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Library lets kids grow with new garden

Space, costing \$140,000, will allow discovery and provide a place for story telling.

By **Jessie Brunner**
Daily Pilot

The rules are a little different at the Newport Beach Public Library's new Children's Sun and Sea Discovery Garden: No adults without child supervision.

Newport Beach City Council members, library staffers, and parents and kids gathered to celebrate the garden's opening at the Central Library on Wednesday morning.

Irvine resident Alberta Young took her two sons Sam, 3, and Brad, 5, to frolic in the "garden" on opening day.

"It's great; I found a crab," Sam exclaimed.

Intended for children 3 to 7,

the new garden offers lessons about the sea. A discovery maze lined with mosaic sea creatures leads children around the garden, past a rock fountain and toward two reading areas. Blue and green cushions dot the garden's centerpiece — a large reading "pod" where librarians will hold daily story telling sessions.

"This is a wonderful place where children can stretch their imaginations, grow and do all the things that children should

do," said Marty Flink, president of the Friends of the Library, the group that funded the \$140,000 project.

The library's need for more space for children prompted the decision to build a garden in the previously

unused patio area, just outside the children's room. Library services director Linda Katsouleas said the library wanted to create a safe place for children to play, and it seemed like the perfect spot.

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Marty Flink
president of the
Friends of the Library



Brad Young, 5, of Irvine flips through a book during Wednesday's opening of the Sun and Sea Discovery Garden at the Newport Beach Central Library. Brad's mother, Alberta Young, sits with him.

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Front Porch Creations, a Corona del Mar-based landscaping company run by husband-and-wife team Chris and Eric Fenmore, designed and built the garden. It was their first municipal project.

Chris Fenmore, a mother of three, designed the garden while in "mom-mode," using inspiration she gained spending time with her sons in parks,

zoos and friends' homes. She hopes children will use the garden to satisfy their natural curiosity, both through reading and recreation.

"Children really like to discover, to find things, and to do things again and again," she said. "This garden will get them out there, moving around."

Newport Beach Mayor Steve Rosansky was present for

Wednesday's ribbon-cutting ceremony, his first as mayor. Rosansky recalled his own library adventures as a child, telling the crowd that he owes his successes, in part, to the education he received there.

"This is a wonderful thing we are doing for our youth," Rosansky said. "I'm just sorry I

LIBRARY

Continued from A1

don't have any kids young enough to bring here."

The garden will be open during the library's daylight hours, approximately 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Councilman Don Webb, who attended the grand opening, said he is looking forward to bringing his 2-year-old grandson to the garden as soon as possible.

"He is going to tear this place up," Webb said.



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Two-year-old Ben Vick of Newport Beach reaches out to touch ocean exploration fountain on Wednesday at the library.