

A fruitful collaboration

Assemblyman Gatto, Glendale Kiwanis join forces on garden project at College View School.

A pink shirt and matching tie didn't deter Assemblyman Mike Gatto (D-Silver Lake) from sinking his hands into a soon-to-be planted flower bed Friday at College View School, as Glendale Unified school board member Mary Boger distributed 300 worms nearby.

“My father, when I was a kid, used to teach me the importance of getting down and working with the dirt, and I just think it is an important life lesson that kids should learn,” Gatto said. “It gives a really rewarding feeling when you plant something and a couple of months later you get a chance to see it grow, and then you get a chance to eat it.”

Gatto was one of dozens of civic leaders, education officials and schoolchildren laboring to create a new garden at the special-education school, made possible in part by a grant the freshman state representative secured through Western Growers Foundation, the charitable arm of the agriculture trade association Western Growers.



Students from local schools helped plant the new garden at College View School in Glendale on Friday, May 20, 2011. (Raul Roa/Staff Photographer)

The half-dozen wooden flower beds — paid for and constructed by the Glendale Kiwanis Club — were designed to be accessible to College View's students, including those in wheelchairs. Students planted everything from corn and beans to squash and strawberries.

“Gardening is a non-verbal skill where you stick your hands in the dirt and you watch things grow,” said Kiwanis member Lisa Brooks. “Anyone can do it. And it is just a wonderful thing for these kids to be able to plant.”