

# Redlands High club honors longtime school employee with memorial garden

*By Kristina Hernandez, Redlands Daily Facts*

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REDLANDS, Ca – A space at Redlands High School once occupied by dying oleanders has been transformed into a memorial garden to honor a beloved staff member.

The more-than-year-long effort was spearheaded by the school's Environmental Club to remember Kathleen Worth, a former registrar attendant who died Jan. 19, 2016 of cancer. She was 64.

The garden sits on the west side of the Grace Mullen Auditorium and was unveiled to the public Wednesday.

Laurel Nelson, an RHS biology and environmental teacher, said her students with the Environmental Club wanted to take on the project to recognize Worth's love of plants and the connection she had with the entire campus. Nelson is also the group's adviser.

"She used to always talk about how there should be more plants at the school," Nelson said. "This is going to help beautify the school."

Chris Ruhm, RHS's assistant principal, threw his support behind the project by helping organizers identify a space and asking the school's maintenance crew to install a watering system. He also took two Environmental Club members to Cherry Valley Nursery to purchase materials. The club received additional support from Starbucks on Redlands Boulevard and Clark Street.

"It was just amazing for this to come to life and to watch an idea come to life," said Miaha Horton, 18, club president and RHS senior. "I just hope the next generation and the next people coming into the club continue (it) and continue making a difference in people's lives."

Worth, who worked at RHS for 19 years, was with Redlands Unified School District for a total of 25 years.

Nelson said she and Worth developed a friendship over their love for plants and a reputation for the work she did at the school.

"She was amazing," Nelson said. "If she didn't know something, she would go and find the answer."

Wednesday's dedication included short remarks from Worth's family and friends, including her son, Tomm, and a formal ribbon-cutting.

Tomm Worth, also an RHS alumnus, said the garden meant a lot to him because he grew up in a garden with his mom.

"So seeing something like this in an area where I grew up is amazing," he said. "My brother and I were her No. 1 and the school was her No. 2. If she wasn't talking about her kids, she was talking about Redlands High."