Lake Pamela Student Leadership Service Project
May 18, 2012

Valencia College’s Student Engagement & Leadership Academy held a Lake Pamela Service Project May 18, 2012. Following the example of the invasive plant removal project by the faculty and staff on Learning Day February 10, 2012, the students removed Guinea grass and vines by Lake Pamela. First they were oriented to the Sustainability features of the campus by the Director of Sustainability, Deborah Green, and took a walk where they learned features of the natural environment near Lake Pamela.

For more photos on all of these events, visit www.facebook.com/ValenciaCollegeSustainability

Green Apple Day of Service September 29, 2012

The Horticulture Club on West Campus and Valencia Volunteers joined the Sustainability Committee in celebrating Green Apple Day of Service on Sept 29, 2012. Choosing the Green Apple Day of Service connects us to student service projects around the country in an effort sponsored by United States Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED for Schools, http://www.mygreenapple.org/.

Goals of the West Campus butterfly garden project are to provide the opportunity for students to become involved with the campus environment and to have an opportunity for hands on learning as they plant.

The college's sustainability effort includes developing the Campus as a Living Laboratory, and Biology classes will be able use the garden for study. The project converted a forgotten patch of turf grass behind HSB that needs mowing, into something with diversity and interest. Students walking around that side of the lake can enter the campus along its paths.
The Horticulture Club, which formed in February 2012, has as its mission to involve students in horticulture and environmental-related projects, including community and campus vegetable gardens. The club is sponsored by Dr. Javier Garces, who points out that an organic vegetable garden can be a challenge with our sandy soil, heat, and pests. The butterfly garden is a first step for the club with aspirations to plant the vegetable garden in the future. The plants and mulch were purchased through the budget of the club, which comes from Student Development funds.

Some of the trees and larger plants, like wax myrtle, American beauty berry and saw palmetto, had been dug up by Grounds Crew from the vegetation bordering the Econlockhatchee Trail, which is undergoing widening. Additional small trees planted in the swale included hackberry.

For the garden project, forty participants completed constructing the split rail fence and doing the planting and some mulching within a little over an hour. Several birds appeared immediately to visit the new plants, like American beautyberry.

More photos are on [http://www.facebook.com/ValenciaCollegeSustainability](http://www.facebook.com/ValenciaCollegeSustainability)

**VESAs Plants Tree on Valencia College East Campus November 6, 2012**

Members of Valencia Earth Studies Association (VESAs), a student club on East Campus, helped plant one of many new trees on campus grounds. VESA, which was founded in October 2011 by student members and their club adviser, James Adamski, has the mission of “bringing awareness in order to promote an active community through discovery and adventure with nature.”

A total of 12 students plus their faculty adviser helped to plant the tree on November 6, 2012. Grounds Maintenance Supervisor Clarence Canada selected the tree and helped coordinate the planting activities. The students learned that the tree, a type of magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora* var. Bracken’s Brown Beauty) is a native evergreen tree that will grow to 50 feet tall after it matures. The tree produces large, white, fragrant blooms in late spring – early summer. The tree will provide shade, wildlife habitat, and restore a more natural forested environment to a disturbed grassy area.
A plaque was also added to the site to describe the tree and educate the students on East Campus. The tree planting and plaque are part of a long-term plan to create a native landscape on campus and raise student awareness about the flora and fauna of central Florida. The students at Valencia College are diverse, with many from other states or other countries, so the tree and plaque provide a learning opportunity outside of the classroom. In addition to learning about native flora and fauna, the native plantings will help teach students about climate change and natural methods, such as tree planting, to offset carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere. The students involved in the planting, all volunteers, had a great time, and appreciate the opportunity given by Tree Campus USA to add something to the campus that will remain and grow long after they have graduated. They look forward to future beautification and environmental opportunities.

More photos are on http://www.facebook.com/ValenciaCollegeSustainability

Peace and Justice Tree Dedication Ceremony, November 15, 2012

The Peace and Justice Initiative held a tree dedication ceremony in honor of Penny Villegas, founder of Peace Studies at Valencia College. Students, faculty, staff and members of the community, including Penny’s husband Frank, came together to honor Professor Villegas through poetry, letters, words and song for her thirty years of dedication to Valencia, and specifically her role as the “Mother of Peace Studies” at the college. With the assistance of grounds maintenance supervisor, Clarence Canada, a Magnolia tree now stands as an evergreen reminder of Peace and Justice and the legacy of Professor Emeritus, Penny Villegas.