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Campo Troops Rally to Repair to Garden

By Chris Lavin



Spencer Spiering, Marisa Monopli and Shelby Bocks repaint signage damaged by vandalism at the Campolindo High School garden. Photos Chris Lavin

A stealthy nighttime melee caused by vandals at the school garden at Campolindo High School inspired some dedicated students to pull out their cell phones and summon help to repair benches, signs, plants and more this month.

"It was probably drunk people," said Chloe Bouchy. "It's pretty distressing."

A group of unknown people raided the area, breaking benches in half, smashing tables, tearing down signs and tearing up plants. The next day Bouchy started rallying the troops, who appeared almost immediately.

The team effort had students pairing up, some with brushes and paint, others with power drills and hammers, and got to work. Most are (or were) members of the poultry or garden clubs – but many had already graduated, and are preparing to head off to college next month.

"They pulled all this together themselves," said science teacher Patrick Wildermuth as he disentangled a hose.

Some of the students got interested in gardening through Global Student Exchange, an organization that shepherded them to Nicaragua to

visit small villages and farms. That created the spark in Bouchy.

"I'm very into it," she said. It was the first time she realized how something as simple as a seed can be miraculous. "The idea that a tiny seed" – she grabbed a 4-foot-high tomato plant and shook it – "can flourish into something like this is simply amazing."

When asked if he was surprised that graduated seniors were still pitching in at school, Wildermuth immediately shook his head. "My students are pretty amazing," he said.



The Campolindo Garden revitalization team, from left, back row: science teacher Patrick Wildermuth, Justin Bon, Brian Davis, Betty Galindo, Chloe Bouchy, Shelby Bocks, Anya Morril, Montana Dunn, Spencer Spiering and Cam Atwood; front row: Marissa Monopli, Nate Jauregue with Bungee the Dog, Ashley Yu, Sydney Lowe, Annie Loose, Emma Sonnenschein and Margaret Hunger.

Life at Leuschner

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A view from the larger dome window shows Leuschner Observatory in need of upgrades. Photo Cathy Dausman

"There would obviously need to be many more groups involved if things continue to move in this direction," Trotter said. In spite of its shortcomings, Leuschner today remains an active teaching facility; it is a site where both undergraduate students and master's candidates can perform their astronomy research.

Leuschner's 30-inch telescope can be remotely operated and is still being used to search for meteors. A modular antenna set up in the parking lot looks for evidence of life from a cosmic dawn scientists say happened 13 billion years ago.

In 1995 the Berkeley Seismological Laboratory began operating a re-

mote sensing station on nearby Russell land. The Leuschner site can even be used in the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence.

"Every campus needs something like this," said Allan Palmer, UC Berkeley project manager of construction and design. Palmer remembers going with his family when he was young to cut Christmas trees around the station's land.

Trotter calls Leuschner Observatory a valuable "hands-on experience." Better yet, it is one that is "right in a lot of peoples' backyards," she said. You just have to know where to look.

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