

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY**

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For Immediate Release  
January 24, 2009

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## **Conservancy Dedicates New Soccer Field At The Los Angeles River Center and Gardens**

*Environmentally Friendly Raul Macias Futsal Court is Named for Community Leader  
Who Gives Soccer and Leadership Skills to Thousands of Children Every Year*

Los Angeles—At a dedication ceremony held today with over 200 young soccer players from the Anahuak Youth Sports Association and their families, community leader Raul Macias made the first kick at a new soccer field named for him at the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's Los Angeles River Center and Gardens in Northeast Los Angeles. The Raul Macias Futsal Court provides the park-poor Cypress Park community with a new team playing field while, at the same time, teaching the kids who use it about caring for their environment.

Speakers included Assemblymember Kevin de Leon and Los Angeles City Councilman Ed Reyes. Their remarks reflected both a deeply-felt admiration of Raul and a shared belief in the importance of keeping kids active.

“Raul’s love for young people and his genuine care for their future have made Raul a formidable leader and champion to thousands,” said Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. “The partnership between our organizations is natural. Anahuak kids are now full-fledged members of the environmental community. These are the stewards of our future.”

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The new futsal court, which is a smaller version of a full-sized regulation soccer field, was built on what was once the employee tennis court of the Lawry's California Center. LA84 Foundation and Nike provided the funds to create the new synthetic playing surface, which is made in part from "Nike Grind" a recycled material made of both old footwear and rubber left over from the manufacture of Nike product. The MRCA installed a rainwater capture system and 250 gallon cistern to collect water running off the field to store and use to irrigate the landscaping around the field. An interpretive panel explains the importance of water conservation. A small picnic area will be built adjacent to the field where families can gather to watch their children play.

The new field is part of the partnership and commitment between Nike and the LA84 Foundation to build and/or refurbish 84 playgrounds throughout Los Angeles to benefit young sports enthusiasts in Los Angeles. The new play surfaces will help rejuvenate the community by creating spaces for the youth of L.A. to play so they can be healthy and live active lives.

A native of Guadalajara, Mexico, Raul Macias founded Anahuak Youth Sports Association in 1997 to give children in communities close to the Los Angeles River in Northeast Los Angeles opportunities to succeed through soccer. Under Raul's direction, today, more than 2,000 boys and girls ages 5-17 participate in Anahuak's recreation and environmental programs and promote positive change in their neighborhoods. As partners with the MRCA, Anahuak's players participate in the MRCA's Transit to Trails and Los Angeles River Rangers programs.

Nike's Let Me Play program is a signature community effort to expand the company's commitment to sports and physical fitness for youth through the recognition that by playing sports, young people can make themselves, their communities and their world better. In addition to building surfaces for play, Let Me Play provides grants and product donations to

support young people in their quest for sport; and it brings volunteers, organizations and decision-makers together to improve opportunities that help youth grow up healthy and active.

The LA84 Foundation was established to manage Southern California's share of the surplus from the highly successful 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. The Foundation received \$93 million at its inception and, since then, has invested \$182 million in sports programs serving more than two million youth in the eight Southern California counties of Los Angeles, Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura. Its headquarters is located in the historic Britt House near downtown Los Angeles where it houses the world's premier sports library and meeting facilities. The Foundation convenes numerous forums for the exploration of the most pressing issues in sport. For additional information, please visit [www.LA84Foundation.org](http://www.LA84Foundation.org).

The Los Angeles River Center and Gardens is located at the former site of Lawry's California Center, near the confluence of the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Seco, close to Elysian Park and downtown Los Angeles. Its beautiful mission-style grounds and conference facilities serve as focal point of the Los Angeles River, and a prime location for community gatherings, educational conferences, and special events. The River Garden Park includes an artistic water feature replicating the Los Angeles River. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority maintain their offices there, along with nonprofits active in the revitalization of the Los Angeles River.

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is a State Agency dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and creation of public parkland. The Conservancy's mission is to form an interlinking system of urban, rural, and river parks, open space, trails, and wildlife habitat that are easily accessible to the public. Since it was created by the Legislature in 1980, the

Conservancy has helped to preserve over 65,000 acres of urban and wilderness parkland throughout Southern California.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is a local government agency established pursuant to the Joint Powers Act between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The MRCA manages and provides planning, education and interpretation, construction, ranger and fire prevention services for parkland it owns or that is owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy or other agencies. The MRCA is one of the principal agencies working towards revitalization of the Los Angeles River and is the leader in providing nature parks in urban areas of Southern California.

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