

Press Release  
City of Perris

Date: January 17, 2020  
Contact: Stephen Hale, Public Information Officer  
(951) 943-6100 x538  
SHale@cityofperris.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CITY OF PERRIS 19<sup>th</sup> SATELLITE GARDEN OPENS AT PALS**

PERRIS, Calif. (January 17, 2020) — The City of Perris dedicated its 19th “satellite community garden” at the Pathways for Adult Life Skills on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, attaining another mark in its efforts to bring healthy food choices and education to its residents.

In attendance for the garden ceremony were City of Perris Mayor Michael M. Vargas, City Manager Richard Belmudez, Assistant City Manager Isabel Carlos, Perris Union High School District Superintendent Grant Bennett, City of Perris Director of Community Services Sabrina Chavez, Interim Director of Administrative Services Saida Amozgar, Director of Finance Ernie Reyna and Interim Director of Public Works Joe Indrawan, as well as representative of the office of the 31st District Senator Richard Roth, the office of District 61 Assembly Member Jose Media and the office of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors 5<sup>th</sup> District Jeff Hewitt.



Mayor Vargas spoke briefly on the importance of hands-on learning and the development of professional and personal skills.

“It’s exciting to be here with my friends from PALS and this very special,” said Vargas. “The garden will be used to provide students with a hands-on learning experience that will allow for the development of horticultural skills, professional and personal development. Additionally, students will cultivate their own produce, providing them with engaging interactive activities in a school setting.”

The 19th satellite garden at the Pathways for Adult Life Skills under the Perris Union High School District continues moving the City forward in the Grow Perris Initiative. After unveiling a community garden at the City Hall Campus, the Grow Perris initiative has passed the halfway point of their mission to establish 30 other gardens throughout the City.

The garden champions and site manager for the Pathways for Adult Life Skills garden was Special Education Administrator Michael C. Rodriguez. Under Perris Union High School

District, Rodriguez and Pathways for Adult Life Skills (PALS) requested to be a part of the Grow Perris initiative and satellite garden in the Fall of 2018.



The City approved and PALS Construction began in November 2019, with completion in January 2020. The garden is the first adult school to receive a garden and students of the school frequently visit and assist horticulture at the Perris Green City Farm at the Main City Hall campus.

City Manager Richard Belmudez also spoke at the event and shared his appreciation for the implementation of this program into the first adult education school.

“We are excited to be here and be one step closer to our goal,” said Belmudez. “Each one is unique and special and this one being our first adult education garden makes it very special to us.”

Belmudez also commended the work by Rodriguez for his efforts in implementing this garden.

“He really has been the champion of this garden concept and helped bring it to fruition. He’s been working with our Grow Perris team in fall of 2018 and we are grateful for this partnership.”

PALS is a special education program provided by Perris Union High School District for individuals ages 18-22 that promote student independence and job skills during their transition from high school to their next stage in life.



The garden was completed by efforts from community volunteers, maintenance and operations and students, who planted and assisted with decor at the garden. Staff and volunteers created a garden containing kale, cabbage, celery, strawberries along with herbs.

Currently, there are more than 30 partners in the Grow Perris initiative, with the goal of building 30 gardens. The partners include health and education advocates from all over the region including WRCOG, Kaiser Permanente, Eastern Municipal Water District, Department of

Water Resources and the UC Master Gardener Program. Riverside University Health System as well as all three school districts in Perris and other local community organizations and leaders.



###