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Contacts:

Catherine Borquez
Principal, Willow Cove Elementary School
Pittsburg Unified School District
(925) 473-2470

Michelle DeCoy
Garden Supervisor, Child Nutrition Services
Pittsburg Unified School District
mdecoy@pittsburg.k12.ca.us
(925) 250-7751

**Encouraging Kids to Get Dirty: Willow Cove Elementary School Spends Day
Planting Fruit Tree Orchard**

Pittsburg, CA — On Thursday, March 3, 2016, students at Willow Cove Elementary School are trading in their pencils for plants. Students are set to move outside the classroom walls and into the outdoors, spending the day planting a fruit tree orchard. Common Vision, a non-profit organization, in conjunction with Pittsburg Unified School District's Child Nutrition Services department will be transforming an outdoor area into a grove of trees. Along with digging in the dirt, students will learn about fruit trees, how to care for them, and the benefits of growing fresh foods. The day's activities include hands-on experiences planting trees, orchard inspired sign making, creativity with compost, and learning gritty details about growing trees under proper conditions.

*****Media Advisory:** Photo and video opportunities of students planting trees will take place from 11:00am – 12:30pm. If you plan on attending, please contact Catherine Borquez, Principal, at (925) 473-2470 or email at cborquez@pittsburg.k12.ca.us. Willow Cove Elementary is located at 1880 Hanlon Way, Pittsburg, CA 94565.***

“We are extremely proud and excited to partner with Common Vision in creating the opportunity for growth for both our students and garden at Willow Cove,” said Catherine Borquez, Principal at Willow Cove Elementary School. “Last year we were recognized at the White House for our efforts in establishing a school garden where students take part in planting, caring, and learning about fresh foods. We look forward to a long and prosperous relationship with Common Vision.”

This program ties into Pittsburg Unified School District's commitment to student wellness. The district believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year. "Students that partner in growing their fruits and vegetables are much more apt to actually eat them," said Matt Belasco, Director of Child Nutrition Services at Pittsburg Unified School District. "They have ownership in the process. I have heard students in the cafeteria say to others, 'I grew those beets and they are delicious! You should try them.' That peer to peer influence is so important to children. Many studies have shown that well-nourished students that eat a balanced diet succeed academically."

Thursday's planting program at Willow Cove Elementary School was initiated by teacher Paul Schnurr, who sought out Common Vision and collaborated with PUSD administrators to bring the day to fruition.

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About Pittsburg Unified School District

Pittsburg Unified School District (PUSD) is a K-12 district serving the community of Pittsburg, California. Founded in 1933, the school system is committed to providing an excellent opportunity for all students to learn. Comprised of eight elementary schools, three junior high schools, one comprehensive high school, one alternative education high school, an adult school, independent study, alternative learning experiences, and early childhood education services, the school district serves more than 10,500 students. PUSD is located in the San Francisco Bay Area, fifty minutes outside of downtown San Francisco.

About Common Vision:

According to Common Vision, their goal is to take root and bear fruit. Over the last decade, the organization has directly impacted more than 80,000 students, transforming 180 low income schools and community centers into abundant orchards. Their focus is on innovative strategies in sustainability with diverse communities and schools throughout California. For more information about how Common Vision uses inspirational education to create a healthier society, go to:

<http://www.commonvision.org/>