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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TOLUCA LAKE ELEMENTARY CELEBRATES INSTALLATION OF MARQUEE
City of L.A.'s Community Beautification Grant Strengthens Neighborhood Participation

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA (June 9, 2008)—The City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works Office of Community Beautification (OCB) today celebrated the installation of Toluca Lake Elementary School's new marquee with more than 50 students, parents, teachers and school administrators of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Joining Toluca Lake Elementary School Principal Carol Reo-Bove at the dedication ceremony were Los Angeles City Councilmember Tom LaBonge, Toluca Lake Elementary School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) President Lucy Gonzalez, OCB Community Beautification Grant Manager Michael Espinosa and representatives from the Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council, Rotary Club of North Hollywood and Toluca Lake Garden Club. The Toluca Lake Elementary School Drill Team kicked off the dedication with a rousing cheer in appreciation of the school's supporters.

“The Community Beautification Grant is an invaluable city resource for community improvement initiatives that fulfill local needs and improve the quality of life,” said Cynthia M. Ruiz, president of the Board of Public Works. “We commend the volunteer actions of Toluca Lake Elementary and the support of the broader community to help improve, remake and redefine their neighborhood.”

The school's grant project entitled, “Together We Achieve,” involved the installation of a new marquee in front of the school to improve neighborhood communication and strengthen the effectiveness of the school and local organizations to carry out their missions. In addition, the project involved the creation of a new gardening area and the planting of a native California garden on the school campus.

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“This grant has benefited our school in two ways. First, the installation of a marquee increases our ability and other organizations within our school community to communicate with the public, thus strengthening ties between individuals within our community and its organizations. This grant has also given the gift of gardening to the children here at Toluca Lake School,” said Karin Grigsby, project manager and teacher at Toluca Lake elementary school for eleven-years. “Gardening will nurture in the children a respect for the natural world as they care for the gardens and observe the insects and birds that are attracted to the garden. Gardening within the school is a way for children to find a connection with nature and to develop a sense of responsibility toward protecting our natural world and its wonders.”

The school supporters that helped provide the grant match included the Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council, Rotary Club of North Hollywood and Toluca Lake Elementary School PTA. On their Garden Party Day, more than 250 parents, teachers and students as well as volunteers from the Toluca Lake Garden Club, Rotary Club of North Hollywood and at-risk youth volunteers planted the gardens and cleaned up the school.

In 2001, the school was the recipient of a city grant for the project, “Our Beautiful World.” At that time, the school installed a mural on the wall of the library. Two parent artists provided art lessons to two children chosen from each class at the school, after which the children painted their vision of a beautiful world within the mural. A garden was also created with the grant. The same garden was refurbished and planted with native California plants with the present grant project, “Together We Achieve.”

More than 500 students and 80 special education students, Kindergarten through 5th grade, attend Toluca Lake Elementary School. The school’s mission statement is: “To educate individuals to become independent creative and critical thinkers within a culturally diverse environment. We will work cooperatively toward the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement through a partnership of school, families, and community.”

The Community Beautification Grant cycle begins in July and closes in October. Proposals accepted from community-based organizations, a group of five or more individuals, must reside, work or take interest in beautifying a community in the city. For more information on the City of Los Angeles Office of Community Beautification and Community Beautification Grants, please visit the office website at www.laocb.org.

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About Board of Public Works

The five-commissioner Board of Public Works manages the Department of Public Works, the City's third largest municipal division focused on the essential needs of residents for a better quality of life and environmental protection. With a \$559 million operating budget, the department awards more than \$500 million in public service contracts annually that provide for the construction, renovation, and operation of public programs and services including: municipal buildings and treatment facilities; streets, street lights, and urban forest; bridges and sidewalks; sewers and storm drains; integrated solid waste management and recycling; graffiti removal and beautification grants. The Board is committed to the delivery of quality customer service, to help neighborhoods thrive and benefit from healthier living and working environments. For more information, visit www.lacity.org/bpw.

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