrop Gunman. The contest fostered creativity and prompted kids to think about planting trees for their futures.



*Arbor Week Poster Contest:
5th Grade winner*

“During the community workshops for the plan, residents continuously brought up how education on the importance of trees, at an early age, is important. With over 50 school children in attendance, this event did exactly that, while also showing our young participants that trees are fun and exciting! After planting, one child, Jessica, age 6, told her mom, ‘Let’s plant some more trees at home!’”

–SUSTAINABLE CLAREMONT

▶ “We were inspired to see proud grandparents supporting their grandchildren, whole families working side by side, mothers and fathers forming new friendships, and dedicated teachers contributing to the beauty of the school and enhancing outdoor learning opportunities. Everywhere you turned there were people working, sweating and laughing together. Many parents and students shared that they were looking forward to watching the trees grow for years to come.”

-AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS

▶ “Perris Hill Neighborhood Association held the tree planting event on Tuesday, Sept. 10th in San Bernardino. The location is a family-owned Mexican restaurant that has been in business in the city for over 50 years. The owner was generously offered to have the association plant two trees in front to improve the area (few businesses in that area have any type of trees or other vegetation).”

-PERRIS HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

▶ “At the second event, six orange trees were planted by students were planted public housing and fifteen orange trees were given out to low income families. Over 10 organizations participated in passing out trees and discussing “how to plant” trees properly. Agencies included, the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, East Valley Water District, and UC Extension Master Gardeners...

“Over 200 residents including volunteers attended the Arbor Week Celebration in Highland which helped residents and agencies engage in environmental conservation for the first time in this part of Highland.”

-HIGHLANDERS BOXING CLUB & YOUTH SERVICES



Amigos de los Rios, Altadena



Perris Hill Neighborhood Association



Highlanders Boxing Club, San Bernardino

Soon, free fruit



Emily Alarcon helps plant a tree Monday in Old Town Victorville. The trees, planted on Seventh Street, will bear fruit for taking by the public. (JAMES QUIGG, DAILY PRESS)

Volunteers plant trees in Old Town to provide food for the needy

By Matthew Cabe
Staff Writer

VICTORVILLE – In an effort to increase access to fresh produce in Old Town, volunteers planted and dedicated 14 fruit trees Monday that will soon bear apples, pears, nectarines and loquats along Seventh Street.

The community garden, dedicated on Earth Day, is the third such site in the city's downtown area. Its trees will provide free fruit to the needy, according to Cornelius Page Jr., facilitator for San Bernardino County's Communities of Excellence

See FOOD, A4



Victorville Mayor Gloria Garcia, left, and volunteer Kim Ammerman, right, offer children coloring and story books as part of the tree-planting ceremony in Old Town. The planting project "just makes my heart feel overwhelmed with joy," Garcia said. (JAMES QUIGG, DAILY PRESS)

FOOD

From Page A1

in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention program.

Page said the multiple groups came together to plant the trees after CX3 program members conducted a survey last year that identified some of Old Town's priorities.

"We surveyed the retail stores, the mom and pop stores, and we found that there was an abundant need for fresh fruits and vegetables," Page said. "The prices are too high, so there's a big need."

The CX3 program focuses on low-income communities that are disproportionately affected by environmental conditions that do not support healthy eating and physical activity, the county's website shows.

Page, who is also the executive director of the Community Health Action Network, said 71 percent of adults and 34 percent of children in the High Desert are obese. Those statistics, coupled with the survey, resulted in the plan to "get more fruits and vegetables into the community."

He said CX3 members worked alongside St. Joseph Health, St. Mary and the City of Victorville, among others, to complete the project.

The trees were purchased via a \$2,000 Edison International grant facilitated by the California Relief nonprofit, according to Page.



Elizabeth Ramos, left, and Emily Alarcon, in red, plant fruit trees on Seventh Street Monday. "We found there was an abundant need for fresh fruit and vegetables," said Cornelius Page, executive director of the Community Health Action Network. (JAMES QUIGG, DAILY PRESS)

They were planted outside the building located at 14923 Seventh Street, where owner Dr. Yvonne McKinney has planned an emergency sleep center and work program for the area's homeless.

CX3 member Kim Ammerman said the fruit on the trees are intended for "anyone who is in need." She added, though, that no single person should pick all the fruit.

"Just pick what you need so there will be some for everyone," Ammerman said. "That's the idea."

CX3 members have similar projects planned in other areas of Old Town, according to Ammerman. She said the goal is to create safe, walkable environments designed to benefit all residents.

That goal started when

community activists with ROOT – short for Revive Our Old Town – spearheaded two fruit-tree planting events in November, according to ROOT organizer Stephanie Vida Pazarin.

ROOT partnered with the Fallen Fruit Project for both events. The first set of trees arrived Nov. 3 at the Family Assistance Program's community center, the FamSpot. The second set was planted Nov. 18 at Eva Dell Park in collaboration with the City of Victorville, Pazarin said.

At Monday's CX3 planting, fellow ROOT organizer Jennifer Neri told a crowd of about 40 volunteers and civic leaders that the trees provided "community connectedness" in addition to nourishment.

"ROOT is very excited to be part of this project, and duplicating the efforts that we did," Neri said. "We got some pretty big trees so they shouldn't take too long to produce fruit."

Victorville Mayor Gloria Garcia cut the ribbon Monday, officially dedicating the trees. She said the project equaled a "terrific way to bring our community together."

"This is so wonderful to see all this beautiful work that's going in, planting these trees, beautifying our city," Garcia said. "It just makes my heart feel overwhelmed with joy."

Matthew Cabe can be reached at MCabe@VVDailyPress.com or at 760-951-6254. Follow him on Twitter @DP_MatthewCabe.

Recognition

Tree planting events were advertised across the state, spreading the word about Arbor Week activities. We hope this increasing awareness will spur even more public participation as we continue growing Arbor Week in years come.

Edison's sponsorship was also widely shared. All grantees spoke about Edison's support during the events, and in some cases Edison representatives were in attendance. Edison International's name and logo were included on event fliers, social media posts, newspaper articles, and even on the back of tee shirts (see right). This representation and recognition demonstrated Edison's commitment to these communities.

Edison was also recognized as a sponsor at the California ReLeaf Network Retreat, with their name and logo featured on the retreat agenda packet, social media posts, and presentation slides. This retreat welcomed urban forest nonprofits from throughout the state for networking and education, and we were delighted to share Edison's support!



Conclusion

We believe everyone should be planting and caring for the trees in their neighborhood.

Arbor Week celebrations and planting events nurture a love of trees in our youngest community members, connect California teenagers to volunteerism and community engagement, provide parents an opportunity to learn and work side-by-side with their kids, and give our most veteran tree advocates the space to pass on their knowledge and passion to future generations. All of this helps ensure thriving urban forests and healthy, engaged communities for years to come.

While the program was very successful overall, challenges included the homeless population adversely affecting tree planting in public parks and the fact that as an “incubator” program, not all of the groups were successful. This is to be expected in when funding start-up organizations, and helps provide lessons on how we can even better support them in future years.

California ReLeaf is very grateful for the 2019 sponsorship of Edison International. We look forward to future partnerships for California Arbor Week celebrations and educational events. **Together we are making California communities greener, healthier, and more resilient.**

“Edison Representative Mark Cloud, who came to Akoma for the first time for this event, also spoke about how this was his first time seeing youth, elders, and community leaders all at one event. It was inspiring to see many elder community members tell the youth in the room that they also attended Rio Vista Elementary and would be part of caring for these trees along with them.”

– AKOMA UNITY CENTER



Empowering grassroots efforts and building strategic partnerships that preserve, protect and enhance California's urban and community forests.

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