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ESTRELLA PARK SHINES ONCE AGAIN FOR SOUTH L.A. NEIGHBORHOOD

Los Angeles' First Lady Corina Villaraigosa welcomes return of renovated park

(LOS ANGELES) - On Saturday September 16, Los Angeles' First Lady, Corina Villaraigosa, Councilmember Ed Reyes and representatives of the non-profit organization Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT) joined community members for the re-opening of Estrella Park. The valuable South Los Angeles pocket park was honored with a ribbon cutting ceremony and street fair to celebrate its activist history.

"I am so proud of this community. They are an example of the best this city has to offer and what the power of community can do," Mrs. Villaraigosa said.

"Twenty years ago, local children raised the awareness and money to convert an abandoned lot into a park," added Tsilah Burman, Executive Director of LANLT. "Thanks to grants from the S. Mark Taper Foundation and The Annenberg Foundation we have revitalized their dream for a new generation."

"Today is a great day for the people of this neighborhood but we must not lose sight of the thousands of children in Los Angeles who still don't have access to green space. Our work has just begun," Councilmember Reyes said.

The re-opened park, which is located at 1960 Estrella Ave., boasts a new play structure, barbeque grill and large gazebo with a padded floor for exercise classes.

"This organization has really changed the lives of those of us who live in this neighborhood," said Gabriela Garcia, a community member and new staff member at LANLT. "This summer we formed 'The Estrella Park Community Club' and there are exercise and other health enrichment classes here all week long."

"The programming is a major component in bringing people together to revitalize their community," said Richard Mayer, LANLT Board Chair.

LANLT was created by the City of Los Angeles to address the lack of parks in underserved communities throughout Los Angeles. The organization acquires small parcels and converts them into parks and community gardens. It also creates a structure in which the community takes ownership of these public spaces by participating in the design, programming and maintenance of the parks.

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