



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY LAUNCHES FIVE GARDEN EDUCATION CENTERS *Centers Offer Free Gardening Classes as Part of the Healthy Works Initiative*

Want to learn how to plant and maintain a garden? County officials and community partners announced five Regional Garden Education Center locations today at Olivewood Gardens in National City. Olivewood is one of five sites where residents can take free classes to help them to start or maintain school gardens as well as teach residents how to convert lawns, yards and small spaces into fruit and vegetable gardens.

In addition to Olivewood Gardens, centers are located at: Solana Center in Encinitas, San Diego Youth Services at Spring Valley East Community Center, the International Rescue Committee locations in City Heights and Wild Willow Farm, and Education Center in south San Diego.

“The garden education centers are an innovative step in the effort to improve health throughout our region,” said Supervisor Greg Cox, San Diego County Board of Supervisors, at the event. “By teaching residents to grow their own healthy food we are engaging community partnerships in our efforts to create a healthier San Diego.”

Regional Garden Education Centers are community-based hubs for garden education. The centers will offer classes and hands-on experience in basic, community, and school gardening. By offering classes for current and future gardeners of all skill levels, these centers will help San Diego County thrive as a place where fresh produce is grown in our schools and communities.

“Healthy eating can be a challenge due to rising food costs, lack of access to healthy produce, and prevalence of inexpensive yet highly processed foods,” said Nick Macchione, Director, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. “Growing your own fruits and veggies is one way to eat healthier and stay active, both key strategies in preventing the serious toll of chronic diseases.”

Many people have lost their connection to gardening as a source of food. The garden education sites provide residents with step-by-step gardening instructions. The free classes are ongoing and registration is handled by the individual centers.

The Regional Garden Education Centers are a project of Healthy Works, a countywide initiative making systems and environmental changes promoting wellness and addressing the nationwide obesity epidemic. The Healthy Works project is administered by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, through a federal grant funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The project is part of the County’s “Live Well, San Diego!” initiative, a 10-year vision for healthy communities. For more information, please visit www.HealthyWorks.org.

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