

Tzu Chi Academy

On Saturday, March 19, Oregonians in the Portland metro area woke up to a glorious day of sunshine invigorating over 80 volunteers to join in a tree planting in the Lents neighborhood. This marked the eighth of twelve plantings that ODOT and Friends of Trees have scheduled along the I-205 Multi-Use Path for the 2010/2011 planting season.

Students and parents from the Tzu Chi Academy participated in the March 19 planting as part of a community service project. Public Relations Manager Mei-Shan Wang explained that she had planted trees once before with Friends of Trees and decided it would be a good opportunity for a service project for the school. Marking the beginning of their spring break, the Tzu Chi Academy brought 43 volunteers (aged four to sixteen) to the March 19 planting; they helped to plant 130 trees that day.

"Planting trees meshes with our goal because this year we are focused on environmental protection," explained Wang. "With so many natural disasters, we want to do our part to save the earth."

Headquartered in Los Angeles, California, the Tzu Chi Academy

operates schools located throughout the United States. Tzu Chi's education mission emphasizes "kindness, compassion, joy and selflessness," which are the "Four Immeasurables" under Buddhist teachings. Tzu Chi Education U.S.A. aims to promote character in the United States, emphasizing the values of gratitude, respect and love.

Locally, the Tzu Chi Academy operates a private school in the Conestoga area of Beaverton – the only Tzu Chi Academy in Oregon, which just opened its doors a year ago.



Students and parents from the Tzu Chi Academy participate in a planting along the I-205 Multi-Use Path in the Lents neighborhood as part of a community service project.

Project Description

A three-year community-wide effort among ODOT, Friends of Trees and Metro to green the I-205 Multi-Use Path with thousands of native trees and shrubs.

Benefits

- Improved neighborhood livability
- Enhanced experience for path users
- Increased wildlife habitat
- Decreased stormwater runoff
- Increased environmental equity among communities

Project Funding

- \$410,000 from the Metro Natural Areas Bond Measure's Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant Program
- \$80,000 from East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District
- \$25,000 from Spirit Mountain Community Fund
- Generous support from:
 - J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.
 - IKEA
 - Cantel Sweeping
 - Collier Arbor Care
 - HSBC Bank USA, N.A.
 - Portland General Electric
 - Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
 - REI
 - Portland Timbers

Tzu Chi Academy

The Beaverton-based Tzu Chi Academy has enrolled thirty students between the ages of four and nine. Students enjoy a rigorous curriculum of studies on Saturdays; teachings include Chinese language, culture and humanities.

"The Tzu Chi Academy's teachings include the mantra: Love the Earth, Protect the Earth and be Environmentally Friendly," said Wang.

In addition to the Tzu Chi Academy, there is also a Tzu Chi Foundation which focuses its work in four areas: charity including international relief, medicine services, education and humanity and culture.

"I think planting trees is so educational and I am thrilled with the parents and kids for coming out," commented Wang. "At Tzu Chi Academy, we instill values such as love the earth, save the planet and we want to make planting with Friends of Trees an annual event."

Mei-Shan Wang and Tzu Chi Academy students and parents worked alongside other volunteers to plant trees and shrubs along the I-205 Multi-Use Path, a collaborative effort between ODOT, Friends of Trees and Metro. With grant funding from Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant program, ODOT and Friends of Trees (with support from volunteers) will add thousands of trees and shrubs in existing ODOT property along the I-205 Multi-Use Path over a three year period. The project is part of ODOT's overall vision to make significant improvements to the 16.5 mile I-205 Multi-Use Path, which is used by commuters, neighbors, residents, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.



www.facebook.com/I205MultiUsePath
www.facebook.com/friendoftrees

To learn more about the people contributing to this project, visit:
www.oregon.gov/odot/hwy/region1/i205_mup/profiles.shtml

