

Youngsters break ground for charter school on UCSD campus

March 30, 1999

Media Contact: Pat JaCoby, (619) 534-7404 or pjacoby@ucsd.edu

Editor's Note: Image available at <http://www-er.ucsd.edu/ucomrn/newsrel/events/jgroundbreak>

YOUNGSTERS BREAK GROUND FOR CHARTER SCHOOL ON UCSD CAMPUS

Five youngsters symbolizing future students at The Preuss School on the University of California, San Diego campus turned the first shovel of dirt today for the innovative \$13.1 million school building, scheduled for completion in the fall of 2000.

In remarks preceding their groundbreaking action UCSD Chancellor Robert C. Dynes observed "we are not just breaking ground for a new school; we are breaking new educational ground."

The sixth through eighth graders, all students at the Partners at Learning/Summerbridge program on the UCSD campus, included Ana Huitron, Paola Hernandez, Martha Valdez and Alfonso Reyes, Cadman Elementary School in the Clairemont area, and Brittanie Evans, Freese Elementary School, East San Diego.

Joining Dynes in brief remarks at the ceremonies on UCSD's East Campus were University of California Regent Peter Preuss, San Diego Unified School District Superintendent Alan Bersin, Thurgood Marshall College Provost Cecil Lytle, and Preuss School Principal Doris Alvarez.

In discussing plans for the new school the only one in the state to be established on a college campus Dynes promised that "we will commit ourselves to new possibilities and to new opportunities for those who need them most. We will commit ourselves not to a single idea or a pet theory, but only to discovering what will work best."

Preuss School Principal Alvarez noted that "we are breaking new ground to forever change the lives of countless young people of San Diego who will become first generation college graduates. These students will be given extraordinary opportunities to become prepared and ready for attending a college or university."

"It is quite an accomplishment to realize that this is the only charter school in the country whose facilities will be built on a university campus entirely with private donations and capital," Alvarez said.

Completion of The Preuss School's 70,000 square foot complex of new buildings is expected in the fall of 2000. Meanwhile, temporary quarters this fall at UCSD's Thurgood Marshall college will house the first 150 Preuss School students, consisting of sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

Those first 150 students will be chosen by lottery from more than 500 students who met the established eligibility requirements and filed for admission by March 12. Notification of selection will be sent to parents by April 15. The school will reach its maximum of 700 sixth through 12th grade students in 2003.

The mission of the public charter school is to prepare low income and educationally underserved students for admission and graduation from a university. Classroom size will range from 20 to 27 students; the school day and academic year will begin earlier and end later than is the custom in San Diego District schools.

To create a campus environment, buildings of the new facility are arranged around a long central courtyard which features an outdoor amphitheater designed for performances, school assemblies and lunchtime gatherings.

A large building for administrative offices, a Library/Media Center and a Multipurpose Facility will be built on one side of the central court. On the other side are five two-story classroom wings which contain 28 classrooms, including four science class/labs.

Designed by HMC Group Architects of San Diego, The Preuss School project recently received an Award of Excellence in the unbuilt category from the American Institute of Architects, California Council, and the Coalition for Adequate School Housing.

The Preuss School is named in recognition of a \$5 million gift to the facility made by University of California Regent Peter Preuss, his wife Peggy, their son Peter and the Preuss Family Foundation.

(March 30, 1999)